

CoLaborer



**March Program
Deep Roots,
Strong Winds**

**How my husband met the Lord
Two women tell their stories**

4

Mar • Apr 1999

VISION

Suzanne Franks



Good Problems

There I sat Friday night in the home of a mathematics professor—the only misfit in a circle of math maniacs and grad students. I kept my nose above water as long as they discussed non-math subjects. As an outsider, I had ample opportunities to practice my listening and observation skills.

Elaine joined our circle around 8 p.m., and friends started asking about her new position at a university out West. Among the positive things she said about the new school, six words followed me around several days. “He has lots of good problems,” she said as her eyes lit up with excitement. She was talking about a colleague at the university. It wasn’t so much the words that caught my attention as the combination of her facial expression and the use of “good” and “problems” side by side in the same sentence.

Most folks don’t think of problems as “good.” In the business world, we are taught to erase the word from our vocabulary. We may not be able to get rid of our problems, but we certainly are good at ignoring them.

On the other hand, mathematicians live to solve problems. If the math gurus some day figured out all the problems in this world, they would have to find another field to research. However, they assure me this won’t happen. Their main purpose for existing as mathematicians is to solve a good math problem—and the harder the problem the better. The “best” problem is the one many have tried to solve and failed.

God is like those mathematicians in at least one way. Our Father’s eyes light up with infinite love and compassion when we finally recognize we have a problem and cry out to Him, “I need You.”

“Come here, My child,” He says, “I’ve wanted to help you all along.” He delights in restoring broken creatures. And He is glorified when we pull into safe harbor after weathering the storm with our Protector at our side.

He wants us to run to Him, not just as Mr. Fix-it-Quick, but as One who can make things right through the blood of Jesus Christ. He longs to make our lives better, but we must go to Him in humility seeking forgiveness and willing to follow His instructions.

Problems drive mathematicians to look for better solutions. Problems should drive us to look to **The Solution**—Jesus Christ.❖

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4

**Norma and Martha
tell their stories,
give advice
and encouragement
to women
who are married to
unsaved husbands.**

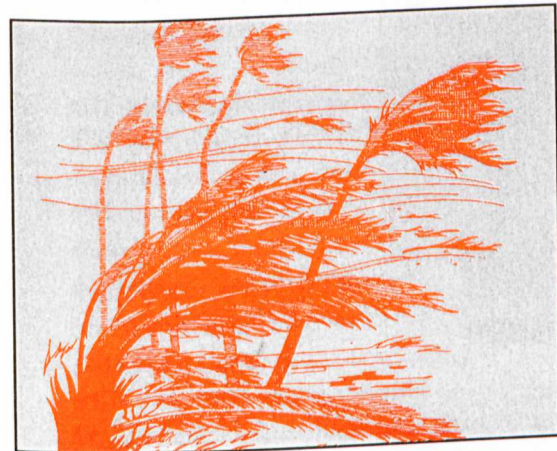
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How my husband met the Lord

By Norma McAlister and Martha Harris as told to Suzanne Franks

Norma's story:

Norma McAlister tells her story of how she and her family met the Savior. She was married to Gerald almost 40 years before he came to the Lord.

Growing up I lived with foster parents, but I learned the most about God during the summers I spent at my grandparents' house in Virginia. We went to revival services practically every night.

The foster parents I lived with from ages 5 through 9 were Christians. I remember sleeping on a pew during Wednesday night services. I believe something soaked in even back then.

I met Gerald when I was 17 years old and living with my sister in Maryland. I was working full-time at a restaurant and going to night school to finish high school. Gerald was a shoe salesman. He ate at the restaurant every day. We started dating in April and got married in June the same year. My first daughter, Myra, came along 10 months after the wedding.

I started taking Myra to Sunday school when she was two years old. One summer when I was taking Myra to Vacation Bible School, a godly older woman in the church asked me, "Why do you think you are going to heaven?"



"Because I am good," I said. She gently told me I would only go to heaven because of what Christ did. And she gave me some books on Paul's writings. I still did not understand salvation but I kept saying in my mind, "I want to be a Christian." In my search I had prayed the prayer of faith.

After we moved to Newport, Tennessee, we met Brother Ed Young, pastor of the First Free Will Baptist Church. The first time Myra heard the gospel, she raised her hand for prayer. This was also the first time I heard a clear presentation of the gospel. I received assurance of my salvation through

new convert classes Myra and I took together.

God brought us to Nashville in 1974. I started attending Woodbine Free Will Baptist Church with my girls. Though Gerald didn't attend church services with us, he loved the people and attended the social functions at the church.

From the beginning, the church was praying for his salvation. I think he didn't go to the services because he would get under conviction.

Over the years, many have witnessed to Gerald and he used to get angry at me. In the last six years, Gerald's attitude changed and he didn't get mad at me anymore.

Gerald is very close to our grandson, Jared. One day Jared asked his grandfather, "Daddy Mac, are you a Christian?" "No," was Gerald's answer. This broke Jared's heart. He cried and cried. Jared always talked to his grandfather about the Lord. God used an eight-year-old child to soften a grandfather's heart.

About the same time, our younger daughter, Teresa, turned her life over to the Lord. Gerald thought it was just a fad because

(continued on page 7)

Martha's story:

Martha Harris relates how her late husband, Pat Burttram, met the Lord three years after they were married. Pat was pastoring a Free Will Baptist church in the San Diego area when he was diagnosed with cancer. He died eight months later. In 1995, Martha married James Harris, a widower from Moody, Alabama.

I met Pat when we were in technical school. He was studying to be a barber and I was taking secretarial courses. When we started dating, I started praying for Pat's salvation and we went to church together. I was a Christian but I didn't know much about the Bible then. We dated only five months before we got married.

After we married, Pat wanted to stay home in bed on Sunday mornings because he worked hard on Saturdays. I would get up and get dressed trying to look my best. Pat was very jealous of me. When he saw me all dressed up, he would get up and get ready for church.



We were always late for church then.

Many times I told him I wanted him to go to heaven with me. Pat had joined the church when he was young because his mother told him to, but his church didn't preach the gospel.

Pat's dad had never gone to church with his mother. He didn't want to be like his dad. So, the first year and a half we were married, we went to the church where he grew up.

Then we moved to Centerpoint, Alabama. My mother told me some families were starting a Free Will Baptist church there. She gave me the pastor's name and told me to call him. I started going to this

mission church that met in a little white house. The congregation only had about three families. Pat went with me, but he made fun of the church.

One of the ladies from the church always visited us. Pat stayed under conviction because the church, my family and I were praying for him.

The people from the mission church were erecting the church building themselves. The first service in the new building was an all-day affair. Pat

was excited about the new building and he invited my family over that Sunday. The church also kicked off a revival that night.

Pat went with me to the revival every night. On Wednesday night he really got under conviction. I could tell. The lady leading the music stopped and dropped at the altar to pray for Pat. And he knew why she was praying.

After we got home that night, we talked for a long time. Around three o'clock in the morning, we knelt down beside our bed and he asked the Lord to come into his heart.

When we went back to church
(continued on page 7)

Many women want to see their husbands commit their lives to the Lord. So, *CoLaborer* asked Norma and Martha to share what they learned through the years.

Norma's advice

Sometimes the unsaved husband will vie for your time when you want to go to church. At first, I wouldn't join the church because Gerald wanted to do other things on Sundays. Occasionally, he would take the boat to the lake on Sundays and he wanted me to go with him. My pastor and others in the church told me to do what my husband wanted to do.

It's not good to put the church in competition with your husband. Sometimes the wife will have to go with her husband.

However, don't wait until everything works out perfectly before you start serving the Lord. I wanted to teach a Sunday school class. But I wanted to be a good wife. I included Gerald in my decision and asked him about taking the position. God honored my commitment to both—to Him and to my husband. Ever since I began teaching, I didn't have to miss any Sundays because Gerald wanted to do something.

You shouldn't sit back and feel sorry for yourself. Show concern for others and not just for your own family.

You especially need Christian friends to go to when you feel like God has forsaken you.

Before my husband's conversion, we didn't have the closeness we have today. Your differences will result in marital problems. You will have to hold back your anger at times. Live a Christian testimony, because you can easily turn your husband off. If Gerald said, no, to an invitation, I had to drop it.

Take your kids to church if he allows you to. Don't wait until he is saved to teach your children the way.

