CoLaborer

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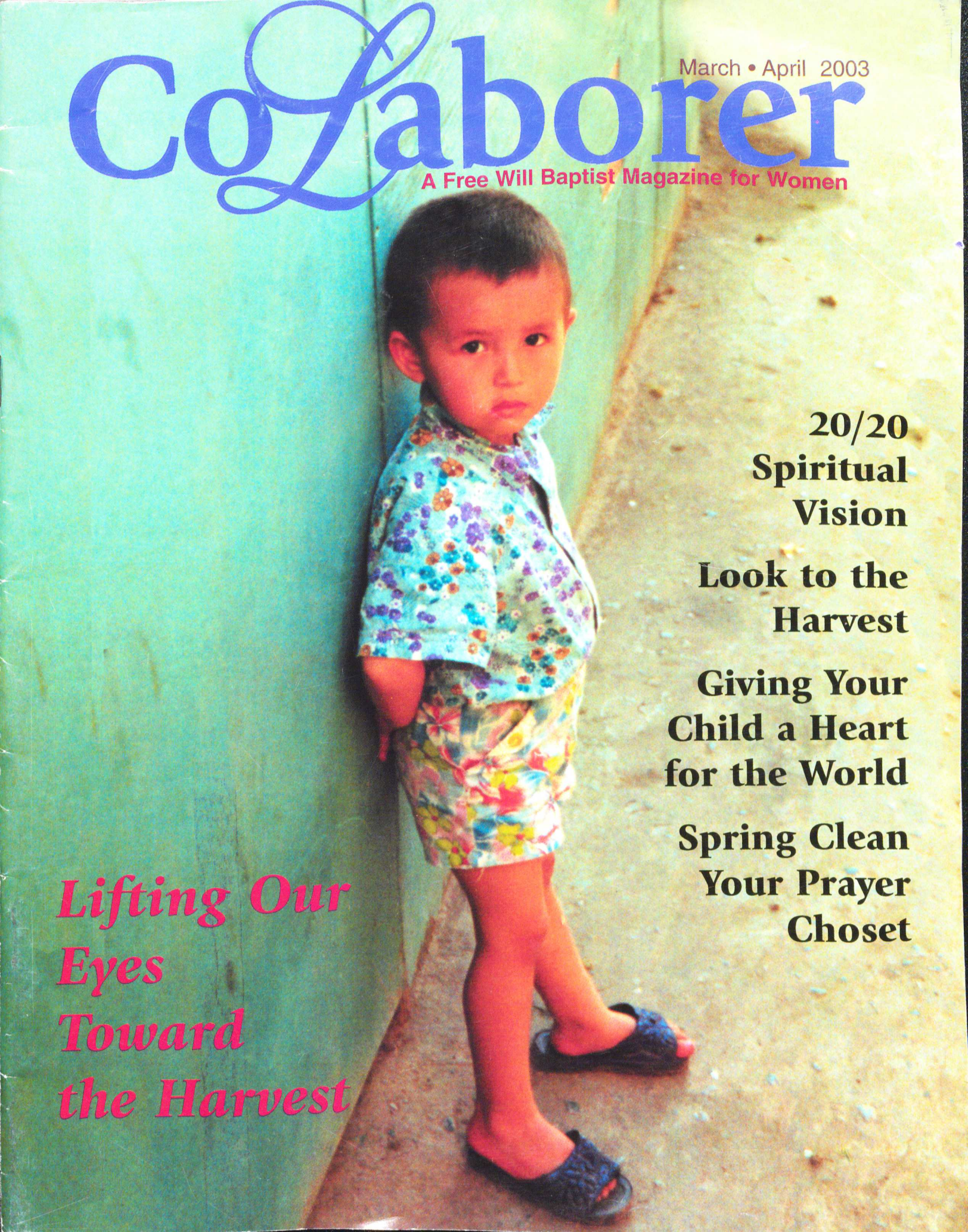

20/20 Spiritual Vision

Look to the Harvest

Giving Your Child a Heart for the World

Spring Clean Your Prayer Choset

Lifting Our Eyes Toward the Harvest

CoLaborer

March-April 2003
Volume 43, Number 2

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Labor of my heart

Sarah Fletcher

LORD OF THE HARVEST
GOD OF THE IMPOSSIBLE

"She'll be hard to win. She's so steeped in Islam. She'll come to a certain point and then she'll bristle." These thoughts fill my mind as I listen to one of our ELL students talk about her observance of Ramadan. And I sense the Holy Spirit chiding me, "O ye of little faith! Do you not believe that I am able to save her?"

Across the street I watch my neighbor, married to an international, caught in the clutches of an Asian cult. We've talked many times. I've shared Christ and what He has done in my life. She's even attended my church on occasion. But do I really expect her to come to faith? Am I daily brought to my knees, burdened for her and the salvation of her five precious children?

