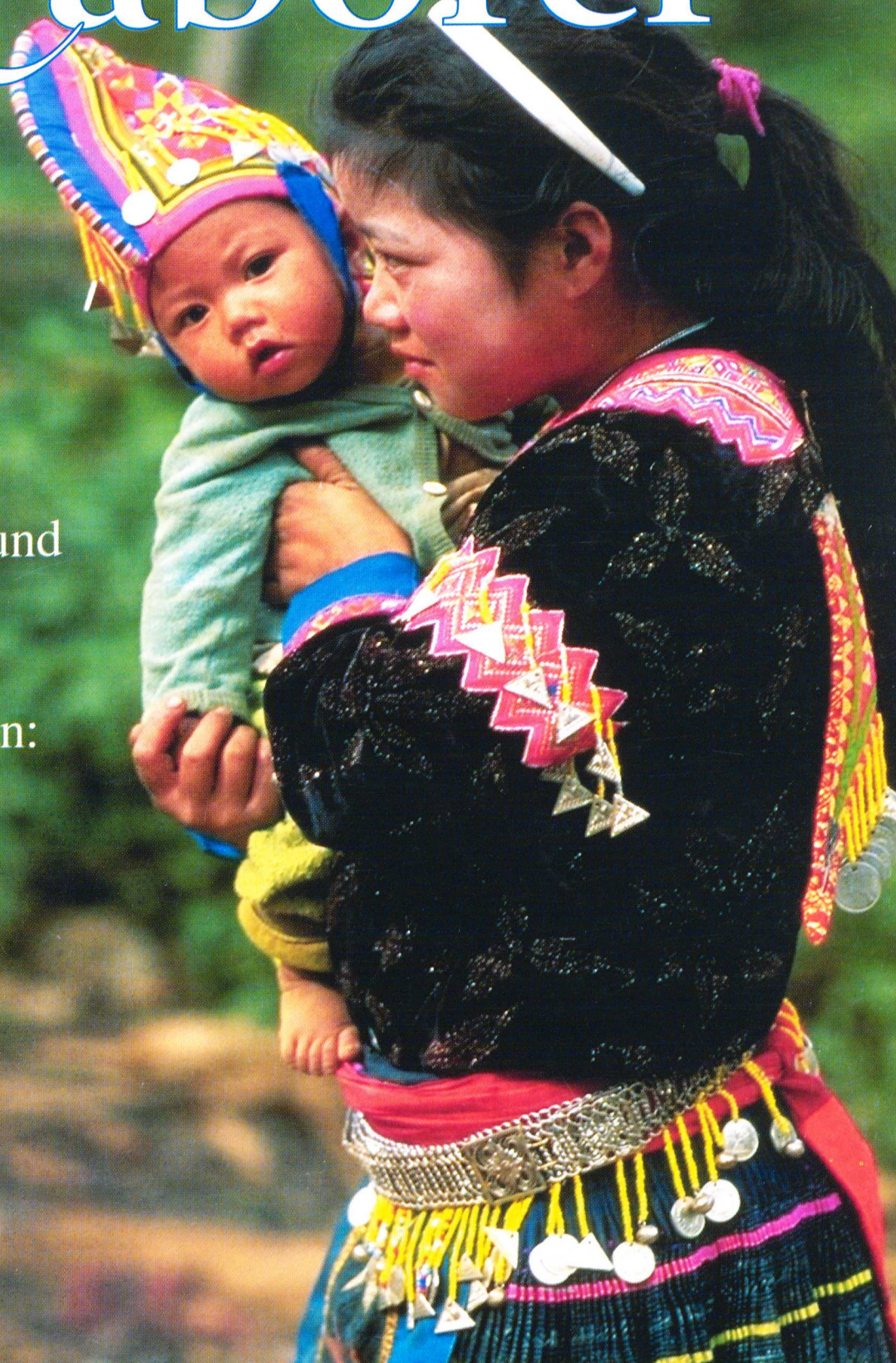


CoLaborer

A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a black patterned top with colorful geometric embroidery and a wide silver belt with many small bells. She is holding a baby who is wearing a colorful, pointed hat and a light green sweater. The background is a blurred green forest. In the upper right corner, there is a faint stamp that reads "FWBCC LIBRARY".

Opportunities Around
the World

The Muslim Woman:
Who is She?

Pagan Gods in our
Neighborhood

Mar • Apr 2000

VISION

James Forlines
General Director
Free Will Baptist Foreign Missions



Guest Editorial

It is an honor to be asked to write a guest editorial for *Co-Laborer*. It's not often that we men get an opportunity to address the ladies of our denomination in this format.

Free Will Baptist women have played a crucial role in our efforts for global evangelism. Perhaps there is no greater contribution that has been given than in the area of prayer. The Foreign Missions office receives cards and letters on a continual basis from women who pray regularly and fervently for the lost and needy around the world.

The Pre-Easter Week of Prayer, sponsored by Women Nationally Active for Christ, is yet another call to our women. I join the call to ask you to take seriously the urgent need for intercession. Yes, the Pre-Easter Week of Prayer can be a simple going through the motions, but it also can be an exercise to change eternity for many. Just as we have to be the voice for the unborn in opposing abortion, so we must also be the voice for those who have yet to see the Life that only Jesus can bring.

I trust that prayer for the world will not be confined just to this special week. If we as Free Will Baptists hope to make a significant contribution to the Kingdom around the world it will begin as we spend time on our knees, or our faces, before God. Paul reminds us in 2 Corinthians 10:4, "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." We are in a war. The mightiest weapon we have is not money. It is not even personnel. It is prayer. For when we pray the Lord will provide the means and method to accomplish His will.

As you pray for our missionaries, pray specifically for four things. Pray for:

1. The Holy Spirit to go **before** them.
2. Protection of God to be **around** them.
3. Holy boldness of God to be in them.
4. Financial provisions to **undergird** them.

As you pray for the unreached, pray specifically for four things. Pray for:

1. Leaders of nations and people groups to allow the opportunity for their people to hear the Gospel.
2. Christian brothers and sisters who are currently being persecuted for their faith.
3. Peace in war-torn regions where fear has prevented opportunities for the Gospel.
4. God to send His Light through miraculous means to those whose eyes have been blinded to the Truth.

God is at work around the world. He is working through Free Will Baptists. We look forward to gains in the Kingdom as a result of the coordinated prayer of Free Will Baptist women around the world. God bless your efforts for His cause. ♦

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Number 2

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Dania Lokee's leadership has united Panamanian Free Will Baptist women in order to accomplish more.

10

Four missionaries discuss open doors of opportunity to reach people around the world.

20

Alabama Blue Bell Actionettes put service first.

C O N T E N T S



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Trail Blazers: Free Will Baptist Ladies Society in Panama

Suzanne Franks

According to popular opinion, Panama's claim to fame has more to do with a big ditch connecting the Pacific Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico than a group of women who bear Christ's name. And then from time to time, Colombian guerillas crossing the border to terrorize tiny, isolated communities grab the attention of news watchers. God knows and cares about these dear ones who often live in the grip of fear. God also knows about the lives

of Panamanians who have been touched through the efforts of Free Will Baptist women who call themselves *Sociedad de Damas*.

Their leader is Mrs. Dania Lokee. After she took office in February 1999, things changed. Although the women have always been concerned with building God's Kingdom, Mrs. Lokee's leadership has united Panamanian Free Will Baptist women in order to accomplish more.

Outreach

Last year the women's organization sponsored two youth seminars at public schools entitled "How to get better grades." They sent invitations to various local schools asking them to send students to a central location for the seminar. The seminars were successful in many ways. Every school sent an entourage of their best students. The speaker incorporated a simple plan of salvation and the event helped the local community realize that the *Sociedad de Damas* cares about the well-being of their students.





They also sponsored, in conjunction with the Betania FWB Church, a marriage conference. The conference was not only well attended, but resulted in a long list of people who asked for Bible studies in their homes. Consequently, the Panamanian churches need more volunteers willing to lead studies in homes.

Growing Up

The Panamanian National Association of Free Will Baptists is showing signs of maturity. About 20 students are enrolled in seminary classes. Most of the classes are held at local churches. Foreign missionaries Steve Lytle and Ron Callaway teach some of the seminary classes. They both agree that their primary role is to train Panamanians so they can pastor and plant churches.

The women often blazed new trails as the church moved toward maturity. The most

important goals of any missionary endeavor are to bring churches to a point in which they can support pastors and thrust laborers into worldwide evangelism. One way WNAC has contributed is by sending monetary gifts to help pay for the education of the children of the Panamanian missionaries.

The congregation at Cañitas is in the process of organizing as a church and taking on the salary of Pastor Nicolas Valdes. The same is true of the church at Las Tables—pastored by Martin Plicet. The women are contributing to the salary of these pastors until their churches can take on full support.

Supporting Missions

The women help support three missionary families. Uriel de Lasque is the missionary pastor at Parity. Jacinto is another missionary

who travels to Aguas Frias to assist in that congregation. Raul Sanes assists Eddie and LaRhonda Bowerman in their outreach to the Kunas.