Martha's advice

Show your love for him. Let him know he is very special in your life. Do extra things for him.

Pat enjoyed eating out. We were trying to save money and we hadn't gone out to eat for a long time. So, I fixed a special

candlelight supper one night. When he got home, I told him, "You are at a restaurant tonight." He really liked that. Once during the evening, he said, "Do you think the waitress can get me another glass of tea?" I treated him like a special customer at my restaurant. After supper, he even left me a \$20 tip.

Do things he likes if it doesn't cause you to sin. Men like to be pampered.

They like to know they are important in your life. Don't ever take him for granted.

Remember whom you belong to.

Norma and Martha both mentioned tact. They said,

Pray about the right time to talk to your husband. Then make loving comments at the right time. Talk to him with tact. Don't speak in a condemning way.

Norma's story, continued

of the hard times she had been through. But after two years, she's still serving the Lord.

Soon after Teresa was saved, our pastor, Dr. Outlaw, came over on a Thursday night to talk to Gerald. Dr. Outlaw has such a relaxing manner and Gerald always liked him. Dr. Outlaw showed Gerald the plan of salvation and then said, "I'm going to leave this with you for you to think about."

The next Thursday came around and Gerald welcomed Dr. Outlaw with new excitement. "I've been thinking about what you said," Gerald told him. "I never thought my whole family would be saved. I want to be in heaven with my family." I almost shouted when I heard these words come out of my husband's mouth. We knelt at the coffee table and Gerald prayed.

Right away we started having devotions each night. His thirst for the Word blesses me. Hearing him pray is so refreshing.

After Gerald turned his life over to the Lord, I walked on clouds for months. Today, I thank the Lord that we will have some years to share our walk with the Lord.

Norma McAlister is a tax administrator at a manufacturing company. She lives in Laverne, Tennessee, and is a member of Woodbine Free Will Baptist Church where she serves as church treasurer.

Be encouraged

Martha:

Don't give up. Pat always said, "If you really love your husband, you can get him to do anything you want him to."

Remember God's promises.

Norma:

Don't let Satan rob you of your joy.

Always keep Romans 8:28 and Philippians 4:13 in mind.

Man has a free will, but God has a thousand ways to influence that will.

Stay in the Word to combat discouragement. At times when everything was going wrong, a verse or something I heard in a sermon would comfort me.

Remember, you are not alone. God works through circumstances and people. Without the prayers of the church, it would have been difficult to win Gerald for the Lord.

Martha's story, continued

on Thursday night, he went with the men to pray before the service. The pastor knew something had changed, but he didn't say anything to Pat at that point.

After the service, we invited the pastor, Brother Youngblood, to our house. They went through the plan of salvation in the Bible and Pat confirmed that he had already repented and accepted Jesus as Savior.

Some amazing changes took place in Pat's life. He used to be cold hearted. I used to think, "Someone could fall at his feet and he'd walk over the person." After his salvation, his personality changed and he had a special love and concern for people. From then on, he never met a stranger and could talk to anybody. Before, he didn't get close to anyone. He even kept me at a distance. The Lord softened his heart.

Pat started studying the Bible and that made me study more. I became more concerned about the Lord and His will and we started praying together. I was so happy, that months went by before my feet seemed to touch the ground.

Martha Harris is WNAC's bookkeeper. She currently lives in Nashville, Tennessee, and is a member of Woodbine Free Will Baptist Church. Martha serves as treasurer in her local WAC.

Deep Roots Strong Winds

Sarah Fletcher

Scripture: 2 Timothy 1-4
Suggested Songs: *Near to the Heart of God, May the Mind of Christ My Savior*

In the middle of the night, a family huddles together in the corner of a basement. Heads down, they hear the roar and feel the impact of mighty winds. Moments later, silence. After seemingly endless hours of darkness,

dawn appears. They rise to examine the aftermath.

The beautiful, secure rooms above them are gone, blown away in the storm. In the midst of destruction, the family feels blessed—life remains. They can rebuild. They are thankful for

their underground shelter.

This scene is all too familiar. Tornadoes and hurricanes headline the news almost daily.

This scene is also all too familiar in the spiritual realm as ungrounded Christians are “blown away” by the winds of false doc-

trine. A beautiful part of the body of Christ is damaged or destroyed. Spiritual lives are shattered because individuals did not obtain shelter.

The blow from spiritual cyclones can be minimized. Shelter is available. Protection against strong winds relies upon deep roots.

Paul described it this way. "Rooted and built up in him and established in the faith." The Psalmist spoke of the godly as a "tree planted by the waters" whose "roots do not wither." This "root cellar" of underground refuge and security is a place near the heart of God.

How can a person discover this place and develop those deep roots? Paul gives us the plan in the 2 Timothy.

Know Whom You Believe

In 2 Timothy 1:12, Paul told young Timothy, "I know whom I have believed." Paul's aim in life was to know Christ. He considered everything else unimportant (Philippians 3:8-10). What does it mean to know Christ?

Knowing Christ involves a relationship with Him—choosing to believe in His death and resurrection, and accepting His forgiveness for sin. Countless churchgoers face the storms of life unprepared because they have never experienced salvation.

Knowing Christ also involves study and commitment. A physician continually reads books and charts about the human body. A good artist contemplates the design, structure and color schemes of the great Masters.

Christians should do the same. We should continually read and study the words and works of the greatest Master and our Great Physician. Consistent time in the Word and in prayer are vital if we are to know Christ.

Knowing Christ is aided by experience. The sight-impaired person "knows" through sound and touch. Though we have never seen the Lord, we can "know" Him through His touch.

How exhilarating to witness the change in the life of a sinner saved by God's grace. How refreshing to see God's answers to prayer. How awesome to realize His divine providence and protection upon us each day!

Knowing Christ is refuge from strong winds of false doctrine.

What constitutes a cult? Fiendish personalities and strange practices? Generally not. Most individuals involved in cults are ordinary (yet misguided), everyday people. The criteria for a cult heavily weighs upon the group's belief about Christ. John states this repeatedly in 1 John 5. Belief in Jesus as the only begotten Son of God is the only way to eternal life.

Know Why You Believe

Paul not only knew whom he believed, he was persuaded or convinced of his beliefs (2 Timothy 1:12). He knew that his "son in the faith" was convinced as well. Paul admonished Timothy to "continue in the things" he had "been assured of." Timothy knew what he believed and why he believed it.

Though Timothy had been blessed with a godly mother and grandmother who had taught him these truths since infancy, Timothy had to "own" his faith. Each of us must do the same. We must not only believe in Christ, we must be convinced in our beliefs. We must know the whys.

Christians should be thinking people. Peter advised his readers to be "sober" and "vigilant." We might paraphrase this today as "thinking on your feet" or being "thoughtful and proactive."

From early on, our children are taught to question, to prove, and to reason. If we are to reach the people of this age for Christ, we must be reasoning people. We must use our minds.

The old song, "God Said It, I Believe It and That Settles It," may rouse "Hallelujahs" and "Amens" among the saints. Yet this mentality arouses suspicion and lack of credibility in the world.

We must give proofs and intelligent answers concerning the claims of Christ and God's Word. Can the resurrection be proved? Is the Bible a reliable source? Is Creation a valid answer to the origin of man? Why do bad things happen to good people? If God is love, what about evil?

According to a recent survey, these questions are foremost in the minds of today's college students.* When asked why they did not embrace Christianity, these were the questions most frequently given.

Can you give intelligent proof for your beliefs? Be sober and vigilant, always striving to make the gospel attractive to the world.

Knowing why we believe deepens our spiritual roots. Thinking through our faith allows us to see the untruths and errors of false doctrine. Jewelers concentrate on the genuine in order to easily identify the counterfeit.

Guard What You Believe

Paul charged Timothy to guard the truth (2 Timothy 1:13). Only through the power of the Holy Spirit could Timothy "hold fast" to sound doctrine. Why was it important for Timothy to guard his beliefs? Why is it important for us to guard our doctrine?

Timothy's world was one of growing greed and guile. Timothy's church was also plagued with doctrinal problems.

Young, zealous Christians, discouraged Christians, ungrounded Christians—these individuals live in tornado alley. Unless we compassionately teach them to dig deep and discern, they will be blown away.

(Two men, Hymenaeus and Philetus, were leading believers astray.) The world situation was coursed on a downward spiral. Paul warned Timothy of the perilous and troublesome end times (2 Timothy 3:1).