Another neighbor meets me at the fence and freely talks about Christianity. "Everyone needs God and religion," she says. "But any path is okay," she clarifies, "—whatever works best for you." And I've shared with her what Christ means to me. She's seen me leave each Sunday morning, evening, and Wednesday night. She gave our son a unique and caring gift for his recent missions trip. But do I really intercede for her? Am I awaiting and anticipating her conversion?

Sometimes. Sometimes I earnestly pray for the unsaved persons God has placed in my life. Sadly, I confess, it is only sometimes. In my Christianized world, I often find myself *knowing* the power of salvation, yet not consistently *claiming* it.

I'm sure I am not alone. This issue's theme, "Lifting Our Eyes Toward the Harvest" reveals that evangelism is not just a sometimes suggestion. It's a continual command spoken by Christ Jesus Himself. "Behold I say unto you, Lift up your eyes . . ." "Say not there are yet four months . . ." Christ's command is for now and until—until all precious soul grain is gathered—until He comes.

My neighbors and my international friend?

"All things are possible to them who believe," He says.

"Lord, I believe. Help thou my unbelief," I answer.

"May Your glorious gospel, the power of God unto salvation, motivate my prayers, my thoughts, my actions. Help me live in expectancy and not in doubt. Lord, fire up my fervor. Keep my eyes ever focused on the fields."

Lifting Our Eyes Toward the Harvest

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My Heroes

by Kristi Johnson

TODAY I LEARNED A LOT ABOUT MISSIONS. Long hard work in humid areas. Getting up before the sun rises to get the job done. Being a servant to the ones around you. But, I didn't learn this on the mission field. I learned it in the States at a WAC-sponsored craft fair where all the proceeds go to missions.

You see, I've been a missionary for five years now. But I've never really seen the "other" side of missions. I've always been blessed with enough money in our mission account. I've definitely attended my share of potluck dinners sponsored for us. I've even been privileged to speak at many ladies' meetings and retreats. But today I saw what "missions" is all about. I saw *where* that money comes from.

Sometimes as missionaries, it's easy to think that there's some great big money tree that keeps us on the field. But there isn't. There's only a great number of people who are working to keep us on the field.

Take, for instance, the craft fair today. For the first time in my missionary career, I was able to participate in something on the ground level of Women Active for Christ. I made crafts. I baked muffins. I even drove to the craft store three times in one week, just so I could use various coupons and get the cellophane wrap I needed for the baskets. And. . . I loved every minute of it. Why? Because I knew that for the past four years, while I'd been in Spain, these same ladies (working alongside me this year) had been doing the very same thing. . . for me. They'd slaved long hours making sure the baked goods were fresh. They'd met together on weeknights to make nautical-themed items. You name it—they've done it.

And I really think, until today, I took all their work for granted. Yes, I always sent the proper "thank-you note," but I never knew all of the labor that went into each $10 donation to our account. Now I won't forget. When North Warren FWB Church sends their next gift to us, I will be *more grateful* than ever because I've realized the sacrifices those ladies make.

Yes, I learned about missions today. I saw first-hand what these and other ladies all over the country do for missions. True, I'm the one on the field. But I could never be a missionary without our supporters. They are missionaries too. They are my heroes!

Kristi Johnson recently returned to Spain to begin another term of missionary service. She, her husband Tim, and their two children minister near Madrid.

TWENTY-TWENTY SPIRITUAL VISION

by Karen Carver

"...BELIEVE in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe in his prophets, so shall ye prosper." —2 Chronicles 20:20

When we were born, we could not see as we do now. As the days progressed, we could focus our eyes on our parents and our surroundings. Beginning to crawl and walk, we could explore the world, learning, seeing new sights everyday. The taller we grew, the more we could see. In our teenage years, most of us knew only one way of seeing things—our way!

As we grow older, however, we sometimes lose sight of things—not just physical sight, but intellectual and spiritual sight. We do not remember things as well. And we do not always see eye to eye with people. Many times we do not see our own faults. How clouded our vision becomes when we see only *everyone else's* faults.

Vision consists not only of what we can see, but also of what we cannot see. We cannot see our memories. We cannot see the inner thoughts of others, for only God sees the heart. The future cannot be seen with human eyes. We cannot presently see God. Many things in life must be taken by faith. Twenty-twenty vision is a faith vision.

BELIEVE

1 John 5:4 states, *"...and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."* Victory in life requires faith. Faith begins with belief. What we believe can "better us or bitter us." The choice is ours. *"For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he..."* (Proverbs 23:7).

What does it mean to believe? Synonyms for believe include "consider, maintain, conclude and trust." Trust means "to expect, have faith in, accept and rely on."

Each step toward victory requires faith vision; we need to see where we are going. *"For we walk by faith, not by sight"* (2 Corinthians 5:7). Using the synonyms above, we could amplify this verse to read,

"For we walk or advance in steps through our life,
by what we believe, what we consider right,
by whom we trust, how we maintain our actions,
reactions, and attitudes,
by what we expect God to do,
by placing our faith in His promises,
in how we accept adversities, trials, temptations
and misfortunes of life,
in what we rely on for strength or comfort,
and finally, by what we conclude to be truth;
NOT by what we can see, feel, or understand."