The outreach to the Kuna tribe is perhaps the most significant sign of how the churches have become missions minded. In order for Panamanians to reach out to Kunas, they must first overcome economic, social and racial prejudice. As a rule, the native tribesmen are the lowest social class in the country. This outreach is also significant because many of the Kuna villages are entirely unreached with the gospel. As is true of all the new Panama missions endeavors, the work among the Kuna is a joint effort of the FWB Foreign Missions Department and the Panamanian Association of FWB Churches.

Upon the request of the Panamanian Association of Churches, missionary Stan Bunch is planting a church in Chitré. Local believers are assisting the Bunches in this work.

Positive Results

Pastors Arsenio Gonzalez, Uri Gonzalez and Alex Mercado carry heavy loads as bi-vocational pastors at three different churches. According to missionary Judy Lytle, one of the positive influences the women's work has had in Panama is a growing desire of the churches to support their own pastors full-time.

In spite of looming financial hardship, the FWB women in Panama take relentless steps of faith as they find creative ways to evangelize and support the work generously.

** This article is based on an interview with Judy Lytle, a missionary to Panama.*

WNAC local Delegate Form

This certifies that _____ is an authorized delegate
to the WNAC Convention of Free Will Baptists from the _____
women's group of _____ Free Will Baptist Church,
(Church Name)

(Church Address)

Signed _____ or _____
(Local Coordinator) (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.

MARCH PROGRAM

Pagan gods in the neighborhood

by Janice Banks

Scripture: Acts 2:14–41; Hebrews 13:1–3;
Revelation 3:8



Wat an exciting time it was! Jews from every nation were in Jerusalem to participate in a praise gathering known as the Day of Pentecost or Feast of Weeks (Lev. 23:15-22). God, however, had a greater purpose for their gathering. It was there in Jerusalem that thousands of people from other languages and cultures learned about the great love of Jesus Christ, God's Son.

Let's consider a parallel to that New Testament situation by recognizing what is happening in American cities today. People from all over the world are coming here for various purposes such as education, professional training, refuge, research, and adventure. Could it be that God has a greater purpose for these international people who are coming to America?

Foreign Gods on American Soil

Multi-cultural communities are now becoming the norm in most areas of America. Also, international students by the thousands are flocking to America for part or all of their higher education. With the diversity of society all around us, we could probably all agree that America is no longer a "melting pot" with everyone blending ideas and practices into one common lifestyle.

Author and Pastor Jerry Appleby has chosen to call America a "stew," while Oscar Romo, author of *American Mosaic*, prefers to see this nation as a great masterpiece — a mosaic. Romo says that America is now a place where people communicate in over 600 languages and dialects. In addition, people from all different cultures who live or visit the United States bring with them their religious beliefs and practices. Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism and other religions are taking firm root in American soil.

A Christian Response

What is your response to these people of different cultures who speak different languages and who bring their religious faiths and practices with them? Do you welcome them with an open heart, or do you prefer to stay uninvolved? Do you join the sen-

timents of many who wish they'd "go back where they came from"? Or do you see the opportunities that God has placed at your door?

Christians can't ignore the changes taking place on American soil. It's time we stand up and accept the God-given responsibility of reaching people from every nation with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Traditionally we have sent people across the seas to do cross-cultural ministry, and until Jesus returns, we need to continue this practice. We must also strive to do our part in reaching the multitudes God is placing on our doorsteps.

Here are a few simple suggestions to help you get started in this important ministry. If you follow the suggestions below, you'll not have any major problems that can't be overcome.

Do practice hospitality. Relax! Be real!

Do study your friend's culture. Showing an interest in your friend by learning about his or her country and customs will boost your friendship to deeper levels. Learning about customs and being careful not to do anything obviously offensive would be good for both you and your friend. For example, serving a pork roast to a Muslim would not be "in good taste." Knowing that Muslims don't eat pork could save some embarrassment for you and your guest. Remember ignorance about a certain custom or religious law might explain the reason for doing something offensive, but it might not lessen the effect.

Do study your friend's religion. First, refresh your own understanding about your own faith. Do you really understand the fundamentals of Christianity? Can you explain them in simple terms to someone else? Then study your friend's religion asking her to help you understand what she believes. In your conversation be careful to define terms such as God, salvation, sin, life after death, etc. Sometimes other religions use the terms of Christianity but with vastly different meanings.

Do increase your awareness of cross-cultural communication principles. We are responsible for effective communication of God's Word. In order to

do that, we need to do everything possible to help the listeners understand the message. That means we need to understand and practice good communication skills. (See resource list for more help in this area.)

Do be a real friend. Help your international friend with her felt needs. Care about her like you would any American friend. Also, accept your international friend's reciprocal friendship.

Do help your international friend understand your culture (which includes your religion.) She needs to feel comfortable while here in the States. Your contribution in this area will surely be remembered for years to come and perhaps with joy for eternity.

Do pray, pray, pray! You will definitely need the Lord's help and guidance in this cross-cultural ministry." Ask the Holy Spirit to open your friend's mind and heart so that she can understand and receive the Savior, Jesus Christ. Enlist Christian friends to hold you up in prayer as you pursue this very effective and needed form of evangelism.

Don't put conditions on your friendship. Your international friend should never feel like a project. Unconditional friendship means that you will be a friend even if your friend does not respond to your evangelism attempts. Just keep praying and caring!

Don't expect someone from another religion to attend your church upon your invitation. Many people think that only believers should go to a respective place of worship. Often church social functions are good starting points for introducing your friend to Christianity. Then you can help her see that visiting church will help her understand about Christianity. Romans 10:17 tells us that "faith comes by hearing ... the word of God."

Don't assume that your friend has the religion that is prominent in her home country. Nor should you assume that she doesn't. Ask!

Don't get the false idea that sincerity in religious belief and practice is sufficient for one's relationship with God. Some people in the world have the idea that any religion is good and all religions lead ultimately to the same "reality." Remember that Jesus is the only way of salvation (John 14:6) and we are his

messengers in the world today.

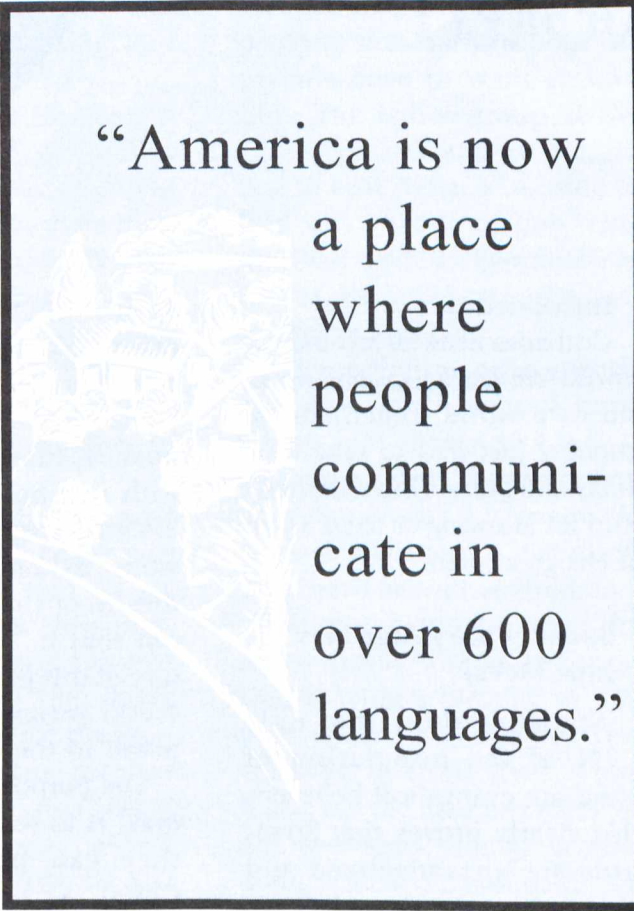
Don't be condescending toward international friends. Actually, there is a lot you can learn from people of other cultures. Genuine friendship means mutual trust and respect, which are necessary ingredients if a door for witness is going to be opened.

Don't give up on your friend moving toward a relationship with Christ. It will probably take time, and in some cases, it will take a long time. Remember that sometimes you will be the seed sower and others will water that seed, but God brings about the harvest.

A True Story:

Mary and Randy Hill found that God had opened a huge door for ministry to international students

... continued on page 17



“America is now
a place
where
people
communi-
cate in
over 600
languages.”

Opportunities Around the World



Introduction:

God does work all around the world. We get so caught up in our own world sometimes we forget. I just had to take time today and praise Him and thank Him for allowing us to be a part of His great plan.

Spain: Café y Algo Mas June McVay

Statistics show that only 0.2% of the population of Spain are evangelical believers. This clearly proves that Spaniards are unevangelized and need to hear the Gospel.

What are we doing to reach

Spaniards? One of the most successful programs we have used is "Cafe y Algo Mas" (Coffee and Something More). This program opens a door for sharing Christ with non-believers. Revelation 3:8 encourages us: "I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." In the 8-year history of this program, more than 1,000 women have been exposed to the Gospel.

