

A Free Will Baptist Magazine for Women

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CoLaborer

Holiday
Gift Ideas

Lessons from
the Star

Home Missions
Prayer Guide

Nov • Dec 2000

VISION

Trymon Messer
Guest Editorial



Laborers Together

"I COMMEND unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchræa: That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also" (Romans 16:1, 2).

When I think of Phebe, the bearer of this Roman epistle, and Paul's commendation of her, my mind and thoughts center on Women Nationally Active for Christ and their tremendous work and ministry. Paul states that Phebe was a sister, a saint, a servant, and a succourer of many. Dr. Picirilli, in his writing on the Book of Romans, states that the word *succourer* could be used as *help-provider* or *sponsor*. The guess is that she had filled this office in a monetary way.

As we approach November, Home Missions Month, and the Pre-Thanksgiving Week of Prayer, I am again reminded of the wonderful contribution that our Free Will Baptist women make for the cause of Christ...not only in service and prayer, but also as providers, in financial matters, in prayers, and in action such as the provision closet. What a help and blessing the WNAC is to our Home Missions Department and to our missionaries.

Our department depends on WNAC so heavily to help in the promotion of our November Home Missions Month project with fervent prayers and financial support. The Free Will Baptist ladies always come through in a mighty way. We thank these precious ladies for holding up our department and our missionaries, not only in November, but also throughout the entire year.

This year the cross-cultural emphasis is really strengthening and making great strides, and the number of missionaries is increasing. We really need your help. Because of the language barrier, many of our cross-cultural missionaries are unable to raise adequate funds for their support. Therefore, our department feels the financial pressure as it relates to this ministry.

Paul also states concerning Phebe that the church at Rome "...assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you..." (Romans 16:2b). Paul is asking the church to help her. WNAC also has great financial needs, and yet they are always so gracious to help with the needs of others.

I am asking that we all get behind this great department. They are always such a help and a blessing to so many. Let's help the Women Nationally Active for Christ in their financial struggle. Our missionaries and others depend on this department. It is only fitting that we do all that we can to help them. They are a vital part of our denomination and we are all working together for the same cause...to win others to Christ. ♦

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586 attendees to the
WNAC National
Convention.**

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on a walk with God
during their state
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Debe Taylor, calls
for Christians to
"leave a light on"
for the world.**

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A Door Ajar

2000 WNAC Convention Review



The 2000 WNAC convention welcomed 586 registered attendees to Anaheim, California. The music, the speakers, and the banquet focused around the year's theme, "Opportunities: A Door Ajar." The convention offered many spiritual and growth opportunities, and those present walked through the open doors with renewed hearts.

General Session

Elaine Holland, missionary to Cote d' Ivoire, centered her devotion around the year's theme in the Tuesday morning session. She encouraged the crowd to take advantage of every open door. She emphasized the need to recognize daily opportunities as a means of witnessing for Christ.

Marjorie Workman, WNAC Executive Secretary-Treasurer, gave encouragement to the women about the work they

do. "I'm excited about the work of WNAC." Gifts for the missionary provision closet already for the year 2000 have topped the total for all of 1999. Nearly \$60,000 has been received in cash and non-cash gifts. Mrs. Workman also took time to read a letter from



Executive Secretary-Treasurer, Marjorie Workman

a student who attends International Christian Academy in Cote d'Ivoire. The letter was written to all WAC women asking for two new computers for their school. The highlight of the morning came when Mrs. Workman introduced the new full color WNAC brochures. Each woman present received a copy.

Debe Taylor, WNAC President, presided over the business session. The following resolutions were

approved by the Women Nationally Active for Christ during the convention:

1. To decorate and furnish the Mission House to be built on the campus of Free Will Baptist Bible College by the Foreign Missions and



WNAC President, Debe Taylor

Master's Men Departments.

2. To grant up to three scholarships of \$1000 each from the Cleo Pursell Foreign Student Scholarship Fund.

A third motion was made to specify the number of years a WNAC Executive Committee member may serve. The motion was tabled until 2001.

Seminars

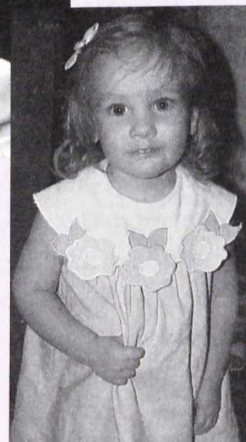
Nearly 200 women attended two WNAC seminars on Monday afternoon.

When Cancer Comes to Your House

"Please stand if you have had cancer. Please stand if a relative has had cancer. Please stand if you know someone who has had cancer."

With no one in the room left sitting, Joanna Felts captured people's attention by driving

Convention Moments



home the fact that, in some way, cancer touches every one.

She then lightened the mood by reading the children's story, "Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day."

*At that moment, I
looked into the face of
fear—stark, paralyzing
fear."*

The story was a good lead into the roaring emotions of a household struck with cancer.

Joanna revealed all the emotions on the roller coaster ride through this disease. She spoke on everything from shock to denial to fear. "At that moment, I looked into the face of fear—stark, paralyzing fear. I was carrying a killer and I was afraid." Then, she revealed how God brought her peace during this time.

Women walked away with insight and encouragement when facing this dreadful disease in their own life or in the life of someone they know.

Treat Yourself to a Retreat

Judy Posner (TX), Deborah Honeycutt (OK), and Rhonda Hodges (CA) led the women down the road to planning a retreat. The speakers supplied the women with an assortment of ideas for planning and organizing a retreat on the local and state levels.

Creative Arts Contest

CoLaborer editor, Rhonda McReynolds, presented awards to twelve winners in the 2000 WNAC Creative Arts Contest. There were 120 entries in four categories. This year's first place winners are:

Poetry: "Clutter," Freeda Lucas, Cromona, KY

Articles: "The Chef," Alice Grant, Lancaster, OH

Programs: "Five Nobodies Who Were Somebodies for the Lord," Cheryl Akers, Jacksonville, FL

Plays: "A Friend Like No Other," Sara Kilgore, Limestone, TN

Missionary Service

"Go ye. . . our only question should be where. . .?"



Annette Aycock, Missionary to Brazil

Annette Aycock, missionary to Brazil, challenged

each person to do as God has commanded and "go."

Her message centered on a series of events that happened in her life from losing her money to losing her youngest daughter Destiny in Brazil.

Annette related these experiences to asking the question, "What is your level of commitment to missions?" She challenged the traditional thinking that giving money and having compassion for missions are doing enough. Instead,

hearts were inspired to a deeper commitment. "Finances and compassion are good, but they are not good enough. . . God's heart aches for souls whom he wants to come home."

As the audience wiped tear-filled eyes, the closing words penetrated the hearts of those listening.

"Nothing is good enough until we are all going . . . to the grocery store, to the doctor's office, to the ball game . . . Your next open door is the next lost person you meet."

Fellowship Luncheon

WNAC's 2000 luncheon was a success. This was the first time

to have a luncheon instead of a dinner. The tickets sold out and the room was filled to capacity.



The California women provided each table with a beautiful basket full of California surprises. One lucky person from each table got to take the basket home.

Pat Clary from the Women's Ministries Institute was the speaker for the afternoon. She continued with the "Door Ajar" theme. She challenged the crowd to be like Esther and dream big dreams, enter into the presence of the Lord, surrender to his presence and initiate a plan to move into service for the Lord.

Those present left the luncheon with the question, If God could do anything with your life—what would HE DO?❖

Tentmakers Past and Present

adapted from a program written by Margaret Hardison



(Left to right: back row, Terry and Margaret Hardison, Lori and Mitchell Strickland; front row, Christie and Mike Ray)

The Concept

Aquila and Priscilla were a lay couple who performed a great service as helpers in the ministry of the Apostle Paul. They are first mentioned in Acts 18:2... "a certain Jew named Aquila born in Pontus lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla." Verse three tells us they were tentmakers. When Paul came to Corinth he lived with Aquila and Priscilla. When he went to Ephesus to start a church they went with him. This strong lay-couple were the ones who "expounded the way of God more perfectly" to Apollos. In the book of Romans Paul calls them "my helpers in Christ Jesus..."

Margaret Hardison is a Home Missionary to Wisconsin.

The Pattern

Taking inspiration from this dedicated lay couple, the National Home Missions Board adopted the "Aquila and Priscilla" program to aid in the planting of Free Will Baptist churches. This program is designed to give recognition and assistance to those dedicated lay couples who leave their homes and move to help home missionaries establish churches.

Even though these couples work at secular jobs, under this program they may raise money for moving expenses and receive designated funds through the Home Missions Department.

These co-laborers provide an invaluable service to the home missionaries through personal friendship, fellowship and assistance on the field. They enhance all aspects of the church's ministries by leading music, teaching classes, visiting prospects, working with children, and evangelizing the community.