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:5, 6).

For presentation helps and suggestions, see the 2003 Program and Plan Book, pp. 30-31.

SEEK

In 2 Chronicles 20, Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, faced a great number of enemies who came to battle against him. Fearful and afraid, he sought guidance from the Lord. He proclaimed a fast. All the cities of Judah, wives and children included, came to seek the Lord.

In public prayer, Jehoshaphat recalled God's blessings throughout history toward the people of Israel. He spoke of God's power, authority, and deity. Jehoshaphat put his trust in God's ability to save from all forms of evil and disease. He asked God to help them.

The people humbled themselves and acknowledged their weakness. *"O our God, wilt Thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee"* (vs. 12).

The Lord told them, *"Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's"* (vs. 15). If the people would position themselves and be still, they would see the salvation of the Lord.

"Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:" (Isaiah 55:6). Seeking requires recognizing our need for God, then acting on that need through prayer, asking the God who sees all to help us see. Second Chronicles 16:9 says, *"For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him."*

A faith vision also includes reminding ourselves of God's promises and remembering to obey and praise Him. This is how Jehoshaphat experienced victory. As the people obeyed God's instructions, they began to sing praises. Those praises enabled them to see amazing victory. They watched as their enemies destroyed one another. Neither the people of Judah and Jerusalem nor the king did a thing. God did it all.

FARSIGHTEDNESS

Just as our physical eyesight is sometimes plagued with disorders, our spiritual vision can also by hindered. We are often spiritually farsighted. Farsighted people can see well at great distances. They are always looking ahead. If we are farsighted, we see God as He is. We ponder our path, considering our choices. Truth can help us; lies can harm us.

Is it harm we see? Looking ahead and seeing the consequences of sin can avert much trouble, pain, and embarrassment. How might our choices affect others' faith or their opinion of our character? As sin destroys character, so righteousness builds it up. Character that represents Christ gives sight to others. We may think "what they don't know won't hurt." Others may never know, but God sees the heart where our true character resides.

Is it good we see? Do we look beyond our own needs to the needs of others, considering the rewards? Rewards are often far away—like Heaven. Farsighted people have clear focus to go the distance.

Yet being farsighted is one-sided. Our close-up, "now" view is blurred. The Book of James comments on this. Speaking peace to a brother *in* need, yet not providing *for* his needs is useless.

Knowing and obeying God's Word provides vision correction. *"...the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes..."* (Psalm 19:8). Even if there were no rewards—either here or there—we can find joy in the immediate, in helping others. Joy in itself is reward enough.

FORESIGHT

Foresight is farsightedness, corrected and in action. A person with foresight is aware beforehand; she anticipates or expects. When we have foresight, our thoughts about God are "He will."

"Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens" (Psalm 123:1). We call on the Lord to give us wisdom and direction. We simply trust that He already knows our needs and is ready to answer our prayers. We expect and earnestly rely on His promises to help us in trouble, to heal our broken hearts, to love us unconditionally, to direct our path, and to forgive us our sins, as we forgive others.

We expect what we hope for. We hope for what we desire. We desire and expect what is best. If God has promised it, then we know it is true. Expecting God to keep His promises and to do what is best defines faith. However, both faith and love must be exercised.

HINDSIGHT

Hindsight means seeing after the fact. And everyone knows that, "Hindsight is always 20/20." "If only I'd seen it coming." "If I'd only done things differently or not said those harsh words." These are just a few of the many "if only's" hindsight reveals. At one time or another, all of us have said, "I should have…"

Hindsight is wishing we could rewind, choose again, and let the Lord lead us. Knowledge of sin is the beginning of mercy, followed by grace. "Mercy gets us through; grace gets us past."

NEARSIGHTEDNESS

Are we spiritually nearsighted? Nearsighted people see wonderfully at shorter distances. They are concerned more with themselves or with the here and now. Their thoughts center on "I am" rather than on *the* "I AM." Showing little concern for who God is, spiritually nearsighted people walk by sight, feeling, or the desire of their own hearts. Nearsightedness causes us to see only how life treats us, not how we treat life. This attitude leads to pride, thinking we are always right, that we can do no wrong. Extreme nearsightedness easily progresses to blindness.

"Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not Himself…" (Romans 15:2,3). Practicing this verse will keep our eyes off ourselves and give us proper vision for the world.

BLINDNESS

Second Peter 1:5-9 gives us opportunity to test our vision, not in an eye exam but through a fruit exam. Are the fruits of faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance (self-control), patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and love visible? *"But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins"* (vs. 9).

In the same way that cataracts, glaucoma, and diabetes affect our eyes, sin causes spiritual blindness. When we start to lose interest in heart obedience and only offer lip service, when we find reason or justification for "little sins," we lose sight of truth. The Psalmist prayed, *"Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law"* (Psalm 119:18). If we find ourselves groping in blindness, we can ask the Lord to change us. Spiritual blindness is reversible. God's law gives light to blinded eyes. His Word is truth.