Almost 2,000 years later, we can identify with all three of Paul's claims.

Paul gave Timothy specific instructions to help him guard what he believed. He advised Timothy to **stay away from quarreling and arguments**. Nothing does more to discourage Christians and distance the unsaved than quarreling within the church. Paul said this godless chatter would lead to ungodliness.

Evaluate your local WAC meetings. Are most arguable items issues of the faith or simply godless chatter? Timothy was not to argue, and he was to stay away from those who did.

Paul also commanded Timothy to rightly divide or **correctly handle the word of truth**. This was so important in light of the coming end times when people would have a form of godliness but deny its power.

This "holiness in the half shell" would be served up in homes and congregations. Timothy could expose these indulgences by defending and clinging to the truth.

We are now viewing this list of sins in stereo and technicolor. Are we handling the word of

truth correctly? Is our Bible a weapon for defense or a collector for dust?

Thirdly, Paul advised Timothy to **flee immorality and pursue righteousness**. Timothy's lifestyle was to be above reproach. In the sex-crazed culture of the Greek world, Timothy was to flee—run away from—youthful lusts. In our sex-crazed culture, we must do the same. Turn off the television; skip over magazine articles; close the pages of steamy, questionable novels; walk a narrow path through the world wide web.

If the devil can gain a lusty foothold, he will begin to tear

Some Helpful Books

Beyond Reasonable Doubt, by Robert J. Morgan. ETA—explores proofs of the claims of Christ and the Bible.

Mere Christianity by C. S. Lewis—a classic; one atheist's journey toward belief

Another Gospel: Alternative Religions and the New Age Movement by Ruth A. Tucker. Zondervan Publishing House—a helpful resource for information concerning beliefs. Gives thoughtful ways to approach individuals.

More than a Carpenter and Evidence That Demands a Verdict by Josh McDowell. Tyndale House Publishers—these books give defense for Christianity.

away at our doctrine. Guarding our doctrine keeps us from sinful passion. Keeping our life pure helps guard our beliefs.

It is not enough to merely flee ungodliness. We must also pursue righteousness. We must live holy lives. Holiness cannot be defined through a dress code or a WWJD fashion fad. It is an attitude. Paul said it best in Philippians chapter 2. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ. . . . "When we seek the mind of Christ, we will begin to exemplify His holiness.

Share What You Believe

Paul told Timothy, "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2).

Timothy was to **reproduce true teaching through discipleship**. Young, zealous Christians, discouraged Christians, ungrounded Christians—these individuals live in tornado alley. Unless we compassionately teach them to dig deep and discern, they will be blown away.

Paul told Timothy to "do the work of an evangelist" (2 Timothy 4:5). Timothy was to **share with the unsaved**. Judging from Paul's admonitions in chapter one, evangelism may not have been Timothy's spiritual gift. Still Timothy was to share. We as women have been commissioned to go into all the world and preach the gospel.

Because of our lifestyle and moral values, Christians are often perceived as have-it-all-together individuals. How sad that many times, the people of the world are clueless to the Source of all we are!

Peter urged us to "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you the reason for the hope that is in you. . ." (1

Peter 3:15).

Some underground cellars and basements are hidden or undetected. A neighbor or a passerby might never know a refuge is available—unless we share. We need to speak the name of Christ.

Paul also urged Timothy to **practice consistent, balanced Christianity**—"be instant in season, out of season." Going off the deep end or going to seed on an issue is an invitation for a storm. It's also sends out a red flag to those we are seeking to win to Christ.

Rebuilding and Restoration

As in nature, spiritual storms roar when the prince of the power of the air sends his mighty winds. Underground refuge is available for those who have laid their foundation of faith in Jesus Christ and are rooted and built up in Him. But what of those who become caught up and are carried away? Is there a rescue? What can we do?

First we must **express genuine concern** for these individuals. Missiologist Ruth Tucker says, "In attempting to understand (the cults) it is imperative that we get to know adherents of these movements as individuals—as people. If we perceive them only as nameless faces who are part of a movement or organization, we have failed to take the first and necessary step of reaching out to them in a meaningful way."**

In almost every case, individuals become involved in a cult because someone cared enough to visit, to meet a need or to help. Can we who own the truth care any less?

Just as sinners can be "loved into the kingdom," those who have strayed away from the truth can be "loved back into the kingdom." When people are

caught up in false doctrine, arguing or belittling their beliefs does no good. Generally, this only strengthens their resolve and sucks them farther into the storm. Condemnation is not the way. Consideration is.

Restoration, like salvation, is dependent upon **the Word**. "For the Word of God is quick and powerful . . . and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (1 Timothy 3:16).

However, bombarding individuals with a multitude of memorized quotes or a list of Scripture references may not be the best idea.

A better approach is to ask a few pointed questions that include Scripture. (Example: If the Bible says in Romans 5:13 that the free gift of grace came through one man, Jesus Christ, is there any need for another Messiah?) Whet their appetite for the salty truth, then spoon-feed the Word to them, one bite at a time.

Restoration is a spiritual work. Therefore, we must use spiritual means. **Prayer** is the most effective tool we can use both in the wake of the storm and in the aftermath. "The fervent, effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:15).❖



Sarah Fletcher lives in Antioch, TN. She is a member of Donelson Free Will Baptist Fellowship where she teaches a Sunday school class.

*Survey information gleaned from a Moody radio interview with Ravi Zacharias, aired March 1998. No other information available.

**Ruth Tucker's quote comes from the Introduction (page 11) of her book, *Another Gospel*. See list on previous page.

Refreshing Breeze or Destructive Wind

Do you know the core beliefs of the Christian faith? Use the following check list to help you identify truth from false doctrine.

1. We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.
2. We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
3. We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.
4. We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful man, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential.
5. We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.
6. We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.
7. We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.



APRIL PROGRAM

WHO, ME? A PIONEER?

MARCIA ELLISON

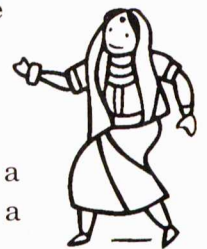
Her name was Crecia, and her name was Mildred. They were the two most important women in my life, other than my mother and sister back then. They were my teachers at church—my launching pad into distant space.

At times, I thought they were absolutely too demanding. After all, did they forget I went to school all week, and that I had a job after school? Not to worry! They had determined to educate; to force into my memory the names and contents of the sixty-six books of the Bible. Their goal, to teach who wrote those books, to drill me until I became so well-acquainted with those books until I could find verses in a flash about faith, trust, redemption, salvation, and international mis-

sions. If they were to be successful, I was not to miss a class, not a single class. That meant I had to literally run from high school to church on Tuesday afternoons!

Now and again, as a reward, I got a National Audubon Society card with a bird's picture and information about that bird on the back. Now and again, I went to their homes for fellowship. Those two women memorized, fed and fellowshipped me to death! They addicted me to studying the Scriptures, yes; but even more so they planted within me the desire to share what I learned with those who had not heard.

In 1982, my only daughter, Malinda, was attending a private school in an atheistic country in South America. In a Social Studies



class, the professor asked if anyone had a Bible, and she alone raised her hand.

No one else had one to bring to the next class, so she volunteered to bring enough for everyone, as there were "lots of them at our house. She did.

The next day, the question was "does anyone know how many books there are in the Bible?" She alone answered, "Sixty-six." She was then asked to recite them. She did, not missing a single one. Crecia and Mildred, you reached beyond.

No room for failure. No room for excuses. It was just like the military! Deadlines to meet; and bizillions of verses to memorize. They always had an air of urgency about them. Why did I keep going back Sunday after Sunday, Tuesday afternoon after Tuesday afternoon? Because they had convinced me that believers had a job to do, and it was a job that required lots of preparation.

Mildred believed that object lessons was the way to go. Crecia believed, as she was a public school teacher, that organization was the way to go.

I survived them both. I don't know how, but I did!

Years later, on the Sunday that Free Will Baptist Bible College choir visited and sang, Mildred and Crecia cornered me on the front stairs outside the church.

They wanted to know if I were going to FWBBC that fall to enroll. This time I KNEW they had gone stark-raving mad. ME go to FWBBC! No way! I had no way of going. I asked them (just as a measure to see if they were serious in their questioning), "And, does one of you want to tell me just HOW I am supposed to go?"