The Example

Come with us to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and meet home missionary Margaret Hardison. Let her tell you about some 21st Century Aquilas and Priscillas:

It had been 73 years since there was a Free Will Baptist church in the Milwaukee area. The first one was established in 1837 by a preacher named Rufus Cheney and his two sons. In 1925, the community dwindled and died, so did the original church.

In 1998 my husband and I came back to this area to begin another Free Will Baptist church. As did Rufus Cheney, we also brought our family with us. Let me introduce them to you.

Mitchell Strickland is married to our daughter, Lori. Mitchell has an outstanding voice and is a gifted musician. Lori plays the keyboard and sings beautifully also. They provide music for our worship services. Mitchell is an investment counselor by trade which allows him to reach into homes all over the Milwaukee area. Through his work, he shares his faith and invites people to church whenever a door is open. This 21st Century Aquila-Priscilla team is committed to the Lord, to each other and to their two children. What a blessing they are to our mission work.

Our other son-in law, Michael Ray, is an ordained Free Will Baptist preacher. He is married to our daughter Christie. He is an excellent Bible teacher, a good soul-winner and helps out on visitation. He and Christie are quite a team. They have great

"When God calls people to leave their safety zone and go out to labor for him, material things seem to lose their importance."



abilities in the area of children's ministries. They are looking forward to the day when our church is bursting with children. Until then, they will work and pray to make that dream a reality.

To suppose that these Aquila-Priscilla teams followed us to Wisconsin would be incorrect. They each testify to the conviction that God led them here, even as He led us, to establish a Free Will Baptist church in the metropolitan area of Milwaukee: home of 1,000,000 souls.

When this church is firmly established, these two teams plan to start all over again to plant two more churches in the Milwaukee area. Hopefully, within the next two decades there will be three Free Will

There are no age limitations or educational requirements. All that's needed is a recommendation from your pastor.

You won't get much praise or recognition in this life for your hard work and sacrifice. You will probably never be rich or have a great deal this world has to offer materially. But when God calls people to leave their "safety zone" and labor for him, these things seem to lose their importance. Someday you will hear God's "well done...good and faithful servant." What more could any servant ask.

How about you? What is God calling you to do? You don't have to go to a mission field to be a

"These co-laborers provide an invaluable service to the Home Missionaries through personal friendship, fellowship and assistance on the field."

Baptist churches in this area because of the dedication of these young couples.

Pray for the Stricklands and the Rays as they home-school their children and live on tight budgets. Ask God to bless them as they work secular jobs and help build a work in the Milwaukee area.

The Challenge

*A*s new churches are started, many more dedicated lay couples are needed. God needs postal workers, teachers, computer programmers and men and women in all professions who are willing to partner with a home missionary in spreading the Gospel. He can use you and your family to help start a new church.

"tentmaker." Jump in where you are and be a help and blessing to your pastor as he labors with his "mission field."

Pray for the twelve tent-maker teams who currently are recognized by the Home Missions Department. Write or call the Home Missions Department for information about who they are and where they are serving. Ask God how you can be an encouragement to these unsung heroes. Better yet, talk it over with your husband. Then tell God that your family would be willing to increase the number of tent-makers to thirteen.❖

Lessons from the Star

by Debbie Burden

Stargazing has been around for thousands of years. Small children even find

the night sky fascinating. Perhaps one of the first songs you learned as a child was, "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star. How I wonder what you are."

On a dark night about 1000-1500 stars can be seen by the naked eye. Constellations help identify particular stars by breaking the sky into more manageable bits.

In the book of Job, certain stars and constellations are mentioned. . . the star "Arcturus;" a cluster of stars called "Pleiades;" and also the larger constellation of "Orion." While recognizing only a few constellations may be

a feat for the amateur stargazer, the Psalmist says that God, the Creator of the Universe, calls them all by name. Therefore, it



should not be a surprise that God would cause a new star to be seen in the sky in honor of some great event.

The ancient magi (or wise men) of the Christmas story would have been very familiar

with Arcturus and the other stars mentioned in the Bible. Night after night these intriguing characters looked into the sky trying

to learn all they could about God's wonderful universe. Residing in Babylon, the wise men had opportunities to learn from the writings of Daniel.

How much Old Testament truth they learned is not certain, but we find these magi at the birth of Christ

familiar with Messianic prophecy and seeking the true God. More specifically, they were looking for the One who had been born "King of the Jews."

God Is A Caring God

What was the meaning of this

Debbie Burden attends First FWB Church in Locust Grove, Oklahoma. She serves as WNAC Member at Large and as the Secretary for Oklahoma State WAC.



star that caught the attention of the magi? To these men who truly wanted to know more about God, it seemed as if God, who knew their hearts, placed this star in the sky just for them. That's how much God cared about them. And so the first lesson from the star is this: God cares about you and me. He loves us and yearns for us to know more about Him. Do you want to know more of God?

How often do we nonchalantly sing the words to the familiar hymn, *"More about Jesus would I know, More of His grace to others show. More of His saving fullness see, More of His love who died for me. More about Jesus let me learn, More of His holy will discern: Spirit of God, my teacher be, Showing the things of Christ to me?"*

With so many demands being made upon women today, let us be careful not to fall into the trap of "letting the urgent crowd out the important." Take time to develop an intimate relationship with this caring God through Bible study, prayer and worship.

This relationship is our lifeline. May we have the desire to know God just as the wise men.

To learn more, the Magi made a long journey to the land of the Jews. Can you imagine what was involved to make this trip? Food, water, clothing, blankets and tents all had to be packed in preparation for travelling. Of course, if they were going to meet a new prince or king, gifts must be taken as well. This would be a lengthy trip, so good-byes must be said to family and friends.

The magi were respected men in their time, but were foreigners to the Roman Empire. Eastern influences were not necessarily welcomed by the Romans, so when they arrived in Herod's court, Herod was understand-

ably troubled. He even felt threatened by their presence. According to John MacArthur, Jr. in *Miracle of Christmas*, when Matthew 2:3 said "he was troubled," it used a word that means "shaken" or "agitated" like the heavy-duty cycle of a washing machine. In other words, he was in great turmoil!

As upset as Herod was, he very diplomatically called in Jewish experts and asked them where the Christ was to be born. They told him the prophet had written that out of Bethlehem one would come to rule over Israel.

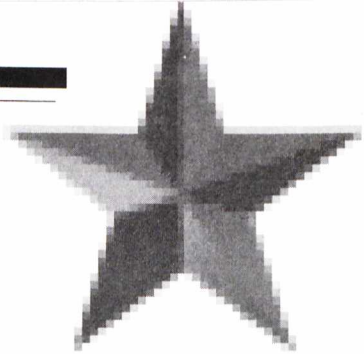
Herod summoned the magi and told them, "Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also." Hurriedly they left the palace and turned toward Bethlehem. They had only five or six more miles to go. How excited they must have been. The star was still leading them, right in the direction of Bethlehem! And then the star stopped over one special house. Their search had come to a successful end!

God Is Our Compass

Thus, the second lesson from the star: God will also give us

"... it seemed as if God, who knew their hearts, placed this star in the sky just for them."

"He did not leave us alone to find our own way, but will be our guide as we walk with him."



clear direction as we embark on our spiritual journey with Him. Like the magi, we don't always know where our journey with the Lord will take us. However, be assured He will be with us every step we take, guiding us carefully along the way. He knows where the "wrong turns," "slippery slopes" and "blind curves" are. With our hand in His, these dangerous pitfalls are avoided.

Every Christmas the planetariums and astronomers offer explanations of the Christmas star. Some say it must have been Jupiter, or a comet, or the coming together of two planets. None of these explanations are believable, because the star led them right to the house of Jesus. No known natural occurrence could have done that.

The place where they found Jesus was not, by the way, the stable where Jesus was born. Matthew 2:11 says they found Him in a house. This may have occurred months, even a year or so after Jesus' birth. And when they came into the house they fell down and worshipped Him, and opening their treasures they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. God, in His infinite wisdom and grace led these men out of a pagan

land to meet face to face with the Savior. Whatever their intentions were at the beginning of their journey, they were now prostrate before this baby King. They saw something that God's own people could not or did not see—that this was God incarnate!

God Is Come to Us

Christ left heaven and all of its



glory to come and redeem fallen humanity! He came out of love for you and for me. "Christ, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; But made himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." One does not need to ponder long to realize how ut-

terly hopeless man's condition would be if Christ had not come. Because of His coming to earth and the great price he paid for our souls at Calvary, we have hope of knowing God and spending an eternity with Him.

Jeremiah 29:13 says, "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." The magi went to much expense and trouble to find the new King. It required great sacrifice. But they were resolute and relentless in their pursuit of Him. They were truly wise men. May we learn from them what they learned from the star.