FOCUS

Without excuse, our focus should be Christ, *"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls"* (1 Peter 1:8,9).

When we were called to follow Jesus we were called to keep our eyes on Him. *"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps:"* (1 Peter 2:21). He walked the way of suffering. He carried His cross, though no one understood, though He felt no love returned. He never said of the cross, "It's too much for Me." In the garden He prayed. He sweat blood. He did not binge, go to a bar, or run to a lover. He did not "just

By Faith

I was going through a difficult time in my life when my pastor asked me to come work at youth camp for a week. "I can't," I said, "I do not get paid vacations. I can't afford to take the time off work."

Later in the day, the Lord spoke to me very clearly,"Go, step out on faith; trust Me." I told the pastor, "Yes, I'll go."

I went to camp and enjoyed the experience. I returned home to find an unexpected check—almost THREE times my paycheck had I worked that week. The joy of my faith in the Lord increased. He provided what I needed and more!

—Karen Carver

go fishing" or seek some lawyer to defend Him. His focus was His Father. *"...not as I will, but as thou wilt"* (Matthew 26:39). He chose to obey. His choice brought us victory.

No matter how heavy our cross, if we look to Jesus, the burden seems to lighten and our eyes are enlightened. Though perhaps grievous, the experience *will* become joyful. God promises, *"I will guide thee with mine eye"* (Psalm 32:8). Most of us have made eye contact, communicating with our eyes without saying a word. Knowing the Lord's guidance demands that we lift up our eyes and look to Him.

RESTORATION

If we find ourselves unfocused, impaired, or blinded, there is still hope. Jesus said in Revelation 3:18, *"...anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see."* On more than one occasion, Jesus opened the eyes of the blind. But it was those who believed that He healed. *"Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you"* (Matthew 9:29). Like the Psalmist, we can resolve, *"Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity;"* (Psalm 119:37). We can pray, "Lord, keep me from looking to worthless things. Help me to see any area of my heart in need of change."

20/20 VISION

How can we obtain 20/20 spiritual vision? How can we live victoriously in Christ? Victory will follow our walk of faith as we choose to believe. Recognizing our needs, we seek the Lord in prayer. We watch for His help and guidance. We obey Him as He reveals things to us through His Word. We offer Him our praises. We observe and recall that He has done as He promised. We keep both eyes straight ahead. *"Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established"* (Proverbs 4:25-26). (*"For we walk by faith and not by sight."*) To be established and prosperous in our faith, we must trust, believe, and keep our eyes upon Jesus.

Karen Carver attends the Akron FWB Church in Akron, Ohio where she and her husband serve as youth leaders.

Waiting For Hope

There's a thirsty soul drowning
In an ocean of her tears.
There's a hungry soul feeding
On the scent of his own fears.
There's an empty soul clinging
To the desire to be made whole.

There's a broken soul waiting
For a mender's touch.
There's a hurting soul wanting
Just one tender touch.
There's a lonely soul searching
For a friend to show.

Will hope ever quench?
Will hope ever feed?
Will hope ever fill?
Will hope ever mend?
Will hope ever touch?
Will hope ever show?
Will hope ever come
If we never go?

–Rachel Sekulich

Rachel Sekulich lives in Brunswick, GA. She attends the First FWB Church where her dad serves as pastor. This entry won first place in the 2002 Creative Arts Contest.

Look to the Harvest

by
Debbie Anderson

Every person's life includes defining moments. One of my moments happened when I was only seven or eight. My family was visiting friends in Tennessee. The husband worked for a company that distributed chocolate candy—like Reese's and Hershey's. I was enamored with a job that could involve something so wonderful. Early one evening before the husband returned home, I wandered off to a quiet spot and fell asleep, having played hard that day. Much later, the man came home from work with a good supply of leftover candy. Everyone had a jolly time talking, laughing, and eating chocolate late into the night. Everyone except me. My sister told me about it the next morning. I was devastated and shocked. Although some chocolate had been set aside for me, it was just not the same as sharing in the excitement and the party. For weeks my mind reeled with the consequences of having fallen asleep at the wrong time.

In a very serious way, Christians are in danger of missing a spectacular event, too. God is revealing Himself in mighty ways around the world, and He has asked us (no, commanded us) to join Him in the effort. There is great joy and blessing in serving the Lord in His work, but many of us are spiritually sleeping the precious hours away. The instructions Jesus gave to awaken His disciples in John 4:34-38 and Luke 10:1-3 are exactly the ones we need today. The task is enormous and urgent, yet Jesus' four commands are very simple.

Lift up your eyes

John 4:35

During the first half of 2001, our family lived in Belgium so that my husband Verlin could receive tropical medicine training in French. Whenever we had a few free hours, we enjoyed sightseeing. As we rode the subways and trains, I noticed that many Belgians did not care about their surroundings, but instead kept their noses buried in a book or newspaper or simply stared at the floor. Often I wanted to grab a shoulder and say, "Please, lift up your eyes! You don't know what mar-

velous sights you are missing!" Of course, they knew what was there, but the concerns of life made them weary or uninterested in things outside their private world.