They did not lose a beat. "Well, how have you lived up until now? By faith! By faith, you will go to FWBBC. We're going to stand behind you and help you through prayers and there

are many in the church who will help, too."

They belonged to the WNAC, you know. They meant business even though they did not mention all the years of hard work they had invested in me. It was as if this were the most natural thing in the world for me to do at this time.

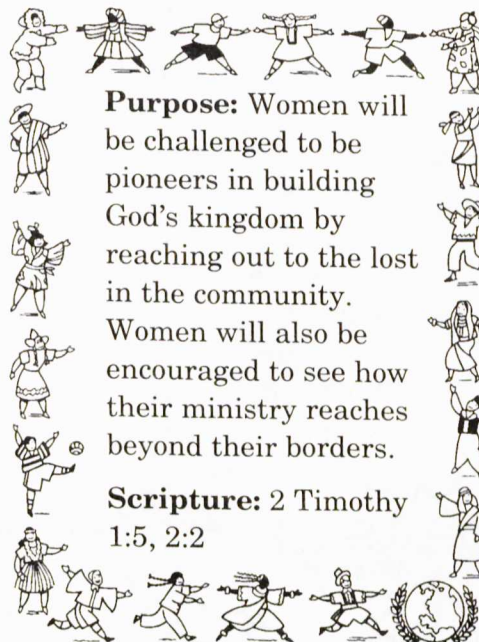
I went. I went by faith, just like "Creeshee and Mogie" had directed.

I left Nashville in 1964 with my husband and two young sons, and settled, after language school, in a little frontier town, Sant'Ana do Livramento, in the southernmost state of Brazil.

Thirteen years later, we were preparing to leave for furlough. A neighbor girl, Thaís, who lived across the street came daily to watch us close out/pack up/prepare to leave. She stood in the doorway of whatever room I was in.

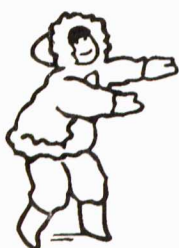
She seemed to think that if she stood there long enough, and wept long enough, this would have some bearing on changing my mind to stay.

I was her Creeshee and Mogie. I had given her what I had to give. I had



Purpose: Women will be challenged to be pioneers in building God's kingdom by reaching out to the lost in the community. Women will also be encouraged to see how their ministry reaches beyond their borders.

Scripture: 2 Timothy 1:5, 2:2



watched her curiosity grow and be satisfied over the years, as she learned and applied what I had received from Creeshee and Mogie.

More than just that, I had the help of my children, as well. Thaís had a sister and a brother. If either of them ever missed a service they would appear early Monday a.m., on the front sidewalk. My children would join them to review what they had missed in Sunday school the previous day. One of mine would get them "caught up."



Over the years, Thaís has grown into an adult. She is married to a Christian, Gerson, and is the mother of a little boy and a one-year-old daughter. She and her family minister in the church we began in Sant'Ana in 1968. She is a pianist and a public school teacher. She is also personal assistant to the vice-mayor of the city.



Where once only spiritism and teachings foreign to the Holy Scriptures abounded, there is now a Christian witness in a little town, far away, at the other end of the world, partly because



two women named Crecia and Mildred decided to equip me to be a pioneer. I ventured into a distant space frontier long ago, and left footprints. Thaís followed those prints, and is now making her own for those who come behind her.

Just a few days ago, a package came for my birthday with a photo of Thaís' little daughter on her first birthday, a box of chocolate candies, some lipstick and a card which states,

Happy Birthday. We desire from our hearts the best that God has for you. We will love you forever. You left profound imprints of the love of Jesus in our lives. A thousand big kisses, Thaís, Gerson, Asafe and Kendali.

Let me encourage you to join those of us who have ventured out, who have made the choice, and who have no regrets. ❖



Marcia Ellison and her husband Walter served as missionaries in Brazil and Uruguay for 34 years. They currently live in Nashville, Tennessee, and Marcia teaches high school.





Springboard:

Innovative Ideas for WNAC Officers

Coordinator/Assistant Coordinator

Promote the Laura Belle Barnard Offering for World Missions throughout your church. This year's Pre-Easter Week of Prayer for World Missions falls on March 29–April 2. Your group may decide to meet 15 or 30 minutes each day at lunch time or in the evenings. Ask those who cannot attend to sign up to pray over the phone with a partner each day. The Assistant Coordinator can match the partners. Each pair can decide when to call each other to pray over the phone for the requests on the prayer calendar printed on pages 29–30.

Secretary/Treasurer

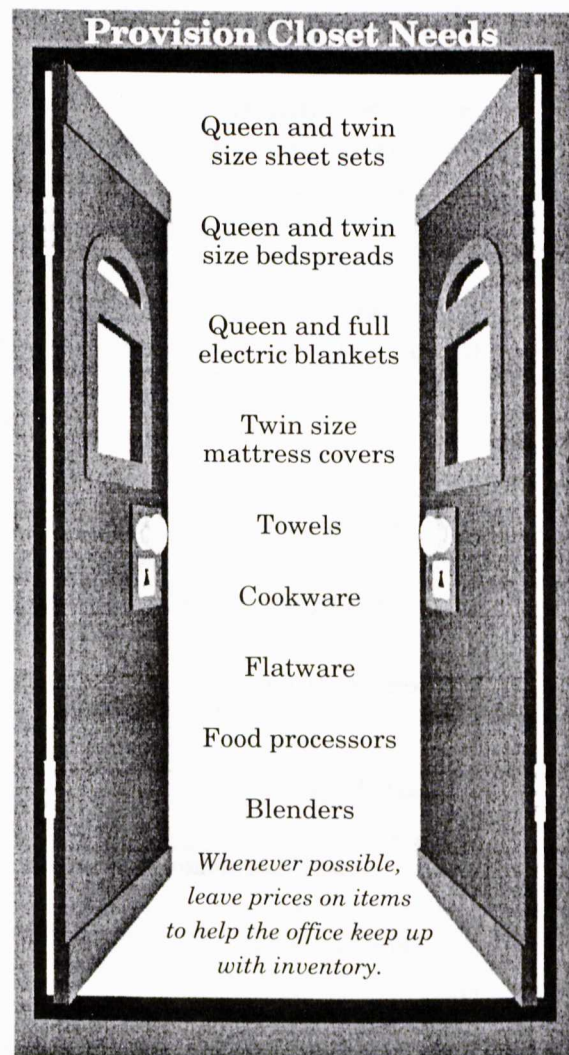
As the new millinim approaches, many people will be recapping the past several years. 1999 is a good time to compile a report of what your group has done in the past 5 or 10 years. A long-term perspective will encourage your women when they see how the work and giving adds up over the years. Your report may include money given to WNAC, missions, children's homes; also, non-cash gifts, time donated to service projects and pies baked, etc. Be creative. The purpose of this report is to thank those who have helped, to encourage your members and challenge them to do greater things during the next 5 or 10 years.

Missions Chairman

Foreign Missions has a prayer request hotline which can be accessed by phone or e-mail. See page 18 for the address and phone number.

Those who have access to the internet will want to visit the National Association of Free Will Baptist's homepage. Several departments already have web pages. If you click on "Home Missions" and then on the "What's New" icon, you will get prayer requests which are updated weekly.

The missionary work in Mexico also marks its presence on the world wide web with a new homepage. Their address is "mexicofwb.org".



Prayer Chairman

Your Coordinator should receive a Pre-Easter Week of Prayer resource packet. Get together with the Coordinator and the Missions Chairman to plan this special time in the year when WNAC promotes Foreign Missions. WNAC plays a vital role in educating, giving, praying and motivating people to serve on foreign mission fields.

Be sure to check the Missions Hotline just before the week of March 29. Prayer requests are updated every Wednesday.

Study Chairman

This issue contains a book review of *When God Weeps* on page 22. Ask your WAC to order the book for your church library.

Books that can be used for missions studies are hard to find. Check out these two books: *Unveiled at Last* (YWAM Publishing, Seattle, WA) and *Run with the Vision* (Bethany House Publishers, Minneapolis, MN). Watch for reviews of these books in future issues of *CoLaborer*.

Service Chairman

Service is perhaps the main way to reach the unchurched today. Your city may be full of church buildings, but do the people inside the buildings really care? We want to reach the lost; but quite often, we will not have permission to meet a spiritual need until we have met other felt needs—such as the need for friendship. How can your group be a friend to the friendless?❖

Bible Study

God's Missionary Heart in the Old Testament

Each passage in this study includes thought questions and suggested answers. These questions may be used to help you study on your own. These notes may also be used to help you prepare a devotion to give at a WAC meeting or during the Pre-Easter Week of Prayer for World Missions.