The purpose of "Cafe y Algo Mas" is to reach unbelievers so they can personally know Christ. As Ephesians 5:15-16 says, we need to be wise in

things we do, making the most of every opportunity we face. We strive to do that with this program, because many will come to a program that would never set foot in a church. This is successful only if believers invite unsaved friends and family. Therefore, every believer can be involved in getting the gospel to unbelievers.

We strive for excellence in our programs because a good presentation means a lot to Spaniards. It is important to have an easy-to-find, reputable location to hold the meeting, such as a local restaurant. A brunch or

before dinner snack works well and doesn't cost much.

One of the three parts of the program is music. We begin with an accomplished guest musician performing a couple of songs, then performing again during the snack time.

The second part is called a "flash." A knowledgeable person shares a few minutes about an interesting subject such as hairstyles, exercise, popular vacation spots, etc. This part will not have a spiritual message, but will be something to capture the audience.

The guest speaker is the main part of the program where a Spanish Christian begins talking about their profession, then ends with a testimony about how they came to know Christ. There have been speakers who were lawyers, doctors, musicians, etc., who have truly experienced the new life in Christ and who share it in a way that is meaningful to those listening.

Before leaving, cards are filled out with names, addresses, etc. A place on the card is available to indicate whether they would be interested in having a 4-week study on a subject of their choice such as family problems, depression, etc. Because of these studies, many have come to know Christ as their personal Savior.

Manbell was one such woman (in her 20's) who came at the invitation of her friend a few years ago. After a follow-up study, she was saved. She had a strong witness that soon brought her husband and a neighbor couple to know the

Lord. Years later, she continues hosting a Bible study in her home that brings others to Christ.

Panama: Joining God in Los Castillos
Brenda Bunch

After reading the Bible study *Experiencing God*, I have been more aware of how God is always at work. He gives opportunities to witness daily. I used to try to start groups for ladies. I thought that would work best. Wrong. John 15:5 says, "I am the vine you are the branches: He that abideth in me and I in Him the same bringeth forth much fruit for without me ye can do nothing." I now look around to see where God is working, and I join Him.

One experience involved a lady who lives in Los Castillos (the castles). A group of young people went there to share their music and the gospel (TEAM). There is not one church in this town, not even a Catholic Church. They have little transportation and love to see anyone new come into town to share something.

While there, a lady shared that her grandson Edgar was very ill and asked that we get some medicine to help him. One of the ladies and I visited the little boy. I took Bible Study material and tracts for the family to read, but the mother could not read. Betsaida (Bet si da) (short e long i short a) was in her late 20's. It was the first time I had met someone so young who couldn't read. While

growing up, her parents wouldn't let her go to school. We shared with her a short testimony.

Edgar was about 5 years old and so sick he couldn't walk. She gave us the prescription he needed filled. We took it to a lady who attended the Free Will Baptist church. She worked at a Pharmacy and said she was sure that it was written by a witch doctor but would check the records to make sure. After checking the list of doctors in Panama, the pharmacist could not find the name of Edgar's doctor. He was for sure a witch doctor.

I was surprised! I wanted to take him to a doctor myself, but Stan says we can't solve every problem that comes along. The parents have to want to take him. The ladies group at the church prayed, and we continued to visit. What a blessing to find out on one of our visits they had made an appointment to take the little boy to the doctor in Panama City.

They put him on a special diet. As a church we took turns taking him things to eat that were on his diet. They are a very poor family with a house made of mud walls and a dirt floor. They have two other children.

On one visit to the home the whole family wanted to accept Christ. What a blessing to witness their response to God working in their lives. They found out the little boy had kidney problems, but he is now doing great and continues to see a doctor. His Mom, however, won't let him go to school be-

cause she fears the sun might make him sick. Please pray that she will allow Edgar to attend school.

The Free Will Baptist church of Parita continues to visit this town once a week to take the gospel, and this family is very faithful to attend weekly. They would love to have a Sunday school, but there are not enough people from Parita to supply this ministry. Pray as God increases this work.

The mother can now read. I started a reading class for her and one of the ladies from the church took over while we were in the States. That was great news to see the people finish the work that was started.

When we obey, we do experience God working. John 14:21 says, "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love Him and will manifest myself to him." Amen.

Cote d' Ivoire: Two Decisions **Lynette Morgan**

She showed up one day at church led by a small child holding the end of her walking stick to guide her down the dusty road. She was of an undetermined age, tall and pencil thin from lack of proper nourishment. Her worn "pagne" covered her lower body and a tattered top hung on her shoulders. A scrap of scarf was tied around her shaved head. But her vacant, sunken eye sockets

struck me instantly with pity. As I got to know her she explained how battery acid was the recommended remedy for her eye infection. Her poor eyes were destroyed, but she carried a contagious smile that stretched across her face, almost popping out the wooden discs in her lips and revealing a wide gap where her eight front teeth should have been.

I began getting Mama Diata for church and taking her home afterwards. She was always thrilled to see me. As time passed I began probing to see how much of the Gospel she understood and realized she understood little. With her scant knowledge, she decided to leave the fetish and "follow God's road" even though she did not know what this entailed. So from time to time, I would try to teach her what God's Word said to her, and how she could apply it where she lived. Mama Diata lived in the courtyard of her sister-in-law, a strong fetisher and medicine woman sought out by many in town. The old woman was not allowed to pray in the courtyard, so she would feel her way along the path to the shade of a mango tree standing 50 yards off, and there, on the ground, she prayed.

One day as Easter approached, I made my way down the narrow path towered over by elephant grass to her thatched roofed hut. Mama Diata squealed her welcome, danced a joyous jig, and offered me her largest and best stool. After the greetings, the fetisher left so she wouldn't have to hear "Thangba

thimiir," God's words.

Diata listened, trying to soak in all I shared with her. I told her that I had come to explain the "fete" that was coming up and why we as Christians celebrated it. Already, during previous visits I had shared the Creation and events building up to the Messiah's coming. So now I proceeded, in simple terms, to tell of Christ's death and resurrection. She listened in wonder, making sounds of awe and exclamation as the story progressed. As I closed the story, I explained that we are all sinners. That sin demanded punishment, but when Jesus died, He took the punishment for all of our sins. Finally, I felt that Mama understood that going to church was not what made one a Christian, but that as we accepted Christ's sacrifice, He forgave our wrong doings and gave us new life.

"Mama," I asked, "do you want to ask God's Son to forgive you of your sins and become His child?"

She turned her sightless eyes toward me, and overcome with emotion, said, "How can I not?"

That day I felt Mama Diata took the final step in her search for God.

A few years passed, and Diata stayed faithful. However, sickness took over her body for several weeks. I visited regularly to give her medicine and to pray with her. During this particular visit, after leaving her hut, I sat down to talk to Kobire, the old fetisher. Not five feet from where I sat, a one and a half foot-high fetish guarded the courtyard.

Composed of a cluster of wood, metal, and gourd, the guard stood straight up from their cement stand.

I turned to the old woman. Around her neck, wrists, and upper arms hung amulets to help and protect her. The round metal discs in her top and bottom lips clacked when she talked. During the years that I had cared for Mama Diata, the fetisher came to respect and like me. Little by little she grew more receptive to the Gospel.

This day I had brought a baby bottle and powdered milk for her 6-month-old great nephew whose mother had recently died. The baby was skin and bones but refused the life-giving milk that dripped from the nipple. Instead he chose to suck the dried-up breast of his old grandmother.

"Kher Kontin," I finally said. (A term of respect meaning "old woman") "This baby is refusing the milk that will give him strength and life. But you're doing the same thing. You're refusing the milk of God's Word that will give you life, and you're clinging to death."

My meaning suddenly hit the old woman. She laughed, acknowledging that I had got one up on her. "I hear what you say," she finally said. "I will think on it and ask my fetish if he will let me go."

That time has not yet come. But I will pray. I will be faithful. I will do what the Lord shows me to do. And I will leave the results to Him.

(Mama Diata died last year. Her funeral, held by the Chris-

tians, was a vibrant testimony of Diata's faith and the Christians' love. It spoke powerfully to Kobire. We continue to visit and witness to her. She says she must think on it....)

Japan: Hospital Roommates Sandra Bishop

Jennifer was hospitalized. Not only would we miss the Japan Field Council meeting, she and I would also miss the fellowship we so look forward to with our fellow missionaries. Yet, God used even this. One of Jen's five roommates needed to meet Christ. Ryota Igarashi, just one year old, and his mother Maki were two beds over from Jen's.

Long hours spent in a hospital room gave ample time for sharing. Of course, everyone was interested in our reason for being in Japan. We explained that we were missionaries. Maki had attended a Catholic school, so she was open to Christianity. Even though only six years old, Jen was able to give a testimony to her new friends, including Ryota's older sister, Keiko, three years old.

When leaving the hospital, we gave each of them some tracts, our address and phone number. We also invited them to church. Our prayer was that God would honor the seeds that had been sown.