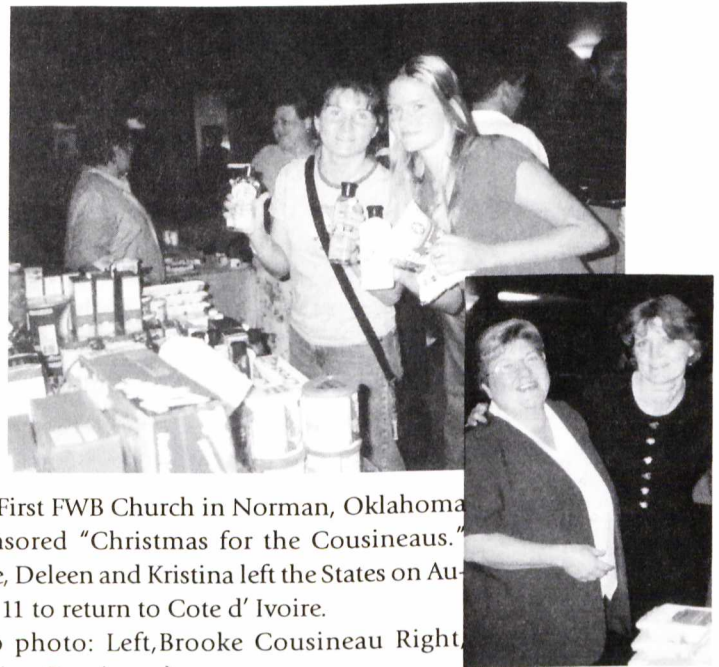
As we place that star atop the Christmas tree this year, let us be reminded that (1) God really does care about every detail of our life; (2) He did not leave us alone to find our own way, but will be our guide as we walk with Him; and (3) His coming gives us hope for a victorious life, both now and for the future. ♦

Women In Action



Showers of Blessings were poured out at First FWB Church in New Castle, Indiana. The ladies held a shower to provide items for the Provision Closet.

(Photo from left to right: Pat Wright, Karen Edwards, Dorothy Kinser, Margaret Gorman, Wilma Batt, Clarice Schmidt, Opal Tatum and Mary Neal.)



The First FWB Church in Norman, Oklahoma sponsored "Christmas for the Cousineaus." Mike, Deleen and Kristina left the States on August 11 to return to Cote d' Ivoire.

(Top photo: Left, Brooke Cousineau Right, Kristina Cousineau)

(Bottom Photo: Left, Sue Chaffin Right, Deleen Cousineau)

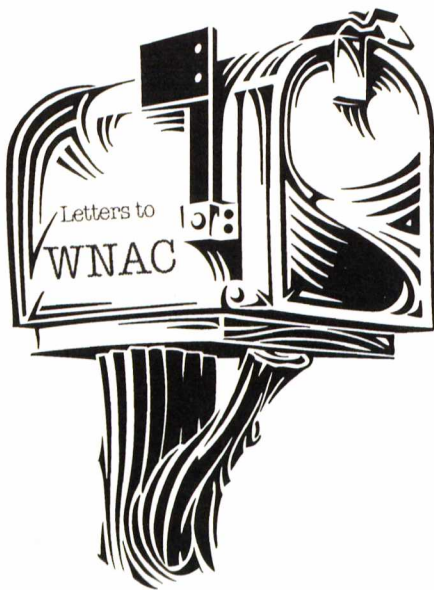


At Florida WAC's 50th anniversary, Diana Bryant, current Florida WAC President and Secretary of WNAC, stands with Etha Mae Owen. Mrs. Owen was the first Vice President at inaugural meeting in 1950.



"These shoes were made for walking." Ohio WACs are putting on their shoes at the Ohio state meeting. The theme centered around "A woman's walk with God."

The devotional revealed why women need a variety of shoes in their daily walk with God such as nursing shoes, working shoes, hiking boots, running shoes, etc. From left to right: Geri Baker, Sandy Mounts, Frances Etterling, Leita Cook, Debbie Teo, Shirley Sharpston, and Shirley Frye



Dear WNAC,

Thanks so much for your wonderful *CoLaborer* magazine! When I receive my copy each month, I read it from cover to cover before laying it down. I appreciate all the hard work that's put into publishing a great magazine for all of us.

Keep up the great job!

Lillie A. Woolard, Washington, North Carolina

Dear WNAC,

I wanted to mention how great the new WNAC brochures are. The writing is well done and contemporary. I picked up 100 to pass around in our state and local churches. I appreciate WNAC giving us this great tool to use in our efforts to reach women.

Melba Hibbard, California

Dear FWB Ladies,

It was Christmas in July! I was as excited as a child on Christmas morning. I had always wanted to be present when a truck from Michigan pulled in to unload at the provision closet. What a blessing!

Your gifts to the provision closet are a blessing to hundreds of missionary families and thus allowing and equipping them to be a blessing to thousands of others.

Merry Sheets and a Happy Crock Pot!

Annette Aycock, Missionary to Brazil

Dear WNAC,

You may be surprised to learn that I read every issue of *CoLaborer*. Without a doubt, I believe that the most recent issue is the best ever. The articles were outstanding and do not only apply to women, but to men also.

Deleen Cousineau's article, "Letting Go," was really good. "Showing Christ in Public Schools" by Jane Hutchison was such a needed article today and Mrs. Pursell's "Open Hearts, Open Doors" was outstanding. Her statement, "The greatest problem of the church is not unanswered prayer but unoffered prayer," keeps ringing in my heart. I also appreciated Willa Johnson's article about the pastor's wife.

Thank you for the great work that the women of our denomination are doing. For many years I did not pay much attention to the work that you all do, but when I began to look, it is astounding.

May God bless you.

Jake Creech, Pastor, Horse Branch Free Will Baptist, Turbeville, South Carolina



Springboard:

Innovative Ideas for WNAC Officers

Coordinator/Assistant Coordinator

Begin now to plan for a successful Pre-Thanksgiving Week of Prayer for Home Missions. Meet with all of your officers before the November meeting to make sure all the materials are ordered and prepared for this special week of prayer. You can find the prayer calendar on pages 25-26. Reproduce the calendar to give to each woman in your group as a prayer reminder.

If your group does not receive AIM, the Home Missions Department's magazine, promote it at the next meeting. This publication serves as a great tool to keep you up-to-date with the missions work going on across the country. Call or write to Home Missions to get your free copy.

Don't forget! The 2001 yearbooks are in and ready to be shipped to you for only \$6. You will find great ideas to help with programs, as well as the Enlistment program and Emphasis play. Order your copy today.

It's not too early to begin thinking about WNAC Enlistment month in January. Begin now by promoting your WAC to the women who are not active members. Some suggestions are to give a personal call or invitation to those women who don't attend, give them a free copy of *CoLaborer* magazine and hand out the new WNAC color brochure to promote your local group. You can receive your complimentary copy of the magazine and your free brochures by calling WNAC at 1-877-767-7662 or e-mail us at WNAC@NAFWB.ORG. You can also write to us at PO Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37011-5002.

Treasurer

Send in the Pre-Thanksgiving Offering through the proper channels.

Missions Chairman

Order the needed materials for the Pre-Thanksgiving Week of Prayer ahead of time. Home Missions has prayer cards for the home missionaries and other materials to help inform your group of the things happening on the home missions front. Call toll free: 1-877-767-7674.

Provision Closet Needs

King, queen and full sheet sets

Queen and twin bedspreads

Queen and full electric blankets

Queen and twin mattress covers

Towel sets

Electric can openers

Small food processors

Tupperware®
(all items)

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

Prayer Chairman

With all that keeps women busy today, many become bogged down with daily worries. Women need a way to hand those worries over to God. At your next meeting, plan to make "worry boxes." The boxes are great tools for all members of the family to learn how to just give it all to God.

Materials:

- Shoe boxes or pre-made boxes with lids
- Decorating materials such as ribbon, lace, glue, glitter, markers, beads, sequins, scrap material, etc.
- Note pad and pencil

Directions:

- 1.) Each woman gives her box a personal touch by decorating the outside.
- 2.) Cut a slit in the lid of the box (large enough to easily slide in a piece of paper).
- 3.) Place the note pad and pencil beside the box.

Objective:

Whenever a family member has a worry, write the worry in a prayer format on a piece of paper. Then put the prayer in the box; therefore, putting it in God's hands. When the box begins to get full, take out some of the prayers and read them again, noticing how the prayer has been answered and how the worry was taken off of your shoulders.

Study Chairman

For the Christmas season, you can suggest that the women begin 30 days before Christmas setting aside time each day to focus on one aspect of the holiday. This time of year it's easy to get consumed with the "work" of Christmas and forget the "gift" of Christmas.