How often we are guilty of the same self-preoccupation in our Christian lives! We rush to work, the gym, the mall, children's ballgames, music lessons, and doctors' appointments (all of which have their place), with hardly a moment to breathe in between. The final, frazzled results are lives turned inward. We often do not see the hand of God at work around us. As singer Keith Green put it, we are "asleep in the light." Jesus steps into our routine, touches our shoulder, and says, "Lift up your eyes. Pay attention to Me."

Look on the fields
John 4:35

Once Jesus has got our attention away from ourselves and focused on Him, He commands us to look on the fields. According to *Vine's Expository Dictionary,* the Greek word for "look" in John 4 means to behold with "careful contemplation." This is no quick glance, but a deliberate effort to really examine the fields. God is asking us to take the time to know His world, particularly the people who inhabit it. He wants us to grasp the magnitude of the harvest.

How is your spiritual vision of the harvest? Did you know that one out of every five people in the world is a Muslim? When CNN shows thousands of them bowing in prayer toward Mecca, whom do you see? Terrorists? Fanatics? Deceived hearts hurtling toward a Christless eternity?

Are you familiar with the 10/40 Window? Have you read about the 3,000 to 6,000 people groups worldwide who still have no consistent gospel witness? Almost half of the world's unreached peoples will never get to hear the gospel once if a Christian somewhere does not leave his or her home and move to their culture and learn their language. Are you aware that since *1950,* at least 150,000 people per year have been martyred for their faith in Christ?*

*Statistics taken from *Run with the Vision* by Bob Sjogren and Bill and Amy Stearns.

There has never been a better time in history to truly see God's harvest fields. Blessed with resources like Patrick Johnstone's *Operation World* (a prayer guide for every nation of the world), websites of unreached people groups, and magazines devoted to mission news and the persecuted church, we have no excuse for ignorance.

What about the gangs, homeless, prisoners, orphans, and handicapped in your city? Do you weep for and strive to help the nephew on drugs, a coworker in pain, or your divorced neighbor trying to rear two children on her own?

When we truly look at the harvest and begin to see the world as Jesus does, the impact is so mind-boggling that we are compelled to do something. Christ tells us what He wants that next step to be.

Pray the Lord of the harvest
Luke 10:2

Contrary to our natural instinct to grab a tractor and head for the nearest wheat field, the Lord asks us to do something else first. He wants us to pray. From a human perspective, this seems unnecessary. Why should we go to the Owner of the fields and ask Him to send out more workers? After all, He already knows the situation and is the One who got us involved in the first place.

Part of the answer is found in the example of Jesus Himself. The many times He drew apart to pray to the Father were not because He did not know what to do. The times alone were for communion and to demonstrate His complete dependence on the Father. Our prayers should do the same. And somehow, it is His pleasure to allow our prayers to make a difference in the harvest too.

In addition, lack of prayer renders our work powerless. When the disciples failed to heal a boy of epileptic seizures in Matthew 17:14-21,

Jesus told them it was because of their lack of faith. This faith shortage could only be rectified by prayer and fasting.

Ultimately, asking God to send forth laborers into the harvest is acknowledging that He is the only One with the wisdom and authority to do the job properly. We are leaving the choices, including the part we will play, up to Him. Prayer, after all, is not about changing God. He is perfect in every way. We are the ones who need to change and fall in line with His plan.

Go your way

Luke 10:3

Once we have gone through these three steps, then we are ready to take our place in the fields. Jesus gave these commands to his disciples right before sending them out on preaching teams. He had always intended to use them in the harvest, but they needed to have His perspective as they went.

Deep in our hearts, we know this is true for us too. Jesus' last command was to go "into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Acts 1 says we should start right where we are and reach out to the ends of the earth. It has never been either home missions or foreign missions with God. It has always been both/and. The question has never been *should* we participate in the harvest at home and abroad, but *how* can we best participate?