A few days later, Maki asked to borrow a children's Bible storybook to read to her children, "and also for myself since I need to start at that level too," she admitted. I loaned her an

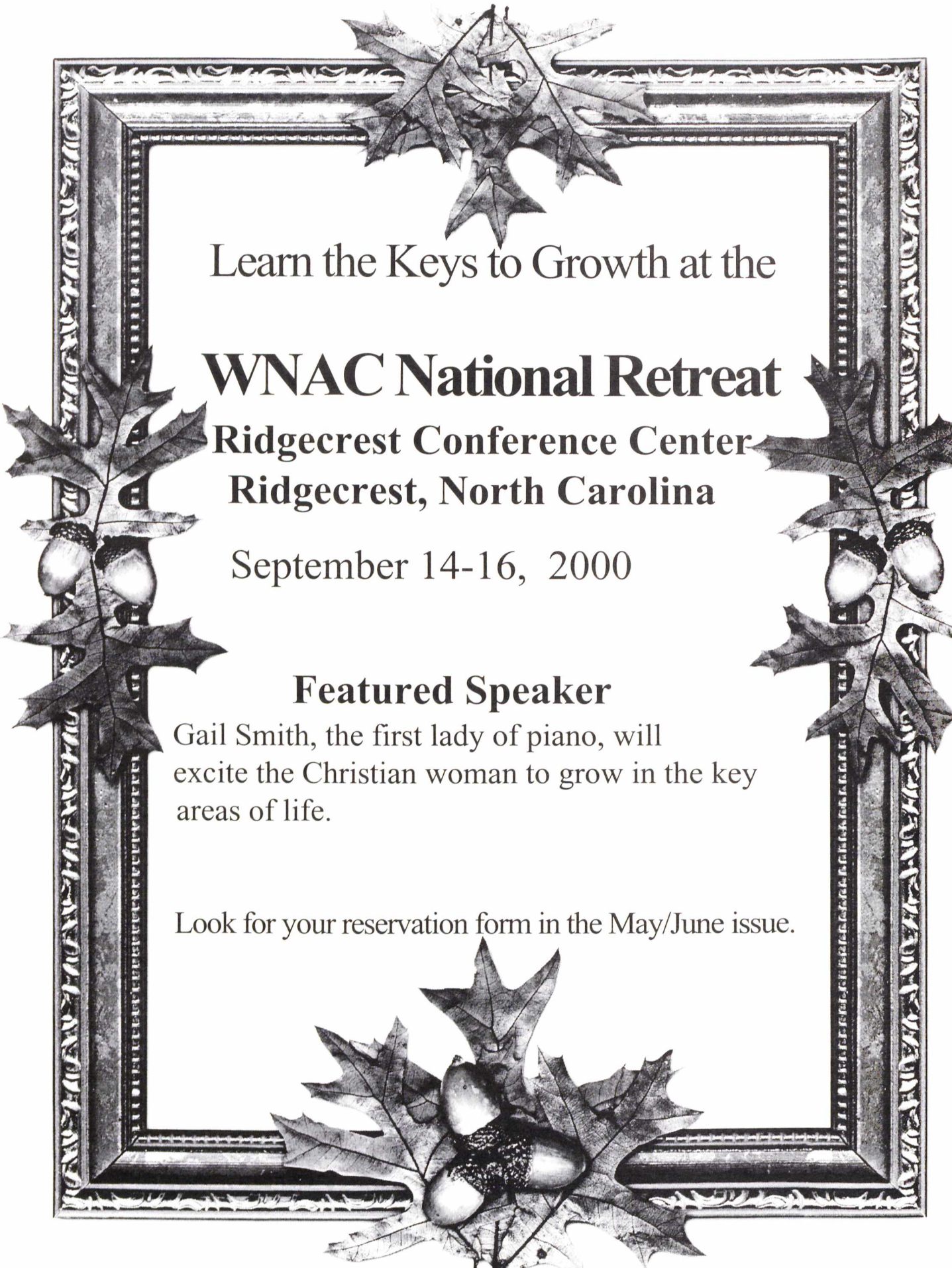
illustrated Bible storybook. She started attending worship services, woman's auxiliary, Bible study and cooking classes. Later we loaned her a Bible that she began to read.

One afternoon I had a phone call. "May I come over and talk with you?" she asked. Maki visited in our home, and Dale and I shared "The Four Spiritual Laws." Unable to stop the tears, she asked Jesus to forgive her of her sins and to be her Savior. This was five years after we had first met.

Joy in her salvation, Maki's life is marked by freshness and spiritual growth, which we see as she shares her faith. No other family member believes, and this is a daily burden. Her children come to Sunday school sometimes, although her daughter has been rebellious. Ryota, now seven, recently said he was going to Sunday school even if his sister didn't go. Maki's family consists not only of her husband and two children, but her husband's parents. Her mother-in-law is Buddhist.

A neighbor raised Maki because her mother died when she was 12. Estranged from her father for many years, last year she began spending time with him and trying to think of ways to share Christ.

She still struggles. Recently, with tears in her eyes she said, "You don't have to worry about me when you go back to America for home assignment. I'm going to stay true to God. I'll miss you, but I'm not going to turn away from God. I've learned how important he is in my life."

A decorative border made of oak leaves and acorns surrounds the text. At the top center is a large oak leaf. On the left and right sides are vertical sprigs of oak leaves and acorns. At the bottom center is a cluster of oak leaves and acorns.

Learn the Keys to Growth at the

WNAC National Retreat

Ridgecrest Conference Center

Ridgecrest, North Carolina

September 14-16, 2000

Featured Speaker

Gail Smith, the first lady of piano, will excite the Christian woman to grow in the key areas of life.

Look for your reservation form in the May/June issue.



Springboard:

Innovative Ideas for WNAC Officers

Coordinator/Assistant Coordinator

Your Pre-Easter prayer packet will be arriving soon. Encourage the Missions Chairman to coordinate a week of prayer with your ladies. This year's Pre-Easter Week of Prayer for World Missions will be the week of April 17 - April 21. Your group can arrange small prayer group meetings each evening to pray for the requests. Divide the groups according to the area where people live. Those who can not attend can participate with a prayer partner by phone. The Assistant Coordinator can designate prayer partners.

Secretary/Treasurer

Begin to set goals with your WAC group for the Laura Belle Barnard World Missions Offering. Share your records from last year's offering and challenge your group to beat the offering in the new millennium. Pray and seek God's will for a generous gift from your WAC. All Free Will Baptist foreign missionaries will benefit from this offering.

Missions Chairman

This is a great time to update your missions records. Contact the Foreign Missions department to get the new full color collection of prayer cards to share with your women. Also, subscribe to the new publication, *Women's Beat*, for free! This is a quarterly publication that will help you to keep in touch and up to date with the events happening with the women missionaries. This will also serve as a good prayer tool. You can get these materials by writing to FWB Foreign Missions Department, PO Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37011-5002.

Don't forget to help coordinate a successful Pre-Easter week of prayer. Work with your coordinator to get all of your women involved in this crucial week for world missions. Aside from coordinating separate prayer groups, you can plan one special meeting for your whole group with a light meal at the church, or in a home, and spend the evening in prayer for world missions.

Provision Closet Needs

King, queen and
twin size sheet
sets

Queen and twin
size bedspreads

Queen and full
electric blankets

Twin size
mattress covers

Kitchen towels

Dish cloths

Heavy cookware

Flatware

Food processors

Blenders

Tupperware®
Pitchers

*Whenever possible,
leave prices on items
to help the office keep up
with inventory.*

Prayer Chairman

Promote and publicize the Pre-Easter Week of Prayer. Print reminders of the event and distribute to the women on Sunday morning. Remind them of the importance and impact of prayer, especially when we are all in agreement. The prayer guide on pages 23 and 24 can be a big help to you during this week. The new Free Will Baptist World Prayer Guide is available through the Foreign Missions Department for \$.50.

You can also make prayer reminders to give to your WAC throughout the week. Tape a small piece of paper to a piece of candy with Bible verses focusing on the importance of prayer. The candy can be given to the women at the mid-week prayer service at your local church. This reminds the women of the week's focus on prayer.

Study Chairman

This issue contains a book review of *How to be a World Class Christian* by Paul Borthwick. The book is a good missions study and application.

You can order the book by calling WNAC at (615) 731-6812. Or write us at WNAC, 5233 Mt. View Road, Antioch TN 37013. You can also send e-mail to WNAC@nafwb.org. Ask your WAC to order the book for your church library.

Service Chairman

The door of service is wide open in our communities. Service is what WAC is based on. We should strive to serve the needy, the unsaved, and the sick who surround us. Also our neighborhoods are now overflowing with people from other cultural backgrounds who have never heard the wonderful name of Jesus.

See page 10 in this issue on how we, as women, can become friends and minister to the large number of ethnic groups that are living right in our back yards. Since most of us are not missionaries in a foreign land, we can serve as missionaries to foreign peoples who have been placed right on our doorstep. The April program can give you many ideas on how to better reach those in your neighborhood. Take advantage through your WAC to step through this open door of service and ministry.