Genesis 12:1–3

Q: How does God's Covenant

WNAC Local Delegate Credentials

This certifies that _____ is an authorized delegate

to the WNAC Convention of Free Will Baptists from the _____
(Group Name)

women's group of _____ Free Will Baptist Church,
(Church Name)

(Church Address)

Signed _____
(Local Coordinator)

or _____
(Local Secretary)

Date _____

Important: This form properly signed and accompanied by a \$5 registration fee entitles a local delegate to register for voting privileges in the WNAC convention. Only one delegate allowed per church.

Clip and attach to Convention Pre-Registration in the next *CoLaborer* issue or bring to the WNAC Convention.

with Abraham affect all nations?

A: All nations will be blessed through Israel.

Psalm 67

Q: Why does God bless His people?

A: So God's people will be a blessing to the ends of the earth.

Ecclesiastes 3:11, 14

Q: What do these verses say about God's desire for mankind?

A: He desires that men will fear Him.

Isaiah 66:18–23

Q: What does this passage say about God's plan for the nations?

A: That all nations will worship Him.

Jeremiah 16:19–21

Q: Why will the nations go to Jerusalem?

A: So the nations will turn from their false gods and know that God is the Lord.

Digging deeper: The Old Testament contains many more passages that refer to God's plan for the nations of the world. With a concordance, find some more passages on your own and meditate on how these verses relate to world evangelism today.

blinded by the Son

by Judy Delong

As I stared out my window for some time at the beautiful sunshine, I basked in its warmth, and sat for some time in its comfort. Then I turned away from the sun. Suddenly, I stopped. I could not focus clearly as I had gazed at the sun and its brightness too long. Slowly the sun spots left and I was able to see clearly again.

I thought, how wonderful to be Son-blinded by One who is brighter than the sun that warms our earthly days. If only I could get to the place where I could look at Him long enough that all I see is He, how my daily existence would change. If I would allow His light to shine into my life, it would blind me to a lot of things the world puts in my way.

Sometimes when I steal away to be alone with Him, I feel warmth of His presence and His light shines way down inside my soul. But, too soon, my quiet time with Him is over and I turn back to the reality of daily existence upon the earth. Though my thoughts stay upon Him for a time, as the sun spots stayed before my eyes, too quickly the world comes back into focus.

If I can discipline myself to spend more time looking at the Son, basking in His glory, maybe the world will be less evident to me and will become less important—until all I can see is Jesus. ❖

Judy Delong lives in Hager Hill, Kentucky. She is a member of Tom's Creek Free Will Baptist Church in Nippa.

MK Provision Closet



The Provision Closet at WNAC has designated some space to store school supplies and other items that missionary kids can use. MK Ministries Coordinator, Tanya Harts, explains that there is a need for items for older (teenage) MKs especially. As needs vary, check with Tanya Hart or WNAC for current needs.

Suggested items:

- ♦ Walkman cassette players
- ♦ Christian music on CD or cassette
- ♦ Backpacks

Lucy & Marge

Lucy: Why, Marge? Why? I just don't understand.

Marge: I suppose you mean what's happened to Peggy's family.

Lucy: That and a whole lot more. I'll just say it right out. How could God allow this to happen? This family is a good Christian family. You know how much they've contributed to our church.

Marge: But, Lucy, we don't know what's in their hearts. We don't even know what goes on in their home.

Lucy: Oh, now I suppose you are going to tell me that they are being punished for some secret sin we don't know about.

Marge: No, not really, Lucy. I don't understand anymore than you do.

Lucy: If God is a good, loving father, then how can He make Peggy and those beautiful children suffer the way they've suffered?

Marge: I don't know, Lucy. I only meant to say that perhaps God wants them to learn something—

Lucy: Oh, yeah. So He hits them over the head with a two by four. I can understand if He did that to hard headed old me.

Marge: Oh, Lucy, don't down yourself.

Lucy: I'm not, Marge. You know me.

Marge: Yes, I know you, and I know me. The truth is none of us deserve God's mercy and grace.

Lucy: I know that. What I can't understand is why some of us are so blessed and some of us have to suffer all kinds of calamities.

Marge: We don't know all the answers, Lucy, but we do know God. Remember Romans 8:28. We don't always know how He is working things together.

Lucy: Yes, and I remember Jeremiah 29:11. His plans are always for our good.

Marge: He doesn't see as we see.

Lucy: Oh, I know. I just wish that sometimes He would give me a little glimpse of what He is doing. Not that I want to know everything or see the whole future or—

Marge: Oh, Lucy, if we knew even a fraction of what God knows, we'd be overwhelmed.

Lucy: But wouldn't it be kinda fun to know if Widow Maxon is going to talk Mr. Whitson into marrying her and whether Esther's cake will win first place again this year, and—

Marge: Oh, Lucy, Lucy. What ideas you have sometimes.

Lucy: Just kidding, Marge. I've seen enough of God's workings to know He is a loving, merciful God.

Marge: And He has given us enough instructions so that we know what we ought to do.

Lucy: That reminds me. We'd better get busy. Isn't our WAC meeting _____? We should find out what we can do to help Peggy's family.

Marge: Possibly they need help with finances.

Lucy: Maybe we could provide meals for awhile.

Marge: Let's see if she needs help getting the children to school and to their activities.

Lucy: Isn't it great to know that our women's group is always ready to help any way they can?

Marge: It sure is. We'll find out what they need and our women will jump at the chance to do something for them.

Lucy: Maybe God is giving us a chance to show that we really mean business.

Marge: At least it's an opportunity for service.

Lucy: Let's pay Peggy a visit. I know she'll appreciate seeing someone from the women's group.

Marge: We can assure her of our prayers. Doing something about the situation almost makes you forget about all those questions, doesn't it, Lucy?

Lucy: Yeah, but I'd still like to know if Widow Maxon is going to talk that old man Whitson into—

Marge: Oh, Lucy, come on. Let's go. ❖

Mary R. Wisheart lives in Nashville, Tennessee, and is a member of Cofer's Chapel FWB Church. She served as Executive Secretary-Treasurer of WNAC for 13 years.



COMMUNICATOR

by MARJORIE WORKMAN

Thou Art Worthy

"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;" It is impossible to comprehend exactly what this choir of voices will sound like. However, having just recently been in a worship service where Korean, Russian and American voices sang *How Great Thou Art*, makes it possible at least to imagine how it might sound.

God's love for mankind is beyond my finite mind, but I'm so glad he loves me. The bottom line of Christianity is to be a blessing to others. Women Nationally Active for Christ has always been interested in missions. We pray, we give, we encourage, but are we really involved? Or have we compartmentalized missions? By that I mean, do we react by doing something for missions only when we hear a missionary make a plea? Do we pray for missions only when a time is set to pray such as our pre-Easter week of prayer? Do we give only when a special project is promoted?

Once these special emphases have passed, do we return to our daily routine of just living our lives as though we have done our part until the next scheduled time comes around again? What really is our heartbeat? Do we care about people who are different than we? Have we heard the words of the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20 so many times that we are unmoved by the command? I have just come from a leadership conference that challenged us to be missionaries seriously and not just "talk the talk."

We pray for our missions works, and this is good. But that's not enough. We are to take part in reaching the globe for Christ. We have neighbors, friends, family, associates. Are we praying and working toward pointing them to Christ?

As you pray during this pre-Easter week of prayer for our foreign missionaries and support staff, pray for your personal involvement in world missions. The Laura Belle Barnard World Missions Offering for Foreign Missions will be received in our churches on April 25, 1999. Our women's groups are encouraged to give during their pre-Easter week of prayer.

Accepting the Challenge

One group has accepted the challenge to help raise \$32,000.00 for the organ fund at Free Will Baptist Bible College in honor of WNAC Executive Secretary-Treasurer retiree Dr. Mary Ruth Wisheart. Tennessee Women Active for Christ adopted the organ fund as their state project for 1999. Other groups and individuals are invited to join the Tennessee women in supporting this project. Be sure to earmark your gift "organ fund."

Plan to be There

Now is the time to start making plans to attend the Women Nationally Active for Christ National Convention in Atlanta, Georgia, July 19-20, 1999. For those who work, schedule your time off now, don't wait until the last minute or until another employee books the time.