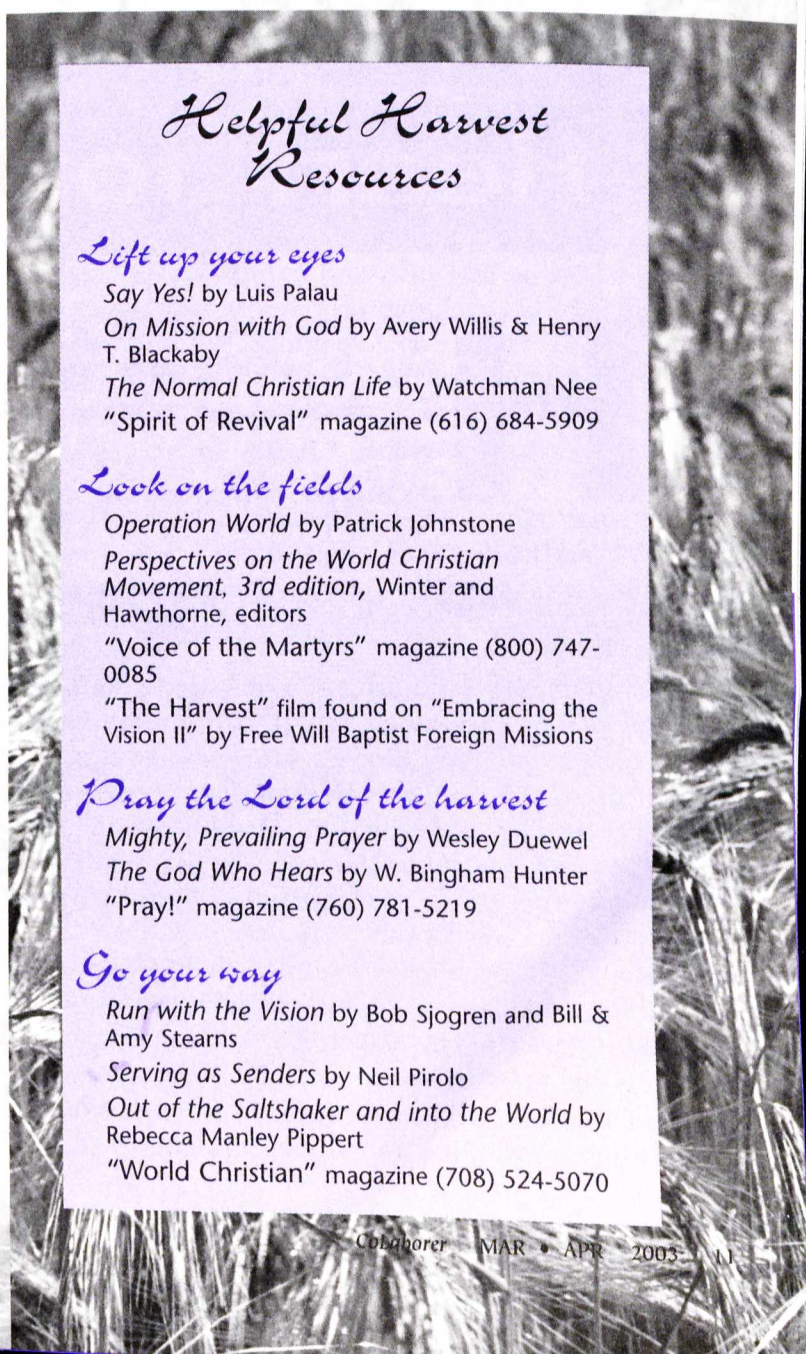
Many teachers, doctors, nurses, computer specialists, musicians, writers, secretaries, and homemakers (just to name a few!) have discovered that they do not have to be career missionaries or pastors in order to obtain a meaningful place in the Lord's service. They simply make themselves and their gifts available to Jesus.

This is the point at which many Christians falter. We are so afraid that the Lord will call us to Afghanistan, make us leave our family and home, expect us to quit a lucrative career, or maybe allow us to fail as a witness. We hesitate. We do not trust the God who made us to equip us for the work. In the meantime, the beautiful, ripened harvest of souls in our sphere of influence begins to rot in the fields.

God forbid that one day we wake up from our spiritual sleep, only to discover we have missed the harvest. While others joyfully bring the crops they have gathered to Him, we look down at empty hands.

But it does not have to be so. God has given us today. Let us lift our eyes, look to the harvest, pray for laborers, and step into the fields without delay.

Debbie (Payne) Anderson grew up as an MK in Côte d'Ivoire. She returned to Africa with her husband Verlin and three children to work as community health missionaries. The Andersons are currently on stateside assignment.



Helpful Harvest Resources

Lift up your eyes

Say Yes! by Luis Palau

On Mission with God by Avery Willis & Henry T. Blackaby

The Normal Christian Life by Watchman Nee

"Spirit of Revival" magazine (616) 684-5909

Look on the fields

Operation World by Patrick Johnstone

Perspectives on the World Christian Movement, 3rd edition, Winter and Hawthorne, editors

"Voice of the Martyrs" magazine (800) 747-0085

"The Harvest" film found on "Embracing the Vision II" by Free Will Baptist Foreign Missions

Pray the Lord of the harvest

Mighty, Prevailing Prayer by Wesley Duewel

The God Who Hears by W. Bingham Hunter

"Pray!" magazine (760) 781-5219

Go your way

Run with the Vision by Bob Sjogren and Bill & Amy Stearns

Serving as Senders by Neil Pirolo

Out of the Saltshaker and into the World by Rebecca Manley Pippert

"World Christian" magazine (708) 524-5070

Giving Your Child a Heart for the World

How can you instill a missionary heart within your child? We asked missionary mothers, Fleda Snow and Gladys Turnbough to share their thoughts. Gladys is a pastor's wife. Fleda is married to a layman. Both women have sent multiple children to our FWB mission fields.