Bible Study

By: Debe Taylor

A GODLY WOMAN (Proverbs 31)

God's salute to women includes:

Deborah, who was a career woman (judge)
Esther, who was royalty
Ruth, who was a migrant farm worker
Mary, who was a mother

Yet, the woman who comes to everyone's mind when a salute to women is mentioned is the Proverbs 31 woman. In *Life Principles from the Women of the Bible* it is stated: "She is not the yardstick by which all women are measured, but she is the goal women should be moving toward."

Let's examine the Proverbs 31 woman:

Woman of Virtue

Vs. 11-12; 25-29

The virtuous woman has the praise of her children and husband. Those who know her best will praise her most. Someone has said that "our reputation is what others think of us, but our character is what our family knows we are." The virtuous woman does not "toot her own horn," but leaves the praise for her family to express.

Write the reasons why her family praises her.

Life Principles from the Women of the Bible:

There is no makeup that will make you look better than godliness. There is no hairstyle that can hold a candle to

earns respect and honor like righteousness."

Woman of Versatility

Write the verse(s) for each occupation:

Chef -
Realtor -
Gardener -
Seamstress -
Social Worker -
Retailer -

Martha Stewart has nothing on this woman.

Don't be overwhelmed by all that she did. It is more important to remember that what she did—she did well. Whatever you do—do all for the glory of God. Your family will benefit.

Woman of Vision

Prepared to meet needs - vs. 15
Ready to help at any time - vs. 18
Provided for her family in advance - vs. 21

Woman of Vitality

Find and write down all the verbs you can find in this passage.

No wonder the writer of the Proverb shares with us that this woman "does not eat the bread of idleness."

The Godly Woman knows God wants to be her first choice, not her last resort.

...continued from page 9

right in their own city. They boldly went to the international student advisor at a nearby community college and volunteered to help with the students' orientation to the United States. In just a short time they began to get calls from people all over the world and their ministry began.

This young couple and their two sons lived in a simple two-bedroom apartment. Although their space was limited, they refused to let this hinder their ability to show hospitality to homesick and needy international students. Their living room couch became a bed as their first Chinese friend found a welcome shelter and refuge for a few days. This began a full-time ministry for Randy and Mary as they helped their international friends find apartments, buy necessities, set up checking accounts, learn to drive, buy cars, get medical help, etc.

It wasn't long before Randy and Mary's new friends began to visit the Free Will Baptist Church. Gradually, several of the church families began to open their homes to these students and many international friendships began. Then, after about 8 months, Nan, a Chinese student, received Christ and was baptized. When Nan completes her studies and returns to China she will go as an ambassador of the Lord Jesus!

Ayhem, another friend of the Hills, is a devout Muslim from Syria who showed no interest in Christianity. One day he fell in his apartment and injured his knee. He consulted the Hills regarding medical help and expressed his concern about the high cost of treatment without insurance. Mary and Randy requested prayer for him and the church later received an offering to help with his medical expenses. Even though the Hills had clearly told the church that Ayhem's family was not poor, the church people took advantage of this opportunity to witness to him and his family. Ayhem was deeply touched by this act of compassion and said, "Maybe I need to visit your church. This is a very wonderful thing that they do."

What About You?

Maybe getting involved in international student ministry like Randy and Mary Hill isn't for you. Maybe your special mission is to befriend the Vietnamese lady who runs the laundry on the corner. Or, perhaps the mother of the little Japanese girl in your child's class needs some help in understanding the responsibilities of the PTA. The door of opportunity is open! The need is there! The challenge is this: Will you ask God to reveal to you what He wants you to do about witnessing to all of the international people around your neighborhood? Will you then do as He commands?

Lucy & Marge

LUCY: Marge, I'm feeling kinda restless.

MARGE: What do you mean, restless?

LUCY: You know, Marge, this is the season of wind, rain and storms. March wind, April showers, and tornadoes!

MARGE: And that makes you restless?

LUCY: Well, yes. Maybe I just have some contrary winds and storms going on in my head.

MARGE: Tell me about it, Lucy?

LUCY: For one thing, I've just been thinking about the people who have suffered in the storms last year. You know, some of our people in North Carolina lost everything they had. Some of our churches were ruined. So many needs, right in our own backyard.

MARGE: I know. But we did try to help those people with money and goods, Lucy.

LUCY: Yes, but I'm sure we didn't do enough. Then there were earthquakes and floods hurricanes all over the world. Just think about it. So many needs, and I am just one little person. What can I do about it? It's just overwhelming.

MARGE: I know we are only a few women in our WAC, but we can do something to help.

LUCY: But just think about those people in Kosovo, Turkey, and all over the world. There are so many needs that we can't possibly meet them all.

MARGE: I believe we have to begin where we are to serve others.

LUCY: You're right, Marge. But even here the needs are overwhelming.

MARGE: We can begin where we are to reach people who do not know Christ. We can begin where we are to help people in our community.

LUCY: You mean, the homeless people, the street people?

MARGE: Well, they do need help, wouldn't you say?

LUCY: You're right again, Marge. The street people, the homeless, even the elderly in our own congregation. I can't even reach to all of them.

MARGE: But, Lucy, we can each reach one right here. If we make a difference in one life, that may have far reaching results.

LUCY: And what about the world, Marge. Aren't we responsible for them too?

MARGE: Lucy, you just need to be sure that you attend the WAC meetings for March and April.

LUCY: And how will that help?

MARGE: In March we are considering what we can do to reach people right around us.

LUCY: Hey, you mean like those people from Cuba who live next door?

MARGE: Ah, Lucy, there's an open door for you right there.

LUCY: But I don't know Spanish, and they don't seem to know English.

MARGE: A good way to reach them. Help them with their English.

LUCY: Hmm. I could try. I'm not too good with English myself.

MARGE: Of course you are, Lucy. You are a great talker.

LUCY: You don't have to call me a big mouth, even if I do talk a lot.

MARGE: Just kidding, Lucy, but you do know English.

LUCY: I can try. And what about those people around the world?

MARGE: In April we are going to hear from some of our missionaries around the world. They will tell us way we can help reach people in different countries.

LUCY: That all sounds good. If I come in March, will someone teach me how to speak Spanish?

MARGE: Oh, Lucy, you know it's not that simple. But come anyway.

LUCY: I'll be there. Hasta luego!

Lucy & Marge in this issue is written by Mary R. Wisheart. She 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.

URGENT

memo

Call
Missions Hotline

615-731-3839
e-mail:
carole@nafwb.org

Communicator

by Marjorie Workman

The new millennium is underway. A door of opportunities awaits you in WNAC. Women, are you walking through the door that is ajar before you? Did you miss the February opportunity to participate in the Cleo Pursell Foreign Student Scholarship offering? Or the January enlistment opportunity to encourage a lady in your church to join with the sixty five-hundred other women across the country who are WNAC members? Are you fellowshiping with and inviting the young women in your church to become partners with you in prayer and action to reach the hurting, hopeless women all around?

Are you getting off to a slow start in this new millennium? "Lift up your eyes and look," Jesus said. Opportunities abound. Workers are needed. Be a prayer warrior. Be a participant in the Pre-Easter week of prayer and pray for world missions. This is a special time to join together to pray for specific needs of the missionaries serving around the world and for the Foreign Missions office staff. Prayers are needed daily, but this one week is designed for drawing our attention in a united effort for intercessory prayer. Jesus said the harvest is ready, but what is needed is prayer for labourers to work the harvest. Seize the opportunity to join with WNAC in prayer for our missions ministry.

Along with praying is the opportunity to celebrate through giving. Sunday, April 30 is the date set by Foreign Missions to receive the Laura Belle Barnard World Missions Offering. Most Women Active for Christ groups receive this offering during their pre-Easter week of prayer. Others receive it at their regular monthly meeting. Last year you gave more than \$17,000 for this special offering. Why not give \$20,000 this April? Send your offering through regular WNAC channels. Let's celebrate Christ's resurrection and tell the whole world the Good News that our

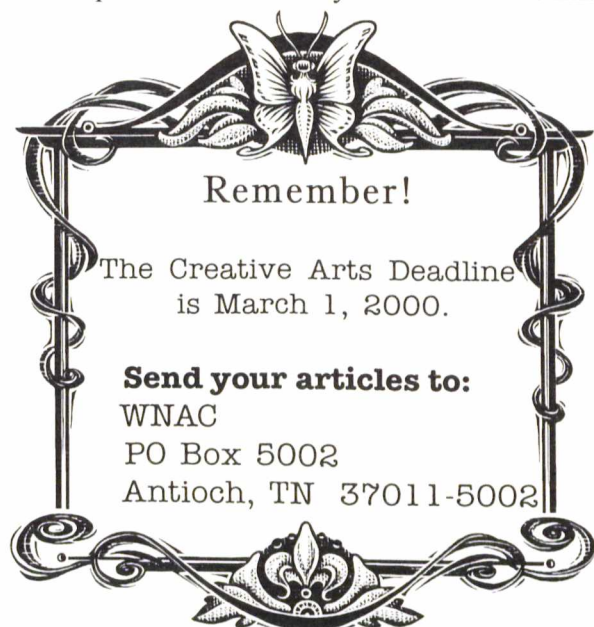
redeemer lives. One way to do it is through our generous giving.