Service Chairman

Organize a Christmas card exchange in your church. Offer to deliver church members' Christmas cards to other church goers for the low price of 15 cents a card. Instead of going through the Post Office, they can send cards through the hands of your WAC. Your group can use the money for missions or other service projects. Use two large pieces of material. One piece of the material will be used for the back, the other piece can be cut into pockets. Attach the pockets to the big piece of material. Make a pocket for each individual family in your church. This can act as your post office. Hang the material on a wall in the back of the church or another designated area. At each service, a WAC member can stand at the post office to collect the money for "mailing." The WAC member, then places the cards in the appropriate pockets. ❖

Special Home Missions Offer



If you would like to send in gifts to specifically help the Cross-Cultural Ministries, Home Missions is making available two items which may be of interest to you. A lighted ceramic church fashioned in the likeness of the Church on

the Ridge in New Durham, NH is being offered for a gift of \$100. There is a limited supply of the churches. Also, a book entitled *The Centennial Record of Free Will Baptists 1780-1880*, has been reprinted from the 1880 original and is being offered for

a gift of \$25. You must contact the Home Missions Department and place your order (1-877-767-7674). The proceeds from both items will be earmarked for the Cross-Cultural Ministry.

HEY ACTIONETTE SPONSORS

Coming in January to a church near you! The new Actionette youth material, "Enjoying the Ride," will be ready for purchase by January 2001. Actionette sponsors won't want to miss out on the new leader's guide and workbooks written just for teens.

Special Prayer Request

Please keep Sue Myers and her family in prayer. Sue's husband was killed in an automobile accident on his way home from work. Sue was on her way home from the National Convention when the accident happened.



Christmas

By Laura Belle Suffridge

What does the word Christmas bring to mind?

Christmas for those who are with loved ones and friends is the happiest day of the year.

For those who have lost loved ones or whose loved ones are far away, and who are remembering other happier holidays, it is the loneliest day of the year.

For those who are without family or friends, or those who are very ill, it is perhaps the saddest day of the year.

But for all of Christianity — all Christians — it is the most joyous day of the year because it gives us hope! Hope for the future!

Christmas feels like holly wreaths pricking your fingers; fragile eggshell like ornaments and silky spin glass angel hair; like sticky seals and smooth silk ribbon.

Christmas tastes like crisp apples and sweet tangerines; like pumpkin pie and fruitcake; like egg nog and cracked nuts; like date cookies and hot chocolate with whipped cream.

Christmas smells like bayberry candles, pine trees, logs burning in the fireplace; like popped corn and plum pudding with flaming sauce; like turkey and cranberries and corn bread dressing.

Christmas sounds like church bells ringing, children laughing, voices singing "Silent Night;" like hurrying feet and small bells tinkling; like snow crunching under foot.

Christmas looks like glistening ribbon candy, holly stretched across the streets, colored tree lights blinking; like mistletoe on door ways; like bright packages on the floor; like star and manger and animals gathered around a different smaller being — Jesus Christ — in a stable.

Christmas is the knowledge of God in our hearts that through the Word made flesh in the manger at Bethlehem we know that we belong to God; that we cannot perish; that we have a perfect, permanent refuge and home.

And because we know this, Christmas smells, feels, sounds, tastes and looks ever so wonderful year after year after year.

Christmas is often all that we make of it in our own hearts. Merry Christmas to each of you! ❖



Laura Suffridge attends East Nashville FWB church in Nashville, TN.

Lucy & Marge

Lucy: Look at this mess, Marge. Here I am working on Christmas cards, Thanksgiving decorations, Christmas decorations, trying to sort everything out. It's such a mess.

Marge: You could do with a little organization.

Lucy: Oh, Marge, I can't stand it! You probably do your Christmas cards way ahead of time and have them ready to mail. Right?

Marge: Well, I do have all of my cards ready to mail.

Lucy: Just as I thought. And I suppose that all year long you've been buying your Christmas gifts and all you have to do is wrap them.

Marge: I think that's the smart way to approach it. You can buy things on sale and use the money you saved to give a special gift to the Lord's work.

Lucy: Some day, I'm going to learn to be like you.

Marge: Lucy, you know that November is a special time to give a gift to National Home Missions.

Lucy: Yes, I remember that, and December is a special time for gifts to our national college. Now, what is it? I can't think of that new name.

Marge: It's not definite yet, but it's Palmer College, Lucy. We do want to give these special gifts, don't we?

Lucy: Of course, Marge. You're right. I'm just letting all these details give me a nervous breakdown.

Marge: You exaggerate, Lucy, but sometimes all of us have a tendency to get wrapped up in decorations, gift giving, parties—

Lucy: dinners, programs, trees, turkeys—November through January 1, it's nothing but holiday work.

Marge: Yes, Lucy, all those things, but maybe we should just stop and think about what these holidays really mean. You know that holiday comes from the idea of holy days.

Lucy: That idea has certainly been lost in the rush, hasn't it?

Marge: We don't have to let it get lost. Just think about the blessings that God has given us, like our families. We all get together at Thanksgiving and have a lovely time.

Lucy: You're right, Marge. I certainly should be grateful for my family. And of course we should be thankful that we aren't starving in the street or without a home. Though sometimes I wonder if my family isn't going to eat me out of house and home.

Marge: Oh, there you go, exaggerating again. But think of Christmas as a time when God gave us the most wonderful gift of all.

Lucy: Of course that's true, Marge, but don't your family and friends expect some gift from you?

Marge: They do, and I don't want to disappoint them. But to me giving gifts is a way of celebrating the greatest gift.

Lucy: Right again, Marge. So I can just sweep all this stuff into the trash can and start over.

Marge: Wait, Lucy, you don't have to

do that. Just slow down a little and as you address cards or tie ribbons, thank the Lord for family and friends.

Lucy: I'll certainly try. And by the way, when is our WAC Christmas party?

Marge: You would think of that. We are meeting (*Time and place*). You don't want to miss that special time with our women. That's another reason for giving thanks.

Lucy: Yes, I plan to be there if—Marge, since you are so far ahead, how about giving me a hand with all these cards, wrapping paper, decorations, ———

Marge: Oh, Lucy, I'm sure you're going to make it. ♦

Lucy & Marge in this issue is written by Mary R. Wisehart and Yvonne Hampton of Nashville, TN.



Communicator

by Marjorie Workman

RENEWAL TIME or GIFT TIME! I'm talking about your *CoLaborer* magazine subscription. This is the last issue of 2000. Any changes for 2001 need to be made immediately in order to keep the records straight. The annual billing statements are sent during the fourth quarter of the year. With this billing, each WAC group is encouraged to add to their bundle plan. In fact, you need to make whatever adjustments are necessary before the mailing of the January-February issue. If we do not hear from you, your subscription continues as is until you tell us something different. Subscriptions to the Bundle Plan (at least five magazines to the same address) are \$8.00 per magazine. Subscription for a single copy is \$8.75. If you receive your magazines damaged, please let us know. We will be glad to send replacements.

CoLaborer is the only Free Will Baptist magazine for women. The subscription price is extremely affordable when compared to most publications. Every Free Will Baptist woman should be reading it. It is more than just a program book for WAC meetings. The magazine . . .

1. Provides articles, human interest stories, Bible studies, and programs for women
2. Reviews good books to encourage your own personal growth or enjoyment
3. Keeps you informed about our missionaries and special projects for missions
4. Provides helps for making your local group successful
5. Tells you what is happening among our women
6. Informs of upcoming WNAC retreats and the National Convention
7. Is written for the most part by Free Will Baptist women.

Give a gift to someone who doesn't get the magazine. It is Christmas time. What can you give to someone who already has everything? Give them a subscription to *CoLaborer*. Mothers, give your daughters a subscription if they are not already involved in WNAC. Choose someone in your church to be a recipient of your Christmas generosity. Provide a subscription for a shut-in or a retiree on limited income.❖

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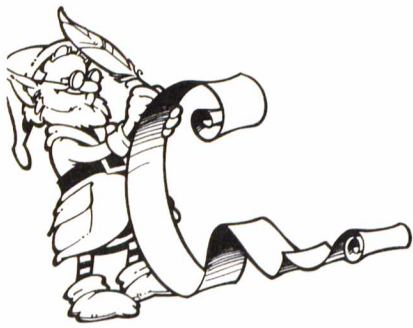
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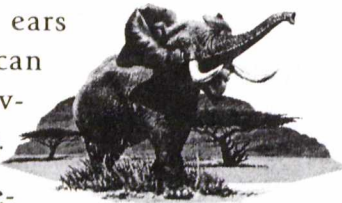
What to give your kids for Christmas

by Floyd Wolfenbarger, 1984

Nobody described how hard it would be to pick Christmas gifts for kids as they got older. Gone are the days when a "Barbie Doll" or "Raggedy Annes" would light up her eyes. Down deep, the little girl is still there who loves dolls, but her personality is much more complicated as she approaches young womanhood. In her adolescence, the intangible needs are the real needs. So what do you give that your teen really needs?