Plan ahead financially for the convention by pre-registering and getting fellowship dinner tickets early. The WNAC banquet has limited space, so don't miss out by waiting too late.❖

Women In Action

Korean Free Will Baptist Pastors visit Provision Closet



Dr. John Joo (foreground) and Dr. James Kim



Dr. Paul Park

Seven Korean pastors are planting FWB churches among Koreans in the United States.

WNAC Executive Secretary-Treasurer Marjorie Workman welcomes Dr. Esther Chang and presents her with a WNAC pin.

She and her husband Dr. John Chang joined Free Will Baptist Foreign Missions in December 1998.

The Changs are key leaders in the future of FWB's in Korea.





Poet's Corner

Lift Him Up

by Bess Trammel, Harrison, MI

In the turmoil of this life,
Where desolations soar,
Lift Him high before the world,
The Truth, the Life, the Door.
Lift Him up, O saints of God,
That the lost may see,
Jesus, high and lifted up,
Will from this world set free.

In the kingdom of our God,
Where paeans of praise resound,
Where from around the throne of God,
The river of life is found.
Lift Him up, O saints of God,
That all may look and see,
Jesus, high and lifted up,
Has from this world set free.

—John 3:14–15

Dear WNAC,

Thanks so much for the Christmas package that arrived today. We will enjoy using the art and school supplies provided by the ladies.

Our Christmas play was a great success with 130 attending. We gave gifts to everybody who came, and many of the gifts had been sent to us by auxiliary ladies to share with our church folks.

The people really appreciate your kindness in giving!

*Rachel, Becky, Steve and Tim
Lloyd*

MK's in Madison, Wisconsin

Dear WNAC,

Thank you for printing the article about our Geneva Collins (July-August 1998). It blessed us to share her life and her love for Jesus with others. Thank you for helping us do that.

*The women at Bethel Free Will
Baptist Church
El Dorado Springs, Missouri*

Attention WNAC women

Have you received an afghan depicting the history of the Free Will Baptist denomination? Clip this coupon, and make a \$100 contribution to Home Missions, and an afghan will be shipped to you within 5–6 weeks.

Send to: WNAC, P.O. Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37011-5002

Name of local women's group _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____



ON THE SHELF

When God Weeps

*Joni Eareckson Tada
and
Steven Estes*

*Reviewed by
Mary R. Wisehart*

*Zondervan Publishing House
Grand Rapids, Michigan 1997
U. S. \$19.99/Canada \$27.99*

Why? Why does my baby suffer? Why am I in this mess? Does life make sense? Is God really good? Does He care?

If you or someone you know asks these questions, then this book is for you. Rest assured, you are reading after those who have faced those hard questions. After decades of sitting in a wheelchair, almost completely para-

lyzed, Joni can understand the pain and those who ask why. Steven Estes started helping her in 1969, and their friendship continues.

The writers do not assume they have all the answers. Yet from the Word of God they point us to one who feels our pain and cares. We may never know the answers to all our questions, but we can know God.

Section One of the book, "Who Is This God?" can open your eyes for a different look at the God you thought you knew.

Does God have a reason for suffering? Chapter 8 asks the question, "Should we suffer?" The answer is Jesus suffered, and "A student is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master."

"We open our Bibles and find that God has his reasons for allowing suffering, not just in the larger realm, but in the life of the individual. Learning some of these reasons can make all the difference in the world."

With these words, the writers invite the reader to join them in a search for Biblical reasons. You will find some certainly, but before the chap-

ter ends, Joni writes, "When your heart is wrung out like a sponge, an orderly list of 'sixteen good biblical reasons as to why this is happening' can sting like salt in a wound." What must be done? Like the Father, we can do no more than give ourselves. "God, like a father, doesn't just give advice. He gives himself."

What about hell in this question of suffering? Estes deals with it in Chapter Twelve, "Suffering Gone Malignant." He writes, "For God to be God, for heaven to be heaven, there must be a hell."

If that sounds rather depressing, cheer up. Joni follows it with a chapter on heaven, the last chapter in the book, "Suffering Gone."

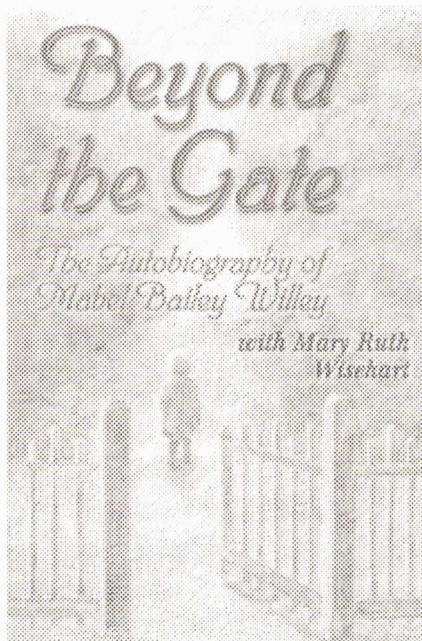
The writers include an Epilogue, with a prayer for the unsaved who may have been touched by the book.

Three appendices include scriptures on God's hand and purpose in our suffering and on the question: Can God experience grief? I was especially glad to find not just scripture references, but the actual text printed there.❖

*This book may be ordered from
Randall Bookstore by calling
1-800-877-7030.*

Mud and Stars

From *Beyond the Gate: The Autobiography of Mabel Bailey Willey* with Mary Ruth Wisheart



From there [Cristóbal, Panama] we moved to El Valle to a mud hut that had only a thatched roof and dirt floors.

One day Thomas had gone to visit the Indians. He often left me and the children alone in the mud hut. Indians were around, examining us curiously, but we couldn't speak to them because we didn't know the language. That evening the children came in and I saw they were covered all over with little brown in-

sects. I hadn't had any experience with ticks before, but I knew that they had to come off the children. As hard as I tried, I couldn't seem to get them loose. I cried and the children cried. I finally thought of using kerosene. I guess it killed the ticks because they came off. I bathed the children through my tears that evening and put them to bed.

After they were in bed asleep, I ran outside. I was overcome with emotion. I sat down on an old stump and complained to the Lord, "Lord, all I ever wanted was a beautiful home. Is this my beautiful home? This mud hut with a thatched roof and creatures falling from the ceiling? And what about my children? Can I bear this for them?" I knelt down by the stump and continued weeping and praying.

Then it seemed that my Lord spoke to me. He asked, "Can you not live in this mud hut for me? Remember what I have done for you."

My heart was stirred. I did remember His love and His care for me. I remember my vows to Him.

"Yes, Lord," I prayed, "I can live in this mud hut for you. I give my desire for a beautiful home, my children, my husband—all of us—to you. Do with me what you will."

Suddenly, peace surrounded me. I rose from my knees, and that mud hut might have been a mansion since my Lord had placed me there. It looked altogether different to my eyes. I saw what could be done to make it a home.

I thought of the verse, "Two men looked through prison bars. One saw mud, the other saw stars." God had showed me the stars. ♦

This excerpt is taken from Chapter Eleven of Beyond the Gate. Used by permission. Copyright © 1998. Randall House Publications, Nashville, Tennessee.



And I will give them a heart to know me,
that I am the Lord. —Jeremiah 24:7a

RESERVATION FORM

Free Will Baptist WNAC National Retreat

September 24–26, 1999

Glorieta Conference Center, Glorieta, New Mexico

ACCOMMODATIONS

(per person for 2 nights plus 5 meals, including program fee):

Please indicate the # of rooms requested:

CHAPARRAL INN (hotel): Large room with private bath, two queen-size beds

- ☐ 1 per room: \$204.00
☐ 2 per room: \$144.00
☐ 3 per room: \$130.00
☐ 4 per room: \$120.00

THUNDERBIRD (motel): Large room with private bath, two queen-size beds

- ☐ 1 per room: \$178.00
☐ 2 per room: \$130.00
☐ 3 per room: \$120.00
☐ 4 per room: \$112.00

FIRST CLASS (hotel): Standard size room with private bath, two beds

- ☐ 1 per room: \$164.00
☐ 2 per room: \$128.00
☐ 3 per room: \$114.00

HOW TO PAY: Enclose deposit of \$40.00 per person. Reservations will not be processed without deposit. Deposit will be credited to your account at check-in.