Retreat Opportunity

Mark your calendar now for September 14-16, 2000 for a retreat weekend getaway at Ridgecrest Lifeway Conference Center, Ridgecrest, North Carolina. WNAC has a program planned that will provide opportunities for spiritual growth, missions enrichment, fellowship, relaxation, and good food and fun.

The theme is "Keys to Growth," based on II Peter 3:18, "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

Gail Smith from Fort Lauderdale, Florida is the featured speaker. She is often called "The First Lady of Piano." She will excite you with her music and seminars. You do not have to be a music lover to catch the Scripture applications that Gail weaves into her presentations. She is one of the foremost composer/arrangers in the field of sacred piano music. Her enthusiasm is contagious. Gail is a member of the National Guild of Piano Teachers and Federation of Music Clubs. Several years ago her blind student, Ivan, was seen on national television on "That's Incredible." Mel Bay Publications showcased her in a workshop at the 1996 National MTNA Convention in Kansas City. She has traveled throughout the USA, Germany and Japan giving concerts and workshops. This is a retreat you don't want to miss.



Women In Action

Blue Bell Actionettes



Left to Right: Nadine Hood, Victoria Stockton, Sarah Brewer, Alta Stockton, Tiffany Stockton, Stevie Huneycutt, Amanda Oneil

The Actionettes from the Blue Bell Free Will Baptist church in Oklahoma are stepping right up to the plate in service. The young women meet monthly to plan a special gift for someone in the church. They give baskets, send cards, and even prepare Christmas boxes for those who would not have a Christmas.

The Actionettes also take time for social activities. They enjoy lock-ins as well as Christmas parties.

Yard Sale for Missions and Community Work

Two large fundraisers have kept one Oklahoma Women Active for Christ group very busy. The Blue Bell Women held their annual yard sale in October and their annual craft show in November. Funds raised during these events allow the women to do extra mission and community work throughout the year. The Blue Bell women are an active group with 14 members.



Left to Right: Nadina Hood (Pastor's Wife), Valerie Lindsey (Youth Pastor's Wife), Merrilly Robinson

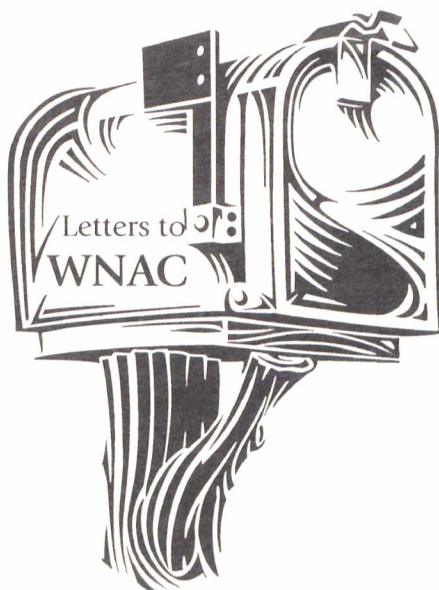
Alabama Missions Banquet a Success

The Alabama FWB Women Active for Christ gathered for the annual missions banquet at Ridgecrest Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama on November 11, 1999. Seventy people attended the banquet and enjoyed good food and fellowship.

Reverend Fred Jones, missionary to Prattville, Alabama and pastor of First FWBC of Prattville, was the guest speaker for the evening. The women collected a love offering of \$282. The Alabama Women Active for Christ commends the Lighthouse Church for its help in the success of the missions banquet.



Left to Right: Rick Cash (Alabama Promotional Director), Melissa and Jeff Munsford, Fred and Barbara Jones, Elwanda Oakes (AFWBWAC President), Judy and Dennis Haygood



Dear Ladies,

You have provided so many of our recent stateside needs through your gifts to the Provision Closet. Thank you so much! It was a true joy to see many of you at the retreat.

Karen Cowart, Brazil

Dear WNAC,

Thank you so much for the fifteen-dollar gift certificate to Wal-Mart. I was very surprised when I received it. Your thoughtfulness made my day. Thank you for your ministry. May God bless you and your actions.

Brooke Cousineau, Côte d' Ivoire

Dear WNAC,

Thank you so much for your kindness and help when we came by to go to Home Mission Orientation. Your help in the Provision Closet was a blessing. I was overwhelmed with your concerns for my family. It was also great to be able to get some items for our three small children. They will be thrilled. Thank you.

Teresa Smith, Missionary to Aiken, South Carolina

WNAC,

Greetings from California! I just wanted to say thank you for the many ways you support us! The ministry

can get lonely as many of you well know, and it's great to know there are those "cheering" you on! May the Lord shower His blessings on you all for your faithfulness!

Beth Willhite, Castaic, California

Dear WNAC,

Thank you so much for your generosity in setting up the Provision Closet. Dave and I were adding up and we figured that the Provision Closet saved us about \$1,000. Because of your kindness, it is much easier for missionaries to set up house, get school supplies, and even take things back to the field.

The kids really enjoyed the MK section!

Becky Franks, Uruguay

Dear Ladies,

I would like to express my thanks to all of our women for their generosity in supplying our (all of us who are missionaries) needs through the Provision Closet. We are certainly blessed to have the care and support of our women. Many of our non-FWB missionary friends in Japan are amazed when we tell them about the Provision Closet.

Sandra Bishop, Japan



ON THE SHELF

HOW TO BE A WORLD CLASS CHRISTIAN

By Paul Borthwick

Reviewed by

Marjorie Workman

For the serious Bible student or any Christian who desires to be effective in reaching people for Christ, Paul Borthwick's book *How To Be A World Class Christian* is a must. The book is excellent for personal growth or for a group missions study.

If you are one who gets overwhelmed by staggering statistics on population growth, percentages of Christians in various people groups, or the vastness of the task of reaching the world, you will like the way Borthwick breaks down the impossible to the very practical.

Your thinking will be challenged as you learn the meaning of "world class Christian." Borthwick takes the reader through contemporary definitions of the words "world class" and builds the Christian meaning of a world view that changes the way most Christians think about the church and missions. You are called upon to examine your prayers, your lifestyle, your material possessions, and your

outreach—both locally and worldwide. He says that the "intensity of a fire is measured not only by the heat it gives off, but also by the number of other nearby objects which it ignites."

The book is divided into thirteen easy chapters. Each chapter contains simple suggestions on how to put into practice what is being learned. A detailed Leader's Guide is included at the end of the book. The guide has a lesson plan for each chapter. Goals are stated, materials needed are listed, and a time schedule is given for each lesson. Also, assignments, applications, and prayer suggestions are given. Permission is given for some pages to be copied for handouts. There are four pages of resources for further growth.

This book will enlarge your vision of the world as you investigate how God is working and wants to use you in the 21st Century.

preview

May/June 2000

- ◆ Part 4 in a four-part series on the US Free Will Baptist Homes for Children
- ◆ Passing the Torch in the Family

works to plant a church across the border in Livramento, Brazil. Mário also works with the Barrio Recreo congregation in Rivera. Ask God to bless his health as he works at a funeral parlor in the evenings and does ministry during the day.

David and Annette Aycock and Andy and Andrea Moore have received board approval for career missionary service in Brazil. Also, Kim Zegelian has been appointed as a career overseas associate to teach at International Christian Academy in Côte d'Ivoire. Ask the Lord to provide faithful prayer and financial partners for these missionaries.

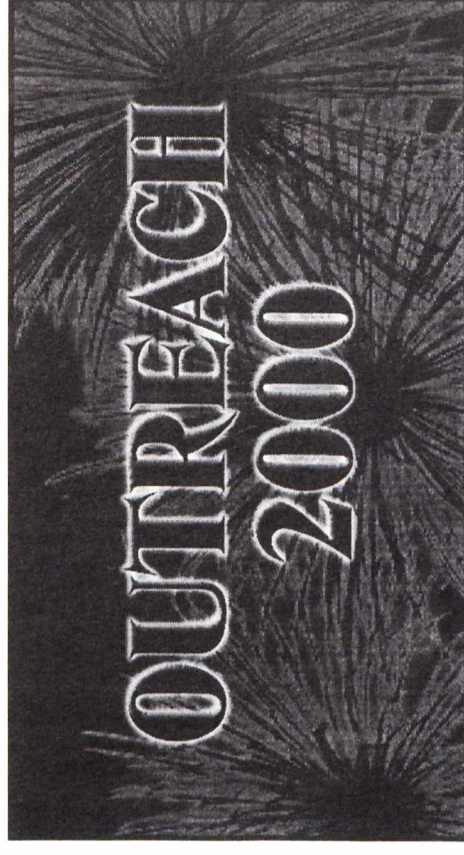
Friday

Pray for outreach to the Kuna Indians in Panama. Eddie and LaRhonda Bowerman, along with a Panamanian couple, continue to make strides in developing friendships and learning the language. Justin and Leslie Banks joined the team in February of 2000 for a one-year term to determine if Justin's health will permit them to work in Panama. He has contracted an arthritic condition called Reiter's Syndrome, so please pray for God's help and direction for the Banks.