GIVE THEM "ELEPHANT EARS"

I don't mean the giant pastry we used to get at the county fair. I mean ears that can hear everything.

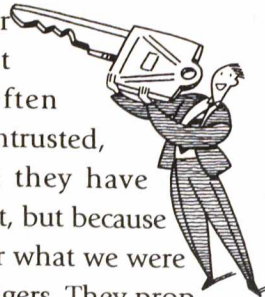


A recent survey showed that parental approval

is more important than peer pressure to teens. The same survey however showed that kids could talk more openly with friends than with parents. Tragic as it is, most young people feel that their parents don't really listen to them. In communicating with parents, teens want to be heard not had!

GIVE THEM "KEYS TO THE SAFE"

In other words, trust them. Often teens feel untrusted, not because they have broken a trust, but because we remember what we were like as teenagers. They properly resent the intrusion of that teen from the 60's who keeps popping up in the present. I'm not talking about permissiveness, but if I don't trust my daughter now, she will never learn to be trustworthy.



GIVE THEM A "WELL-TRIMMED HEDGE"

By that I mean it is important to establish clear limitations. It is unfair to expect teens to be disciplined according to whim. They need to know what our expectations really are.

GIVE THEM A "WALLET PHOTO"

Young people learn most by modeling our example. If I want my child to have a kind attitude, then she must be able to see kindness in me. This gift is perhaps the hardest of all, because by my example she will learn how to react to disappointment, frustration, disagreement, grief and rejection. I must ensure she has a good picture.

It goes without saying that each of these gifts must be motivated by unfeigned love.

Floyd Wolfenbarger served as a Free Will Baptist preacher and pastor until he went to be with the Lord in 1985.

What to give Jesus for Christmas



How can mortals expect to give Jesus anything? He now dwells in heavenly splendor and His every bidding is the commission of the angels. What could you possibly give to Him who is the true giver of every good and perfect gift?

YOU COULD GIVE HIM A PAIR OF SHOES



I don't think you realize how thankful He would be. Shoes are practical and personal, but the problem is to find the right size. Well, the best way is to find a little barefoot boy or girl whose eyes reveal that they have known poverty. Take the child to the shoe

store and find out what size they wear. Buy shoes, give them to the child; it will be just like giving them to Jesus.

YOU COULD GIVE HIM A BOWL OF SOUP

Which of us can long be unmoved by the scenes of hunger in Ethiopia? We can rationalize that such hunger is more the results of Marxist government than the elongated drought, but it doesn't matter which it is to the children with the bloated bellies. As often as we feed the hungry, we are feeding Him. To give so much as a cup of water ensures a reward.



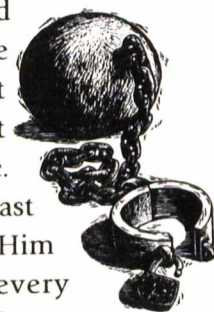
YOU COULD GIVE HIM A SET OF KEYS

How common it is to give Christ only limited access to our lives. We want to restrict Him to the religious domain where we are on our best behavior. Yet the secrets in the closet of our

heart remain hidden. He will never be satisfied until He is given admittance to our social life, thought life, and business life as well as our religious life.

YOU COULD GIVE HIM A SET OF WEIGHTS

I don't mean to imply that He is into bodybuilding. However, nothing could please Him more than for us to get rid of the weight we already have. He wants us to cast our burdens on Him and lay aside every weight. Do you have some care that follows you through the day? Lay it upon Him and be restored to victory and joy.

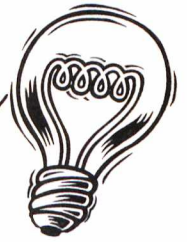


These are but a few suggestions. In fact, all that you do as a Christian should be aimed at giving Him glory.

Merry Christmas and God bless us everyone!❖

We'll Leave the Light On

by Debe Taylor, WNAC President



I love the soothing voice of Tom Bodette as he reassures us that Motel 6 "will leave the light on." We live in a world of darkness. You need only to read the headlines of your local newspaper. After hearing the Motel 6 commercial, I began to think how Christians should leave a light on for the world.

You may ask, "Why should WE leave a light on?" Good question! I would like to share three reasons why the light should be left on.

First, there is the world's cry for a light – "we need a light." Moral and spiritual decay has filled our world with darkness. According to the National and International Report on Religion, "70% of Americans think it's important to obey God or the Bible when choosing right from wrong. Far fewer believe in moral absolutes. Seventy-three percent agreed that there are few moral absolutes; what is right or wrong usually varies from situation to situation. Only 36% were concerned about the influence of secular humanism."

Still, people are groping for the light – begging for the light. It is no different in our day than it was in the days of Isaiah (read Isaiah 59). The only difference is we have changed the names of the problems. In all of this I wonder if the world is echoing the cry of the Psalmist David, "Refuge hath failed me; no man careth for my soul" (Psalm 142:4b). Someone in your "own little world" may be crying out to you – just as the people of Macedonia called out to Paul – "Come over and help us." The world cries for the light!

Secondly, there is Christ's com-

mand – "you are the light" (Matthew 5:14-16).

The Lord wants us to serve Him by reaching others. He wants us to shine brightly – out where the world can see, not under a basket. Don't be mistaken. It's not because of our own abilities and talents, but because of what God can do through our lives.

"I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth" (Acts 13:47). As we obey Christ's command, there will be those whose lives we will brighten. How sad because of our disobedience, someone should be left in darkness. Through our Lord's command, God entrusts to us the ministry of being a shining light to a dark world.

Finally, there is a challenge "to leave the light on." Paul wrote in Philippians 2:14-15, "Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world."

Betsie ten Boom, sister to the famous author Corrie ten Boom, once said, "The most important part of our task will be to tell everyone who will listen that Jesus is the only answer to the problems that are disturbing the hearts of men and nations. We shall have the right to speak because we can tell from our experience that His light is more powerful than the deepest darkness...How wonderful that the reality of His presence is greater than the reality of the hell about us."

No one else has the capacity or capabilities to shine for Christ like you

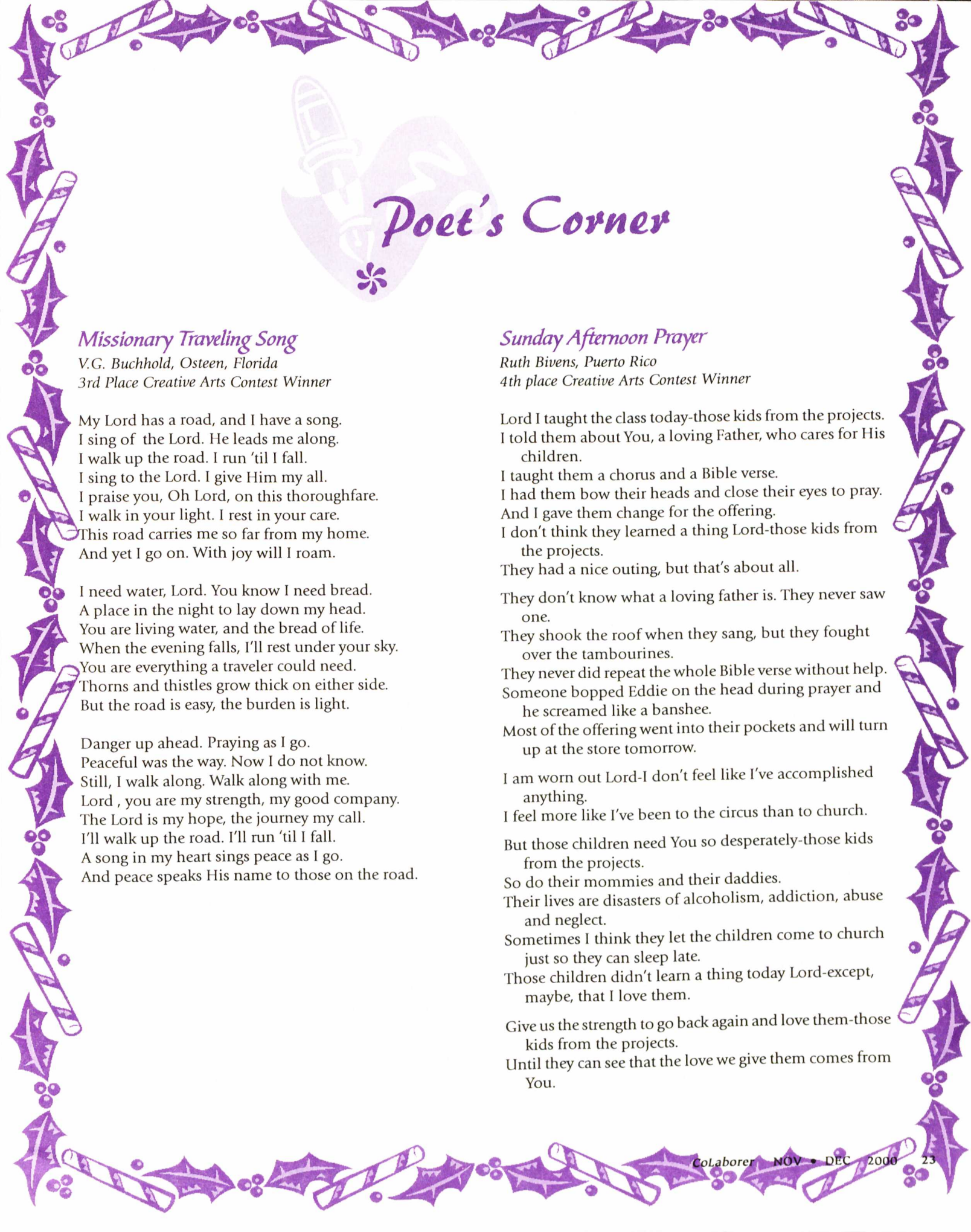
do. God is not looking for lights that are exact replicas of each other. He is looking for some who will shine like a beacon; some like a flashlight; some who will shine like a candle; some like a street lamp; some who will shine like emergency flashing lights; some who are the soft glow of an exit light. Only God knows how He needs you to shine. Your responsibility in all of this is to be willing to shine.