SEND TO: Glorieta Conference Center, Box 8, Glorieta, NM 87535. Fax. (505) 757-6149 Tel. (800) 797-4222

NO REFUNDS after August 20, 1999.

DAYTIME ONLY Participants: \$40.50 per adult plus meal costs. Breakfast: \$4.75; Lunch or dinner: \$7.75.

We accept personal checks, Visa, MC, and Discover cards. If using a credit card, please complete the following information (credit card users may FAX or phone in reservations):

☐ Visa ☐ Master Card ☐ Discover Signature: _____
Cardholder's Name (print clearly): _____
Card Acct #: _____ Exp. Date: _____

Please list all names and addresses of those staying in your room. (Make additional copies if needed):

Your Name: _____

Group/Church Name (if applicable): _____

Home Telephone: _____

Work Telephone: _____

Address: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Special Needs: ☐ Disabled access ☐ First floor required

GROUP RESERVATIONS:

Total number of rooms needed _____

Number of persons in group _____

Attach list of participants, grouped by roommates. Indicate special needs for each room (disabled access; first floor required). Group should plan to pay with one check, if possible; if not, please notify Glorieta in advance.

If planning to arrive or depart early, please indicate below:

Arrival date: _____ First meal: _____

Departure date: _____ Last meal: _____

Use of Glorieta for this conference does not imply alignment with or endorsement by the Southern Baptists.

Life!Action

a column for teens



the proper perspective

Ashley Miller

The awesome task of being in the world but not of the world requires proper perspective. Our eyes must be on Jesus, and not on worldly riches. Jesus is the author of our faith.

Hebrews 12:1-3 tells us to let go of everything that hinders and the sins that tempt us. We are to run with perseverance considering the opposition Jesus endured from sinful men, so that we will not grow weary and give up. We must not quit!

Galatians 6:9 also tells us not to become weary in doing good. "Keep in step with the Spirit" says Galatians 5:25. We are always better off if we walk towards the light of God and away from sinful deeds.

Many teens wear the WWJD bracelets. These initials stand for "What would Jesus do?" or "Walk with Jesus daily!" That means all things in life, big and small.

For six years I knew nothing but how to lie, cheat and steal. I did not know who Christ was. I grew up with a mom who didn't care if I went to school or ate or even got up in the morning. She didn't realize how hurt and upset she made me and my sister feel. I felt unloved for a long time.

Then, I went to live with my aunt Wilma. She took care of me until my dad got a home for us. I then started to school without knowing how to do anything except what was wrong.

I was failing in school up to fourth grade and I didn't know

what Christ had done for me. I was confused and unhappy. That year, a stepmom came into my life. For the next three years, I still did a lot of bad things as had been my practice for so long.

At the beginning of eighth grade I came to know Christ through YUG (Youth Under God). I wouldn't have been there if a friend had not begged me to go. Later, I found Blue Bell Free Will Baptist Church. I went to church camp with the youth of the church and Dixie Tucker took me to Vacation Bible School. Both camp and VBS inspired my life. Today, I am growing in the Spirit and in truth.

I have come a long way and still have a long way to go and so much to learn. A lot of this is through the love and discipline of my mom Tammy and my dad Larry.

Now, I am totally dedicated to God and His work. I have a good family and a church home. I do not lie any more and because of God's grace I have not been as bad as I was for a long time.

I am thankful for those who were here when I needed them and when I needed to pray about something.

My advice to anyone who has had problems is to keep looking for God. And if you've already found Him, keep looking towards Him. That is the proper perspective of life.❖



Ashley Miller is a Sophomore in Kellyville, Oklahoma. She is a member of Blue Bell FWB Actionettes in Sapulpa.



A CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM

A true missionary story
from Belo Horizonte, Brazil
Vicki Sturgill

One day Paula stepped into the van to ride to church. Before long, this seven-year-old girl stepped into our hearts.

Several weeks later, her mother asked if adults could ride the van to church. "Yes, of course," we answered. As a result, Regina (Paula's mother) met the Savior on Mother's Day.

Regina's father died when she was very young and her mother left her on a farm with her grandparents while she went to the city to find work. During a land reform, the grandparents lost the farm and went to live with a son who bluntly told his parents they could come, but he had no room for Regina.

Under much pressure, Regina's mother took her in. At age 12 Regina went to work as

a maid. Her mother remarried. The new husband said Regina could not live with them. Through the mother's insistence, Regina was allowed only to sleep in the home. She was not permitted to eat meals or share in family conversation.

Returning from work one day, Regina found the house locked. A neighbor handed her a key to the house. Inside she found only her bed, wardrobe and a note saying her mother had moved. The note did not give her mother's new address. Regina went to live with the family she worked for.

Later she met and married Paul. Today they have a lovely home and two children, Paula and Bruno.

Regina's surrogate family treated her as their own child. However, she never got to go to

school. So, when she first started coming to church, she couldn't read. Her Bible became her textbook and she learned to read. Regina is an honest, loving and generous person. Having forgiven her mother, she often helps her financially. She possesses amazing dignity and puts a touch of beauty in all she does.

Shortly after Regina's conversion, Paul lost his job. He had been director of food services for an international construction company that worked extensively in Iraq. During the Gulf War, the company went bankrupt. Paula asked the church to pray that God would supply their needs and God did. Paul opened his own business selling homemade hors d'oeuvres. The business supported the family.

One day Paula said, "Daddy, at church we asked God to supply our needs and He has. Now we are going to ask God to give you a job." God did. Just before Paul got his first pay check, Paula took him by the hand, led him to sit on her bed. "Daddy, we have to talk," she declared matter-of-factly. "Remember how God supplied our needs when the church prayed? Then God gave you a job when the church prayed. Now, don't you think you should tithe?" He did and still does.

Paula trusted God. She taught all the church family what it means to believe that God answers prayer. She learned early to give prayer requests in the Wednesday night prayer meetings and wait for God's answer. Everyone's faith grows as children—adults too—make their requests and see God answer.

God wants us to ask for those things we need. Do we trust Him to supply our needs? Paula did, and she gives thanks for His answers. ❖



Vicki Sturgill and her husband Jim have served as missionaries to Brazil since 1970. This piece was part of a Vacation Bible School curriculum she developed using stories about different children in the church where they are currently working.

Come to the mountains of New Mexico

1999

WNAC Retreat at Glorieta

September 24-26, 1999

See the registration form on page 24.

Mission Alert

Evangelism News from Around the World



Bondoukou, Côte d'Ivoire

On December 5, 1998, missionaries Ernest and Elaine Holland went to the village of Yerekai for Elaine to teach a health class. When they arrived, they learned that several surrounding villages had been invited, so the meeting was held in the market place. Elaine's health class became an evangelistic campaign as many non-Christians from the village came to listen. Pray for those who heard the Word of God for the first time during this meeting.

Parita, Panama

Missionaries Stan and Brenda Bunch are currently on stateside assignment in Missouri. They request prayer for Uriel Valesquez, the new pastor at the Parita church.

Campinas, Brazil

Missionaries Jim and Karen Cowart are rejoicing at the ten people who were saved in 1998 through the ministry of the Ipiranga church. After adding

two rooms, they are still in desperate need of more space in order to continue growing. New visitors come every service!

Sonapurhat, India

Missionary Carlisle Hanna writes, "Some fifty people were to be baptized last week (December 1998). We see very few people turn to Christ from Islam, but these include new believers from among them. Persecution does follow. Thank you for praying for His enabling for all." He adds that many people in the Sonapurhat area lost their homes and crops and means of income during the floods from June to September last year.

Brother Hanna returned to India on December 10, 1998.

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Faith Free Will Baptist Church had their first service on December 6, 1998 at the Sheraton Motel conference room. The Terry Hardison family including two preacher sons-in-law settled in the Milwaukee area to start a church.

Sierra Vista, Arizona

Tentmaker missionary Jerry Rayburn writes that during Oc-

tober (1998) the church in Sierra Vista celebrated their third anniversary. Twenty-eight people attended the service.

Davenport, Iowa

Missionary Cliff Donoho reports that in 1998 at least 24 people prayed the sinner's prayer as a result of their ministry. Eighteen people joined the church in just one month and seven were baptized on one Sunday alone. The church is bursting at the seams, with chairs lined up across the back and up and down the aisles.