Pray for the foreign missions staff who work behind the scenes to assist the missionaries with life and ministry details. Ask the Lord to give them wisdom and strength as they carry out their responsibilities. Pray that people will give to the Support Services account to help erase the deficit.

Praise the Lord for opening doors for the expansion of Free Will Baptist outreach around the world. Pray that He will call more people into missionary service. Personnel are needed on each existing field and opportunities open to go to restricted access countries.

Pre-Easter Week of Prayer



for World Missions

April 17-22

Munday

Pray for Stan and Brenda Bunch as they work to plant a church in Chitré, Panama. Ask God to give them spiritual wisdom and fruit as they reach out to people with the gospel.

Pray for Jaimie and Tammy Lancaster and their boys, Jonathan and John William, as they learn the Spanish language and become more involved in the work in Uruguay. They have been able to establish friendships with people from other countries through language study and the boys' school friends. Ask God to use them to win many people to Christ, Uruguayans as well as other nationalities.

Pray that God will call a couple to serve as house parents for the Free Will Baptist boys' dormitory at International Christian Academy in Bouake, Côte d'Ivoire. Another missions agency has provided a couple for the academic years 1999-2000 and 2000-2001, but a Free Will Baptist couple is needed to accept this responsibility soon so they can start ministry in August of 2001.

Tuesday

Praise the Lord for national leaders who are serving Him in Free Will Baptist works around the world, and ask Him to call more nationals into full-time service. Pray that the leaders will remain strong in their faith and that God will bless their ministries.

Pray for Tim and Kristi Johnson in Spain who are scheduled to have final exams at the university the last week in May. Their first child is due June 9. Pray that God will give Kristi special strength to finish school and make final preparations for the baby's arrival. Also, remember the ministry of the rest of the Spain team: Jeff and Susan Turnbough, Lynn Midgett, Sam and June McVay, and Anthony and Lea Edgmon.

Pray for Dennis and Carol Teague, Patsy Vanhook, and Cathy Crawford in St. Sébastien, France. Through personal contact they are helping people to become aware of their spiritual needs. Ask the Lord to continue to work through the missionaries to reach people for Christ in this spiritually dark country.

Pray for Dr. John and Esther Chang in Seoul, South Korea, who have a vision for reaching all of Asia with the gospel. They are in the process of starting a Bible institute to train faithful Christian workers for this purpose. Pray that God will bless this effort and open doors for ministry in Asia, including North Korea.

Wednesday

Pray for Ernest and Elaine Holland in Bondoukou, Côte d'Ivoire, as they work with the youth ministry. Several evangelistic campaigns were carried out by the youth during the fall of 1999 and spring of 2000. Ask God to bless these young people as they work to reach others for Christ.

Pray for the missionaries in Japan as they develop a new strategy for Free Will Baptist work in that country. The Japanese people are materialistic and hard to reach. Pray that God will prepare hearts to receive the good news of Jesus Christ from our missionaries and the Japanese Christians.

Thursday

Praise the Lord for giving Free Will Baptists the opportunity to partner with Russian believers. Pray for six Russian church planters who are carrying the gospel to their countrymen with the help of Free Will Baptists. Pray that Russians will hunger for the Word of God and be drawn to one of these works to hear the gospel.

Pray for Pastor Mário da Conceição in Rivera, Uruguay, as he

Mission Alert

Evangelism News from Around the World



Brazil

Bobby and Sue Aycock in Brazil are rejoicing that the new church building in Antonio Carlos was dedicated on October 30, with 150 people in attendance. The church called a Brazilian man, Flavio Jose Grossi, to assist Bobby during the year 2000 with the expectation that he will become pastor in 2001. Flavio's ordination was held at Barvacena on November 20.

Geneva Poole in Brazil is doing well after several months of chemotherapy and radiation for cancer. We praise the Lord for giving Geneva and Bobby strength for each day during the time of her treatments.

Côte d'Ivoire

Pastor Jerome Kambou and missionary Alice Smith in Ivory Coast request prayer for the Agnibilekrou church as they

conduct an evangelistic campaign in the village of Yebouakrou. They expect much opposition to the gospel from the evil spirit to which the villagers are subject. Pray that the 600 plus people will be delivered from the spirit's power over them and find salvation in and through the Lord Jesus.

Jerry and Carol Pinkerton in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, received encouraging news from the realtor who is handling the purchase of land for the church. After over a year of praying and waiting, the legal documents have reached the desk of the proper government official. Pray that he will sign the documents speedily so they can go to the next step in the purchase process.

India

Carlisle Hannna requests prayer for Pastor Philip in India. Much persecution is going on in his area, but many people are turning to Christ as well. Remember to pray for these who are undergoing persecution and pray for Brother Carlisle as he

continues to minister in India.

St. Sebastien, France

Dennis and Carol Teague are looking to the future with optimism. The meeting room has been full for some time now, and decisions are being made about creating more seating space. The young people are getting more involved in the ministry as well. They recently prepared and presented an evangelistic evening where there were ten unchurched teenagers present.

The men of the church have started a monthly breakfast—prayer and share time. It has been encouraging and has created a real sense of unity among them. They request prayer for one of the newer Christian men who has just been diagnosed with lung cancer.

North Carolina

Tanya Hart, who has worked on behalf of the MK ministry, has suffered severe and hard-to-diagnose health problems for several years. Most recently, she has had mini-strokes, a fungus in the esophagus, and chronic sinus infections, in addition to fibromyalgia and adrenal gland dysfunction. However, she and her family are praising the Lord that she has shown definite signs of improvement in recent days.



Poet's Corner

"A LAMB IS NEEDED NO MORE"



Over a year ago, my husband David preached a sermon dealing with Christ being the "ultimate" sacrifice for our sins. During the sermon, he shared the Levitical duties of the priest to offer the sacrifice and roll the sins of the people ahead for another year. Since I had attended Sunday school all my life and graduated from Bible College, this was no new revelation for me. Yet, that day as he spoke, it all took on new meaning. My sins were not rolled ahead; they were forgiven. My sins were not brought before me again; they were forgotten.

Into the Holy of Holies, went the man of God
To offer the sacrifice and pour out the lamb's blood.
Forgiveness once more was given; one year removed -
Rolled away!

Faith had brought them to this place,
But they looked forward to Calvary's day.

Into the Holy of Holies, went the Son of God
To offer Himself as a sacrifice and shed His precious blood.
Forgiveness once more was given; forever removed -
Rolled away!

Faith has brought us to this place,
And we look back to Calvary's day.

No longer a lamb is needed for a sacrifice.
The Lamb of God was offered and paid the highest price.
My sins, oh, my sins are forgiven;
They're covered by Calvary's flow.
Christ gave Himself to redeem me;
A lamb is needed no more.

- Debe Taylor -



Life!Action

a column for teens

Ruth Ellen Britton is 13 years old and attends Woodland Middle School in Nashville, TN. She enjoys playing basketball and spending time with friends and family.



What's Hot

1. Sweettalk

Give true compliments; encourage others. (1 Thes. 4:18)

2. Contentment

Be happy with what the Lord has given you. Make the best of your talents. (Phil. 4:11)

3. Kindness

Be kind to everyone; forgive people.

4. Purity

Our body is the Lord's temple, and we should keep it pure. (Psalm 51:10)

5. Get Smart

Always try to do your best. If at first you don't succeed try, try again. (Proverbs 1:7)

6. Truthfulness

When you are at school, don't cheat on tests or home work.

7. Obeying

Honor your father and mother. By obeying your father and mother, you are also obeying God.

What's Not

1. Trashtalk

Taking the Lord's name in vain. (Exodus 20:7)

2. Coveting

Always wanting what everyone else has.

3. Selfishness

Not giving your 10% of every dollar no matter how small your allowance.

4. Conceitedness

Thinking that you are the best at every thing you do; bragging.

5. Laziness

Never doing anything constructive; always laying around.

6. Lying

God hates liars. When you lie to someone, they will lose their trust in you.

7. Complaining

Complaining will get you no where. It just makes things worse.

The Muslim Woman Who is she?

Devoted to home and family, the Muslim woman may be the key to reaching the Islamic world for Christ.

By Clara Huff



When you picture a Muslim woman, what do you see? A mysterious woman draped in black, secluded and excluded from the mainstream of society? Someone very different from you?

For a fifth of the world's people, Islam is both a religion and a culture—a complete way of life. Of the 3 billion women worldwide, 23 percent are Muslim women. In Islam, women are seen as upholders of the morals of the family and society. Responsibility for children's religious education falls to the Muslim woman. In the traditional Muslim home the woman is focused on raising children, and other family obligations.

A Muslim woman is thought to bring dishonor to the family if she does not follow the cus-

oms of segregation of sexes, wearing of a veil, and recognizing the dominant position of men. In some Muslim countries, girls marry between the ages of 12 and 14, by arrangement between families. Men are allowed to marry more than one wife, if they can provide for them and treat all of them equally. Muslim girls are often unschooled and illiterate; some are cloistered and live most of their lives behind the walls of a family compound.