The story is told that in a certain mountain village in Europe several centuries ago, a nobleman wondered what legacy to leave his townspeople. At last he decided to build them a church. Nobody saw the complete plans until the church was finished. When the people gathered, they marveled at its beauty. But one noticed an incompleteness. "Where are the lamps?" he asked. "How will the church be lighted?" The nobleman smiled. Then he gave each family a lamp. "Each time you are here, the area in which you sit will be lighted. But when you are not here, some part of God's house will be dark."

Jesus gave you the ability to shine. When you allow Him to control the light, the world will be able to find the Way. But when you choose not to shine, some part of the world will be dark.

Iesus, the Light of the World, shining through our lives can bring light into the darkness wherever

He has placed us. Our message to the world, travelling on the dark road of life – "Come see us! We'll leave the light on!" ♦



Poet's Corner

Missionary Traveling Song

V.G. Buchhold, Osteen, Florida
3rd Place Creative Arts Contest Winner

My Lord has a road, and I have a song.
I sing of the Lord. He leads me along.
I walk up the road. I run 'til I fall.
I sing to the Lord. I give Him my all.
I praise you, Oh Lord, on this thoroughfare.
I walk in your light. I rest in your care.
This road carries me so far from my home.
And yet I go on. With joy will I roam.

I need water, Lord. You know I need bread.
A place in the night to lay down my head.
You are living water, and the bread of life.
When the evening falls, I'll rest under your sky.
You are everything a traveler could need.
Thorns and thistles grow thick on either side.
But the road is easy, the burden is light.

Danger up ahead. Praying as I go.
Peaceful was the way. Now I do not know.
Still, I walk along. Walk along with me.
Lord, you are my strength, my good company.
The Lord is my hope, the journey my call.
I'll walk up the road. I'll run 'til I fall.
A song in my heart sings peace as I go.
And peace speaks His name to those on the road.

Sunday Afternoon Prayer

Ruth Bivens, Puerto Rico
4th place Creative Arts Contest Winner

Lord I taught the class today-those kids from the projects.
I told them about You, a loving Father, who cares for His children.

I taught them a chorus and a Bible verse.
I had them bow their heads and close their eyes to pray.
And I gave them change for the offering.
I don't think they learned a thing Lord-those kids from the projects.

They had a nice outing, but that's about all.

They don't know what a loving father is. They never saw one.

They shook the roof when they sang, but they fought over the tambourines.

They never did repeat the whole Bible verse without help.
Someone bopped Eddie on the head during prayer and he screamed like a banshee.

Most of the offering went into their pockets and will turn up at the store tomorrow.

I am worn out Lord-I don't feel like I've accomplished anything.

I feel more like I've been to the circus than to church.

But those children need You so desperately-those kids from the projects.

So do their mommies and their daddies.

Their lives are disasters of alcoholism, addiction, abuse and neglect.

Sometimes I think they let the children come to church just so they can sleep late.

Those children didn't learn a thing today Lord-except, maybe, that I love them.

Give us the strength to go back again and love them-those kids from the projects.

Until they can see that the love we give them comes from You.

Life!Action

a column for teens

Beth Franks is in 7th grade. She is a member of the honor society and plays the trombone. Beth attends Eastside FWB Church in Dothan, Alabama.



"The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence." This is what my mom has always told me and most of you have already heard. Well, that's what it seems like to most MK's. I'm not sure about missionaries, but I think it's the same with them. It always seems like it would be "funner," easier, and cheaper on the mission field to those who are in the U.S. So, why does it seem like it would be "funner," easier, and cheaper on the mission field when you are in the U.S.? That is what we've been asking each other but in different words. For example, when we left Uruguay we were excited to come to the U.S. so we could see our family. I don't know about Nathan, but I couldn't wait to wear something besides our uniform to school. Now that I'm in the U.S., I can't decide what to wear to school!

I just got through with a week of Trinity Camp in Guin, Alabama. The week before that, I went to Vineyard Baptist Church for camp in Anton, Alabama with Nathan. Now we're going to the Sturgill family reunion, which is more like a camp because we have such a big family. At least you know that I'm tired after putting two weeks of camp behind me and looking at one before me.

Now about the family...

Celeste has been a big jabber mouth. I don't even want to mention what happens when you put Celeste (three years old), Kailey (our five-year

old cousin) and Kacey (our one-year-old cousin) together. You said it! Put them together and...oops! One day we were in Wal-Mart. Kailey and Celeste were in the bigger part of the buggy and Kacey was in the baby's seat. Kailey said, "Let's sing Celeste." They did. Every song in the baby song book like "ABC" and "Itsy Bitsy Spider." Meanwhile, Kacey was grabbing everything off the shelves as she sang. Now can you picture the work they can be—to think that sometimes my Grandma baby-sits them all at the same time. Where does she get all that patience?

Nathan's doing great. He still likes to stay in his room and play. Slowly he's been doing more things out of his room. He's also been finding more friends. This new toy called "Game Boy Color" has kept him quite busy.

At camp the last few weeks the Lord spoke to me about becoming a missionary. I want to go places where missionaries aren't allowed when I finish high school and Bible College.

I'm 12 years old and I just got through with 6th grade. I'm going into high school (7th). I thought I'd never get there! Nathan is 10 years old and starting 5th grade. Celeste isn't in school. My Mom has been trying her best to get her to go to places where she can associate with other kids her age. She needs to learn the word S-H-A-R-E and forget the word M-I-N-E.❖

Friday - All Home Missionaries and Chaplains/Staff

There are so many integral areas that make up the Home Missions Department, but without the missionaries, there would be no church planters. There are presently 75 Home Missionaries, and the Lord is still calling more to come. This figure does not include the growing number of Tentmakers and Aquila and Priscilla workers who are working in the field for the Lord. The Tentmakers are men who are pastoring churches while working another job. The Aquila/Priscilla workers are those who are leaving their comfort zones and moving to various areas to work with home missionaries in helping them to get their churches started. Planting a church from the very beginning requires a lot of hard work and dedication from every member of the family. We are truly thankful that the trend toward participation in the Aquila/Priscilla program is on the rise, and more families are seriously participating in this area of ministry.

We have chaplains serving in the Army, Air Force, and Navy. These men come in contact with a tremendous range of people from all over the world. Our ten Free Will Baptist military chaplains are a tremendous asset to the Lord's work. We are also seeing more and more of our ministers throughout the denomination becoming involved in chaplaincy programs aside from the military. Please remember these workers in your prayers. The chaplaincy program, whether local or in the armed forces of our country, requires a "24 hour, seven days a week" involvement.

- *Pray for all our Home Missionaries, Tentmakers, Aquila and Priscilla workers and their families as they labor in many ways daily for the Lord. The fields are white unto harvest and we need to plant as many Free Will Baptist churches as possible to reap the harvest of souls.*
- *Pray for our chaplains and their families as they travel and as they deal with those from various backgrounds and walks of life. Ask the Lord to guide them and give them confidence to speak boldly to those in need.*

Pre-Thanksgiving Week of Prayer for Home Missions

November 13-17, 2000



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

Monday - Lizzie McAdams Offering for Home Missions

WNAC honored our first pioneer home missionary by naming the Pre-Thanksgiving offering after Lizzie McAdams. She was an ardent supporter of missions, a prayer warrior, and a charter member of the National Home Missions Board.