Though the church is growing, they are not quite ready to go completely self-supporting. The Donohos still need financial support and prayers as they labor in Davenport. "I think we are 'scratching the surface' of what God wants to do through Free Will Baptists here in the Quad Cities," writes Donoho.

Weslaco, Mexico

The Munsey family have many reasons to be thankful. Rachel made a remarkable recovery from her kidney transplant. Her own father, James, was the donor and he is back to normal.

One of Rachel's doctors in Galveston promised to attend the church in Weslaco when he is in the valley. Pray for the doctor and for Mitzi and Rachel as they witness to him. ♦

Pray for Kevin Stacy and Charity VanWinkle who are teaching English to an unreached people group overseas. Ask God to help them learn the customs and language of the people with whom they are working. Pray also for affiliates who are teaching English in China and Mongolia. Pray for spiritual and physical protection.

Pray for Dave and Pat Franks in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. The Franks plan to retire after this term of service. They are shouldering the work alone while Jim and Vicki Sturgill are on a short stateside assignment. Ask the Lord to bless their health and strength, and pray for national workers to help in the work at Belo.

Friday

Read Romans 15:5-6. Pray for a spirit of unity in your church and on each field where Free Will Baptists work. Pray that many people will be drawn to Christ through the example of each person mentioned in today's requests.

Pray for James Forlines who became General Director of the Foreign Missions Department in January 1999. Ask God to give him direction, sensitivity and wisdom for the work. Pray for his physical health and strength. Ask the Lord to watch over his family when he is traveling.

Pray for Verlin and Debbie Anderson who began French language study in January at Université Laval in Quebec, Canada. Pray that God will enable them to learn the language well. Pray for their three children, Cason, Cara, and Corbin, who are in French-speaking public schools. The Andersons will work with the medical team in Côte d'Ivoire in a community health/evangelism ministry.

Pray for Curt and Mary Holland as they minister in São José, a suburb of Campinas, Brazil. The Lord has blessed the work with dedicated lay people who are reaching out to their families and friends with the gospel. Pray that many people will come to Christ through this ministry. ❖

Pre-Easter Week of Prayer for World Missions



March 29–April 2, 1999

**Women Nationally Active for Christ
P. O. Box 5002
Antioch, Tenn 37011-5002**

Monday

Read James 4:8. Begin your time of prayer asking the Holy Spirit to reveal the sins in your life and confessing them. As you pray for the people in today's requests, pray that nothing will come between them and the Lord.

Pray for Ron and Linda Callaway who are ministering in Panama and in Cuba, primarily in the seminary and Bible institute ministries. They taught in the seminary in Cuba during January and February 1999. Pray that God will open the door for them to minister in Cuba on a full-time basis.

Pray for the foreign missions staff and board. Pray that they will be completely open to the Lord's leading in every decision.

Remember that missionaries have personal struggles and needs just as the rest of us do. Pray that they will know God's mercy, guidance, and blessing in difficult times.

Tuesday

Read 1 John 4:9-14. As you pray for yourself and the people in today's requests, ask God to grant the kind love mentioned in this passage.

Pray that God will call Christian workers into leadership positions in the churches overseas. National pastors are needed on every field. Pray for entire families to be won to the Lord and for hearts to be open to God's call to ministry.

Pray for Dennis and Trena Owen and Dave Jr. and Becky Franks as they minister in Montevideo, Uruguay. Through cottage prayer meetings they are working to help believers mature and become active in ministry. People are also being saved as believers bring family and friends to the prayer meetings. Pray that many people will come to know the Lord in this largely atheistic society.

Pray for the administrative staff and teachers at International Christian Academy in Bouake, Côte d'Ivoire. This is a vital ministry for the children of missionaries serving in West Africa. For the 1998-99 school year Lloyd and Betty Plunkett are serving as house parents for the Free Will Baptist boys'

dormitory. Traci Epps and Kim Zegelien are on the faculty. Mike and Deleen Cousineau are serving respectively as business manager and counselor. Pray for them as they minister to the young people at ICA.

Wednesday

Read 1 Peter 2:11-12. As you pray, remember that believers in Côte d'Ivoire, Japan, India, Panama, Spain, Uruguay and United States are engaged in spiritual warfare.

Ken and Judy Bailey in Japan are rejoicing that the Iriso church has called a national pastor, Mr. Sabuta. The Baileys are continuing to work with him and the church during the transition phase. They request prayer as they close out their co-pastoring responsibilities and ease into a sister work in the area.

Pray for Carlisle Hanna. After a time of rest in the States following Marie's death last April, Carlisle, accompanied by his daughter, Brenda Kaye, returned to India in December 1998. Ask the Lord to give him peace and to bless him as he continues the ministry in India.

Pray for Eddie and LaRhonda Bowerman, missionaries to the Kuna Indians in Panama. They had a setback in their timetable in 1998 when Eddie suffered a severely broken leg in a car accident. Pray that God will prevent Satan from hindering their outreach to the Kunas.

Thursday

Read 2 Corinthians 4:5-6. Pray that His light will shine in the hearts of the missionaries and MK's mentioned in today's requests. Pray also that the Light will prevail over darkness in Brazil, China, France, Russia, Mongolia and among the unreached peoples.

Pray for missionaries who have children with special educational needs. Laura Riggs, six-year-old daughter of Steve and Becky Riggs, and Joseph Creech, four-year-old son of Paul and Rhoda Creech, both have learning disorders. Also, Regina Franks, 24-year-old daughter of Dave Sr. and Pat Franks, has Down's Syndrome. Pray that God will bless these MK's and enable them to reach their highest potential through specialized training.



Words for WOMEN

*Marjorie H.
Workman*

*What if women . . .
were not involved in ministry?
were to sit down and do nothing?
stopped teaching?
stopped loving their husbands?
stopped caring for the children?
stopped volunteering in the community?
stopped going to church?
stopped giving their money?
stopped singing?*

Women were not excluded in the Great Commission. The purpose of WNAC is to provide opportunities for FWB women to understand and fulfill the Great Commission through their responsibilities in the family, in the church, in the community and around the world. WNAC is an umbrella name for women's ministries. Individual groups can call themselves by whatever name they choose. But all groups, regardless of the name, should be fulfilling the Great Commission in some form of ministry.

It's true we are known for both our financial and prayer support of our missions programs. However, we are also concerned about ministry to our families and communities. Reaching the lost is not limited to peoples on foreign soil, nor is it limited to reaching only "our own." WNAC is not just projects and fund raising for missionaries. Laura Belle Barnard says it best, "Missions is the normal expression of vital Christianity. Missions and the existence of the church are indistinguishable."

As a woman's organization, we are especially responsible to women both locally and around the world. According to Titus 2:4, we're to teach the younger women. Women have a strong desire to belong. Getting new women in the church involved in WNAC is a good way to assimilate them into the church family. A small group setting makes getting acquainted with other women easier.

How can Free Will Baptist women best accomplish this purpose? Together. Have you ever tried to tackle a huge project by yourself? I remember attending a district

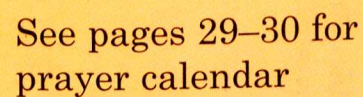
retreat where everyone was asked to help cut postage stamps. The stamps must be trimmed closely without cutting into the stamp and close enough that you don't end up with pounds of envelope paper. The stamps are sold to stamp collectors and the money is given to WNAC.

Can you imagine how many stamps it takes to make one pound? A pound of domestic stamps sells for 40 cents. Imagine if one person had to do all the cutting? Collectively, the project is worthwhile. Single handed it would take too long.

Last year, WNAC gave over \$532,000 to missions and educational causes. Could one group have done this alone? No, but collectively we did what was impossible to do single handedly. However, missions is more than just giving. Our women need to know our missionaries and how to pray for them.

I well remember one new woman that had joined our local WAC group. We had teamed up in groups of two to pray each night over the phone. This lady was new to FWB. She didn't know our missionaries. She was so excited as I shared the printed material that had been provided by the WNAC office for this particular prayer week. She commented about how little she knew about the missionaries—didn't even know their names. She knew only those who had visited and spoken in our services. Sometimes we take for granted that everyone knows all about our work. But someone has to make the information available. Someone has to network it through the denomination. WNAC does just that for the women.

As a national group, we pool our resources, provide materials and leadership, coordinate the work, plan retreats and a national convention. We also provide a magazine for our women to help keep them informed and united in carrying out the work of WNAC. Impossible for a local group to do. **What if there were no WNAC?❖**



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