In the past, many Muslim women considered wearing the veil a backward practice, and quit using it. Today young Muslim women are reclaiming the *hijab*—the modest style of dress of Muslim women. They are reinterpreting it in light of its original purpose—to protect women from disrespect by keeping standards of modesty. Some

Christian women living in Muslim countries adopt a modified version of the *hijab*. They explain that the custom of veiling has its roots in Eastern modesty, not Islam, and that the Bible encourages women to dress modestly.

When Muslim women converts remove the veil they lose the respect of their family and society. They are even considered morally loose. Many in Muslim cultures assume that women who adopt Western dress also adopt Western values, allowing them to be seductive, rebellious, and antifamily.

What about the Muslim woman in the Western environment? Because of Americans' attitudes toward Islam, Muslim women are working to portray their culture more accurately to the public. More United States

Muslim women now work outside the home. We see them working in their mosque congregations, and teaching in Islamic parochial schools.

There are more than 1 billion Muslims in the world; they are the majority in some 45 African and Asian countries. In Europe, Islam is the second largest religion, after Christianity. There are 5.5 million Muslims living in the US. Many fear the moral corruption of the family in the West. They see a lack of decency and abuse of freedom. To reach the Islamic woman in Western countries, Christian women must understand Muslims' negative perception of the US lifestyle.

Nell Magee teaches English to Muslim women. Nell's student Anni, a mother, is clearly the center of the home Anni shares openly.

Anni wears the veil and clothing of the Muslim, but not as a requirement; she does it out of desire. She never attended school or learned to read or write, but she has her driver's license, does all the banking, and the shopping for her family. The day she married at age 13 was the first day she met her husband. "We have been married 30 years and I love him so much," she exclaimed.

Mother of nine children, Anni is a strong Muslim, faithful in praying to Allah, and loyal to Islam. Her children celebrate with her that she passed the test to become a citizen of the United

States. Her 18-year-old daughter, Sahii, is the interpreter for her mother. Sahii said that all of her brothers and sisters are obedient and would never do anything to bring dishonor or shame to their parents.

For many of us Christianity was an easy choice. However for a Muslim woman, following Christ can be very costly. In hard-line Muslim countries, the very act of leaving Islam is punishable by death. In most Muslim countries, a new Christian is likely to be shunned by the family. Women in these cultures, who



have little status to begin with, fear losing the confidence and protection of their families almost as much as death.

The courage shown by Muslim women who convert to Christianity is an inspiration to missionaries who know them. They call us to pray fervently for these new Christians and those who work among them. The Muslim woman is the key to reaching other family members.

Marla was born in Afghani-

stan. Her Muslim parents came to the US to live and work when she was a young child. Her parents arranged her marriage at age 19 to a Muslim. After several years of abuse from her husband, she got a divorce. With her two young children, she moved to another state to live with her mother, who was separated from her father.

One Sunday while changing television channels, Marla saw a Baptist church service. The preacher described the Christian home and the relationship of husband and wife. His words spoke to her need and her heart. The next Sunday she slipped into the church service, late and very nervous, and heard the first of a series of sermons on the prodigal son. Over the next few weeks she returned to hear the whole story.

Marla began attending church, where she received Christian nurture, learned to pray to God, and believe in Jesus. As she grew in the Christian faith, she prayed for her mother and witnessed to her. Her mother left the Muslim religion and became a Christian.

With fear and trembling she invited her father to come see her perform in the Easter Passion play at church. Soon he became a believer. Maria's beautiful Christian spirit is an inspiration to her family and her church.

In her testimony she said, "I prayed to Allah. He did not help

me. When I prayed to God, He heard my prayer. Now I know Jesus knew me before I ever knew Him.

Anni and Marla are good examples of Muslim women living in the US. The land and culture may be foreign to them. The key to reaching these women is to build relationships with them. As you meet Muslim women be especially sensitive to meeting their needs for developing language skills, skills for living in a different culture from their own, and their need to meet Jesus Christ.

ON YOUR OWN

- Befriend a Muslim woman in your community. Invite her and her family into your home. Exchange information about culture, holidays, and foods.
- Contact the NAMB for a "Be-

lief Bulletin" at 1-800-448-8032, which provides information about Islam and how to reach Muslims with the gospel.

IN YOUR CHURCH

Use ideas from How to Use This Issue (p. 5) and 'Insight (p. 44) along with these suggestions for a meaningful group experience.

- Begin a prayer group to pray for Muslim women. Visit our website at www.womenonmission.com for more information.
- Call your Baptist association office to learn of community agencies or churches in your area that teach English as a second language or offer other services that reach Muslim women. Ask how your group can be involved, or start your own.
- Determine if your group can sponsor a Friendship Interna-

tional House to house and entertain international students during their winter break from school. Contact LifeWay Christian Resources for more information at (770) 785-7603.

IN YOUR WORLD

Ask members of your church if they have any Muslim co-workers. Brainstorm how to reach out to these professionals and their families. Non-English-speaking spouses may need help in finding health care, shopping, childcare, tutoring for their children, or English-speaking friends to practice their language skills. Statistics say that many internationals are never invited into an American home. You can change that by extending your friendship and hospitality.

How to witness to a Muslim woman

LEARN all you can about Islam so you can understand their strong commitment to their religion.

SHOW genuine concern and kindness. Try to find a Muslim family and make friends. Visit with them, invite them to your home. Friendship is important to them.

RESPECT their customs. Don't make jokes about sacred topics such as fasting or prayer. They respect teachings of Jesus, so start with a Scripture such as Matthew 5.

IDENTIFY common beliefs and areas of need, but don't argue about beliefs.

DEMONSTRATE a Christian lifestyle. Don't be afraid to share your personal testimony. They expect Christians to be Christlike.

BE respectful of the Bible. Never put it on the floor or things on top of it, or write in the copy you use with them. Use the word *Bible* instead of *Scripture*. The word *Scripture* also refers to other writings, such as the Koran.

ASK serious questions and listen attentively.

BE prepared to help them understand that Jesus is the only way we can be reconciled to God. When a Muslim finally stands for Christ, her faith is strong because she hasn't made the decision lightly.

PRAY for the guidance of the Holy Spirit and depend on His power. Organize special times of prayer for Muslims, Muslim countries, and missionaries who work with Muslims. Pray for more Christians to hear the call of God to work with Muslims in the United States and around the world.

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Words for Women

*Marjorie H.
Workman*

Coal Miner's Daughter New Editor

Do you believe in chance? Not me. I believe Proverbs 3:6, "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." Sure, there are times when things happen that seem like chance to the casual observer. That's how Rhonda McReynolds came to WNAC as the new editor of *CoLaborer* magazine.

Newlywed, Rhonda moved to Nashville in 1997 to join her husband Matt who was already here. They wanted a good church whose doctrine was the same as their United Baptist Church back home in Delbarton, West Virginia. While in the parking lot of Lowe's Home Improvement Warehouse Store, they saw a van with "Woodbine Free Will Baptist Church" written on the side. They copied the phone number, called the church for directions and began attending. They became members a short time later. Was it chance that the Woodbine van was in the parking lot? No, God was working to make paths cross for a future time.

Free Will Baptists are not strangers to Rhonda. The first eight years of her life she attended Mountain Springs Free Will Baptist Church with her parents Larry and Alpha Whitt. They later joined the United Baptists. Was it chance that gave her FWB roots? Or was God preparing a little girl for a future ministry with FWB women?

Was it chance that a job change took Rhonda and her husband to North Carolina for a year and then brought them back to Nashville just as *CoLaborer's* editor resigned? Women were praying for a new editor. Letters were mailed. The search was on. Driving home alone from a state meeting, I prayed. "Lord, where am I going to find an editor? In addition to the main requirement of being a Christian, I need someone with

English or journalism skills and computer experience with Pagemaker. Someone who would come for what we were able to pay? Lord, you'll have to put her in front of my face."

Was it chance that the next day at church a member approached me and said, "Are you still looking for an editor? I have one for you. She's here. Come and I'll show you." I walked with him to the back of the church where Rhonda was standing. Of course, I knew her. I knew her before she moved away. I even knew she was a teacher. What I didn't know was that she taught high school English. Nor did I know she had a double major in English and Communications from Concord College.

I learned she had produced radio commercials and designed pamphlets using Pagemaker. She managed a research team, wrote the script and did a documentary on the historical background of Concord College. During the summer of '97, she did an internship with Channel 5 News, in Nashville. She was an honor student, a member of the Gamma Beta Phi Honor Society, and recipient of the "Best News Writer Award."

Oh, did I tell you that she met her husband Matt the first day at Concord College after transferring from another college? Chance? Mutual friends had been trying to get the two together for some time but had not been successful. When she was introduced to Matt that day, she nearly fainted. This was the guy her friends had been telling her about. Four years later when they married, he had already arrived in Nashville. Although I did not know, God knew the path that He was preparing for Rhonda and WNAC. Welcome aboard, Rhonda.

Free Will Baptist Women

EMBRACING THE VISION



"Where there is no vision, the people perish"
—Proverbs 29:18

Laura Belle Barnard

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