Did you consider yourself missions-minded before your children made their commitments?

Gladys: Yes, my husband and I served as home missionaries in Springfield, IL, Moline, IL, and St. Petersburg, FL. We have always promoted missions in each church we have pastored. My Christian parents instilled "spreading the Gospel." Throughout the years many missionaries have stayed in our home. This has helped define our burden for the lost around the world.

Fleda: I've been very interested in missions since childhood. Brother Thomas "Pop" Willey spoke in my home church, Blakely FWB, Georgia, when I was eight. To better see the slide presentation, I sat on the front row with a nickel for the offering. Sitting on a pillow to ease the discomfort of four boils was little distraction, but swallowing my nickel was disappointing. In spite of all the secondary details, a lasting interest in missions was aroused in me. This desire continued throughout my teen years. On a high school Spanish Club field trip, I spent a long weekend in Havana, Cuba, and tried unsuccessfully to visit the Willeys in Pinar del Rio. Four years at FWBBC strengthened this interest. My husband and I fully realized early on that since we, being Christians, were products of missions, we should, therefore, exist to promote missions. (Our first overnight guest was pioneer missionary Laura Belle Barnard.) Our children have been dedicated and reared in this mentality. From family conversation and interaction, to the "GO YE' tag on one of our vehicles (another was "FWBBC"), the atmosphere of the message permeated our home.

Did you intently direct your children toward missions, or did it just happen?

Fleda: It didn't just happen. True, we "took our children to Eli as mere babes," but *they* were the ones who had to reply, "Here am I." Nothing "just happens." The plant must be nurtured.

Gladys: We never approached our children with the directive, "You will be a missionary when you grow up." They were exposed to many different cultures through stories from missionaries who've visited our home. All three remember Herbert Waid wearing Japanese wooden sandals on the concrete driveway of our home in Sesser, IL. The "clacking" sound was not easily forgotten! Jim and Judy can still sing portions of a song taught to them by Bobby Poole. We only hoped and prayed that God would use them for His service.

If it was intentional, what specifically did you do?

Gladys: It was not necessarily "intentional" that they become missionaries, but our prayer has always been that they would do God's will no matter what path that took. However, we did intently train them to develop a burden for reaching people for Christ throughout the world. Our family devotions and prayer times included stories of missionaries, as well as prayer requests for their needs. Jim and Judy especially remember praying for the Whaley family in Alaska and the Sanders family in Hawaii. At that time, those were *foreign* missionaries to our children! We also made it possible for our kids to be involved in church missions groups and projects. We felt it important to teach them to give to missions.

Fleda: My feeling is children are not to be called or pushed to the mission field by parents, pastors, or other prompts. But good intentions are said to make wonderful paving material. Good intentions and its siamese twin, hindsight, along with $1.75 will get you on any city bus in Atlanta (my husband's job.) We did not push; we merely tried to set the example.

Have you consciously steered your children away from prejudice?

Gladys: I think all three of our children will tell you that our home was open to all races and nationalities, and the churches we pastored were, as well. We tried to teach our children that God loves everyone and died for all, and I think that message stayed with them.

Fleda: We have taught our "little ones" not to prejudge anyone, anytime, anywhere for any reason. In God's economy, all men are truly created equal as to the worth of the individual. Our children are totally immersed in that truth.

Do you feel your home church was a contributing factor in their decision?

Gladys: Since my husband began pastoring in 1953 we have tried to lead each church to become missions-minded. Having been FWB home missionaries, we always felt the need to educate our people about the Biblical mandate of spreading the Word throughout the world. All the churches we've pastored have been involved both prayerfully and financially. This message was clear to our children.

Fleda: It all begins in the home. However, we looked to and received encouragement from our church. Our pastor, for most our our children's growing up years, was J. E. Blanton. He and his wife Jean were great promoters of "here and away." Brother J.E. was chairman of our FWB National Home Missions Board for twelve years, and his vision for *all* people greatly augmented our home teachings.

Do your children serve under our FWB Mission Board?

Gladys: Our son Jim, a pastor in NC, served as a FWB Home Missionary. Our daughter Judy Bailey, and our son Jeff Turnbough have served as FWB Foreign Missionaries since the early 1980's. Jim's son Jonathon was a summer missionary in Russia; his daughter Jessica was a summer missionary in Spain. Judy's two children, Tracey Bailey Delamarter and Benjamin, went with high school groups to the Philippines to help build churches.

Keep On the Firing Line!

Chuck and I have visited numerous mission fields. Most recently (2002) it was Cuba, where in 1960, Chuck and college roommate Jim Combs, served as (pre-) summer missionary interns. We have made it our ongoing practice to make contact with missionaries wherever we vacation. Two years ago in Lima, Peru, the spirit of Mike Cousineau surely rested upon us as we traveled to a crimeridden area to observe the work of a CMA missionary we'd heard about from homeschoolers in Tennessee. It seems a fugitive picked our vehicle (windows rolled up) to skirt, drawing very unfriendly fire. Police bullets rained very near the Snows! But visit we did, and Lord willing, visit we will. Where God guides, He provides.