The Home Missions Department is committed to the work of the *missionaries and chaplains, church planting and church growth, C.E.L.F./Build My Church, missionary builder, and the cross-cultural ministry*. The opportunities for reaching the lost are unlimited. The Lizzie McAdams Offering becomes a part of the Benjamin Randall Offering for November 19, 2000. This offering goes to underwrite the various ministries of the National Home Missions Department.

- *Pray that everyone will give with a joyful heart to further the many ministries that are a part of the National Home Missions Department.*
- *Pray about your part in this year's Lizzie McAdams Offering for Home Missions.*
- *Pray for the Home Missions staff and board members.*

Tuesday - Cross-Cultural Ministry

The National Home Missions Department is responsible for implementing, directing, and supervising the Free Will Baptist Cross-Cultural Ministry. This ministry is growing quickly, especially among the Hispanic, Hmong, Korean, and Slavic people. Let's be specific in our prayers and remember the individual ministries of:

<i>Omar Alfaro, FL</i>	<i>Andrei Chirine, PA</i>	<i>Chang Hyo Choo, CA</i>
<i>Alexandre Drozdov, IL</i>	<i>Jean Guertier, FL</i>	<i>Ki Sun Huang, CA</i>
<i>John Joo, CA</i>	<i>Woojong Kang, CA</i>	<i>Chul Soo Kim, CA</i>
<i>Eun Ki Kim, CA</i>	<i>James S. Kim, CA</i>	<i>Sang Ki Kim, VA</i>
<i>Sun Gng Kim, CA</i>	<i>Yong J. Lee, NC</i>	<i>Vladimir Lopuga, CA</i>
<i>Leonid Morgun, CA</i>	<i>Victor Nafatyuk, NC</i>	<i>Vitali Rozhko, CA</i>
<i>Carlos Rubio, TN</i>	<i>Ramon Zuniga, AR</i>	<i>Soon Young Lee, MD</i>

- Dr. Thomas Maberry, President of the Seminary of the Cross, Reynosa, MS
- Dr. Paul Park, Representative for the Korean emphasis
- Leonid Morgun, Representative for the Slavic movement
- Rick Bowling, Director for Hispanic Ministries in USA

More Korean and Slavic missionaries are being processed at this time.

- *Pray for all the home missionaries as they minister to many ethnic groups within their individual areas of service.*
- *Pray for opportunities to reach the newcomers and internationals in your own hometown.*

Wednesday - Advancing in Missions

Much has happened within this last year in the Home Missions Department. There are now **75 Home Missionaries** out on the field in the service of the Lord with more being processed at this printing. In addition to the Cross-Cultural missionaries listed on the previous day, others have also joined the team. Please pray for the following newly appointed missionaries.

<i>Dr. Mark Braisher, KS</i>	<i>Gary Elder, Madison, MS</i>
<i>Rue Dell Smith, LA</i>	<i>Allen Whit, WV</i>

The following missionaries have gone self-supporting. We ask that you continue to remember them as they reach the lost for Christ in their individual areas. They are:

<i>Ron MacMillan, MA</i>	<i>Mark Thomas, CO</i>
<i>Odin Whitehead, FL</i>	<i>Curtis Allgood, FL</i>

Please remember to pray for the Home Missions board members and office staff as they continually work together defining the different ministries connected with the department.

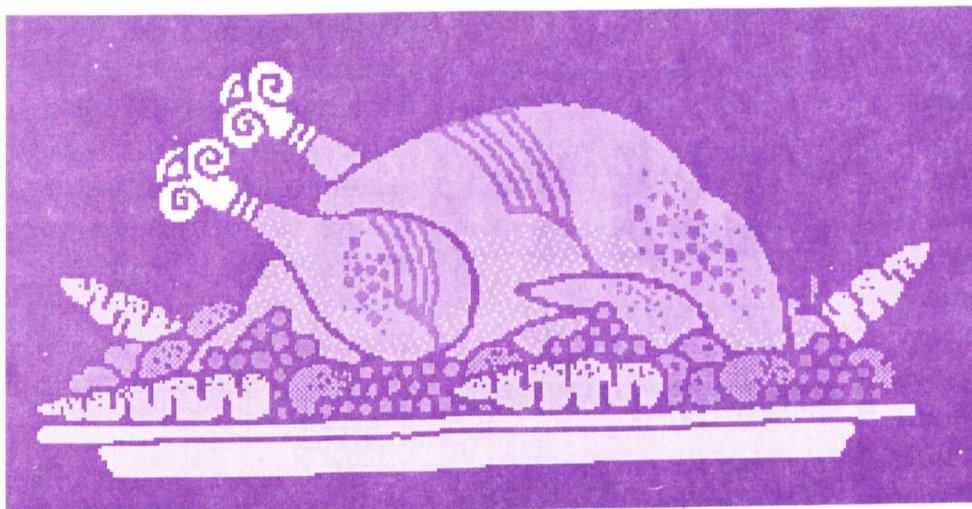
Thursday - Home Missions On The Move

"1,000,000 in 2000." The goal is to see one million homes reached for Christ in the year 2000 and progressing far beyond. To date, various states have already committed to contact approximately 900,000 homes before the year 2000 comes to an end. What a tremendous push for reaching the lost! For more information on this project, please contact **Rev. Richard Atwood, Director of Ministry Helps**, at P.O. Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37011-5002, or 1-877-767-7674.

Also, the Home Missions Department and Free Will Baptist Bible College have joined forces and started a mission work in Nashville, TN to help train future pastors and church planters. The students will be able to gain experience in many areas of the pastorate, from seeing how a church is started to working with the youth, teaching, developing a music ministry, etc. Brother Cliff Donoho recently brought the mission church in Davenport, IA to self-supporting status. Now, he heads up this new Nashville work. This is a new approach for Free Will Baptists. We ask that you pray earnestly for those who will be participating that they will gain the experience to plant new Free Will Baptist churches for the glory of the Lord.

- *Please remember to pray as people from our Free Will Baptist churches throughout the U.S. and territories go out to place the gospel in one million homes during the year 2000.*
- *Pray for all new Free Will Baptist mission churches beginning this year.*

Overflowing *with thankfulness*



by Dr. Ralph F. Wilson

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving" (Colossians 2:6-7).

I hate organ recitals. Not pipe organs, especially, but this kind:

"How are you today, Gladys?"

"Terrible, just terrible? Did I tell you about my gall bladder acting up?"

"Yes, Gladys."

She doesn't seem to acknowledge my, "Yes," but launches into a full-scale report

on gall bladders around the world, and hers in particular. When she sees my eyes beginning to glaze over, Gladys falters for a moment. She knows she has to switch gears quickly to keep me from nodding off.

"And I have this terrible skin rash that drives me so crazy that I can't sleep at night."

I am trying hard to be polite. "Oh, I'm sorry...."

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My spouse is in a bad mood. Normal complaining comes all too easily to my lips.

So when I read Colossians 2:6-7 it hits home. The phrase, "overflowing with thankfulness," begins to repeat itself over and over in my mind.

"Overflowing" — "abounding," some translations say — brings the mental picture of the Thanksgiving cornucopia spilling out an abundant har-

*"Thanksgiving
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vest blessing. Jesus said, "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks." What is in my heart? Complaining? Selfishness? Pride? — or Thanksgiving?

Thanksgiving is the mark of a Christian, because thanksgiving points out and up while my complaining points only back to me and feeds my pride and dissatisfaction. Thanksgiving towards God and man fits the

Great Commandment like a glove, to love God with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love my neighbor as myself. What better vehicle than thankfulness to express love?

The Pillsbury Doughboy® has that endearing quality that when you poke him he doesn't flare up but automatically responds with a friendly, perky, "Oh!" I want to be like him. Not so plump, mind you, but that full of friendliness. When someone pokes me I want my first instinct to be thankfulness rather than anger. I want people to find thankfulness oozing out of me. I want thanksgiving to mark my conversation and manner. I want to abound with it, be full of it. I want to overflow with thankfulness.

How about you?❖

The Doughboy character is a registered trademark of The Pillsbury Company.

I attempt to stop myself, but it is too late. The ill-fated word has crossed my lips — "sorry" — and now I have fed Gladys her first morsel of real food for the day. She seems to take new energy, and as she describes her itching, I begin to sense little crawling things in my scalp. I unconsciously reach up to scratch my head, but nothing gets by Gladys. "Oh, that's the first sign...." she begins.

You've met Gladys, haven't you? It might be a different name. Gladys goes under a number of aliases and dons many disguises. But it's the same complaining, self-centered woman.

Too often, however, I meet Gladys in me. I want people to sympathize with me, so when something is going wrong, — and when doesn't it? — I begin to complain. The 49ers are having a bad season. The morals of our nation are terrible. The election was depressing.

Ready, Set, Go!

by Cheryl Akers

This morning I stopped at a traffic signal. Not too unusual in itself, but the light was still yellow. I stopped anyway and watched the yellow click to red. That yellow caution light had suddenly reminded me of something.

We were on the way to school that morning—my just-turned-fourteen-year old daughter and my sixteen-and-a-half year old son. A regular Tuesday, I had thought. I remembered to remind the one of piano lessons for that day and the other to be sure and return the report card that was forgotten the day before. But why did I stop so unexpectedly at a light that was not quite red? Usually we three hurried on to school, but this morning the yellowness blared out a caution to me at that particular intersection.

Caution—children growing up. Caution—time marching on so fast. Caution—how much longer will they have under my

influence? My mind spun for the duration of the signal cycle. Had I been making use of the precious time with my two teenagers? Or had I been hurrying them off to their various activities, glad to be away from their teenage remarks, their casualness toward life, their sullen attitudes?



—the red stared me square in the face. Stop and enjoy them just where they are right now. Stop my busyness and spend time with each one. Listen to them practicing piano. Praise their grades, their good attitudes toward giving, their concern for other people. Say yes whenever possible. Grapple with their concerns. Be willing to tackle the difficult issues of life with them. Confront worldliness with Scripture. Stop focusing on their pettiness and let them be themselves in Christ.

Go—the sudden green left-turn arrow startled me. Go with Him! Thank the Lord that these two teens are already going in His way. Yes, they have their own ideas. Yes, they can be so ambitious that they boggle my thinking. Yes, they may doze in the car on the way to school when I want to chat. They may want to stay up late talking when my eyelids become heavy from a full day of being “Mom.” But they’re only mine to direct for a while, so thank the Lord for His wisdom. And may He let me go on in appreciation for these two flesh-of-my-flesh.

Lord, thank you for that yellow caution signal and for that brief interlude of instruction from you this morning. Thank you for speaking to me through everyday activities. Please continue to show me how to be a good parent for these teens and how to guide them aright!❖

Cheryl Akers lives in Jacksonville, Florida. “Ready, Set, Go” won second place in the 2000 WNAC Creative Arts Contest.

Mission Alert

Evangelism News from Around the World



Tennessee

Pray for missionary appointees as they continue their itinerate: Clayton Hampton—Clarksville, TN; Cliff Donoho—Nashville, TN.

Puerto Rico

Brother Bud Bivens has requested prayer for the churches in Puerto Rico. There is a need for a hispanic pastor and a new location.

Wisconsin

The Hardisons have asked us to pray as they struggle with opposition from the town council of Milwaukee regarding their rights to have "street meetings" where they proclaim the gospel in public locations.

Utah

Bill Phillips, our missionary to Salt Lake City, is trying to build a new worship facility and is receiving major opposition from

the city officials. It could take 6-12 months just to get permits. Pray that God will cut through the red tape and create a clear path for this work. Bill is also the Law Enforcement Chaplain for Salt Lake City Police and the County Sheriff's Department. But once again, he is being denied access to visit the prison due to delays in the processing of his paperwork. Pray that God will also intervene in this situation.

Russia

The church at Kopejsk has lost its meeting place due to subtle changes in the city government. The church had been meeting in a technical school until city fathers passed a law against religious groups meeting in city-owned buildings. The church is now meeting in a one-room apartment that doesn't hold many people. Attendance is dropping, and the pastor is concerned the church will eventually die if they cannot find a more adequate meeting place. Ask the Lord to provide this need so that He will receive honor and glory.

Spain

Tim and Kristi Johnson are taking advantage of evening strolls with their two-month-old son, Alexander, to talk with unsaved friends and others they meet on the street. Pray that God will give them many opportunities to share the gospel through this avenue.

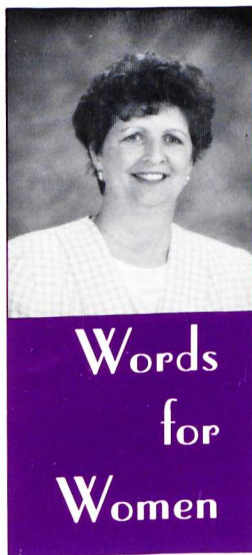
Panama

Eddie Bowerman in Panama is praising the Lord that he has been able to resume language learning in the Kuna village. He has been told the door may open for them to live in the village, which would be of tremendous help in language learning and building relationships. Please pray that the chief of Aguas Claras will give them permission to live in his village.

Nashville

Pray for the Rob Conley family as their four-year-old son, Alan, undergoes treatment for leukemia. Pray for Alan's recovery and pray that the family will especially feel the Lord's presence during this time.

Please pray for Fred and Rachel Warner as they leave Foreign Missions to assume the pastorate at Vista FWB Church in Van Buren, Arkansas. Prior to coming with the department on May of 1987, Fred served on the Board of Foreign Missions for 12 years. He also served the state of Arkansas as promotional director for six years. ♦



*Marjorie H.
Workman*

MARY, DID YOU KNOW?

A contemporary Christmas song asks Mary several questions about her son Jesus. Did she know that her son would walk on water, calm a storm, cause the deaf to hear, and the blind to see? Did she know he was God in the flesh?

I cannot imagine what must have gone through Mary's mind after the visit from Gabriel, the angel sent by God in Luke 1:26. Her thoughts may have been, "What will I tell my beloved Joseph? We are engaged to be married. I can't marry him now. He will never believe what's happened. Why should he? I can hardly believe it myself. I'll be disgraced. Who in their right mind is going to believe that an angel talked with me and that I'm with child without having had a sexual encounter. What will I tell Mom? 'That the Holy Ghost came upon me and the Highest overshadowed me and I'm going to have a baby.' Mom's going to think I've lost my mind. What will the neighbors think? I know the answer to that. They'll stone me to death. That's the Jewish law. But I haven't done anything. I must be having a nightmare. This is impossible."

"That's what I said to the angel. I wonder what He meant when he said 'that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.' He said I was highly favoured and blessed among women. Right now I feel more cursed than favoured. But wait. The angel said that cousin Elisabeth is going to have a baby too. That's crazy. She's too old. Of course, it's more believable that she could have a baby being old than that I could have one without a man. I've got to go see her. I'll be better off anyway if I get out-of-town."

"The angel said Elisabeth was in her sixth month. I'll go see. Maybe I'll stay with her until this is over. That way I won't have to face the stares, the questions, and the embarrassment of the synagogue crowd. Also, I'll know for sure that the angel was real. I believe. I really do. I know I said I was willing to do this, but I just need some reassurance. If Elisabeth is six months pregnant, then I know nothing is impossible with God."

Did Elisabeth know? Her baby leaped in her womb at the sound of Mary's voice. Immediately Elisabeth began speaking prophetically about the character of Mary's child. But did she really

comprehend the meaning of "whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" Did she understand that Mary's baby was the long expected Messiah?

Did Zacharias know? Did he know his son would be the forerunner of Jesus? His prophecy foretold it, but did he understand? He certainly knew something unusual was happening. In fact, Zacharias had lost his speech because of unbelief. He, too, had been visited by Gabriel. He doubted the Angel's pronouncement that God had heard his prayers for a son. Zacharias was human enough to know that his wife was past the childbearing age. He needed spiritual eyes to know that with God all things are possible.

Did Joseph know? Joseph was a kind, gentle, and caring man. He loved his bride-to-be. But greater than his love for Mary was his love for righteousness and purity. We can only imagine what went through Joseph's mind when he learned of Mary's pregnancy. For sure he knew he wasn't the father. Could he comprehend Mary's explanation of Gabriel's visit? Apparently not, for he was planning to break off the engagement very privately. He couldn't make a public issue of her situation. To do so would have meant the stoning of Mary. While Joseph was thinking about how to handle his agony of betrayal, he, too, was visited by Gabriel. At least now he was in on the miraculous conception of Jesus. Although he heard the words "thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21), did he know that Jesus was God in the flesh? Did he understand the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 that Gabriel quoted?

Finally, did Simeon know? He was a religious man, advanced in years serving faithfully while waiting for the coming of the Messiah. Somehow, perhaps through a dream, a voice, or some other means, the Holy Ghost had made it known to Simeon that he would not die until he had seen the Lord. It didn't take Simeon long to know. As soon as he took Jesus into his arms that day at the Temple, he knew. He said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation" (Luke 2:29-30.)

Did you know? **Christmas** is God coming in the flesh to live among us to provide the perfect life and perfect sacrifice to reconcile us back to Himself. Trust Him. Mary did! Joseph did! Zacharias did! Simeon did! ♦



*Paul J. Kettelman Memorial Christmas Drive
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