They also spent summers traveling with HiBA (High School Born-Againers) groups witnessing to Japanese young people. Benjamin is now returning to Japan with FWB to assist in the Tokyo ministries. Jeff's children Matthew and Melissa have been very active in the work in Spain, and Matthew and his wife Brooke are making plans to return next year.

Fleda: Yes, three of my four children have served as FWB missionaries. Rhoda and her family served as dorm parents at ICA. Nathan and his family are serving in Japan. Jonathan and his family are now raising support for a two-year assignment in Japan.

Was their childhood exposure to world evangelism limited to FWB Missions?

Fleda: If the field is the world, then the workers are from as wide a spectrum. Our children were not limited to FWB "glasses," but were taught and encouraged to be *colaborers* with all who love the name of Jesus. Our son Jonathan was led to the Lord by his Christian and Missionary Alliance kindergarten teacher at an Independent Baptist Christian school. We created time to attend Sword of the Lord conferences, chased after Hyman Appleman, Billy Graham, and rode the 1-24 ribbon to our "own" Nashville events.

The SNOWS

Jonathan, Rhoda, Nathan, Steve, Fleda and Chuck

Gladys: No, we've always gladly accepted any Bible-believing messengers God has sent our way.

Did you sense early on with any of your children that God would specifically call them into full-time missionary work?

Gladys: No, there was not a sense of what their future ministries would be, but we always hoped that we, like Abraham, could give "all" as a sacrifice for His kingdom.

Fleda: No early indications heavily suggested that the foreign field would claim our youngsters. When Rhoda, in first or second grade, brought her younger cousin to Christ, it was a natural thing to do. We never divided missions and she eventually went from that *home* missions world to Japan and Africa on the *other side* of the world. Her commitment and burden for the lost influenced Nathan, who in turn has encouraged Jonathan to go, after many years of behind the scenes missions labors. They all have the committed support of their brother Steve. We felt that if we, as parents, set the example for worldwide ministry support, God would take care of the leading.

How did their individual personalities figure into the picture?

Fleda: No more than the respective personalities of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. God calls from all personalities. We once heard a certain speaker say, "The greatest moment of your life will be when preparation and opportunity meet." By God's help, our thrust was always preparation—from Christian kindergarten through Christian college, 33 years of consecutive tuition payments, eight degrees divided among them. Knowing and appreciating what has come to fruition in each of their lives, we can truthfully say it was *only* money.

Gladys: Being raised as PK's (preacher's kids) and MK's (missionary kids), all three were exposed to many different people, moved frequently and often were the "new kids" in school and church. Although the children didn't believe it at the time, I realize now that each of these situations helped them in beginning their own ministries and in empathizing with others. All three are involved in many types of ministries, but each one has special gifts in different areas. Jim, the oldest, seems to be the "counselor." Judy, our middle child, is the "encourager" and .Jeff, the youngest, is the "teacher."

At what age should parents start teaching children about missions?

Gladys: As early as possible! Parents begin reading nursery rhymes and bedtime stores to their children at birth. That's a good age to start with simple missionary stories. Our daughter-in-law Julie sent a book to Japan with Judy's children in 1983, entitled

You Can Wear Your Shoes in Church, a story about MK's growing up in Japan. It's still a favorite with Judy's children. If you begin teaching missions early, the burden will flow naturally as children mature. Teach even the youngest child to pray for missionaries.

Fleda: Before birth. The emotions of the parents, expecially those of the mother, affect the child from inception.

How would you encourage mothers to prepare the hearts of their children? List some ways a mother today can give her child a heart for the world?

Fleda: By example, by example, by example. Exemplify JOY—Jesus, others, yourself. Begin reading and teaching the Scriptures during infancy. Attend church faithfully. Develop friendships with missionaries, welcoming them to your home and corresponding with them. Be a supporter of missions—emotionally, financially, prayerfully. Travel with your children as much as possible—all over the world. Travel broadens their visions and enhances our lifelong teaching credibility as parents. Pray always for God's leadership in your child's life and for his/her willingness to follow whatever, wherever. Remember, the safest place for your child is in God's will.

Gladys: Make friends of other nationalities. Invite these people to your home and church; let them share their cultures with your children. Children possess a natural sense of curiosity, and they will accept people of different backgrounds if they see that YOU accept. Teach by example. Learn as much as you can about other countries. Visit ethnic restaurants; have special family nights at home trying a new cuisine and researching the background of a country. Find someone in your area from that country to help you gain information and you may find a new friend! Read *National Geographic;* buy a large world map and encourage your children to pray for missionaries, finding their locations on the map. Host missionaries in your home where children can meet them "up close and personal" and actually know the people in their prayers. Adopt a "family MK" and correspond. Above all, keep a worldwide vision before your children. Encourage them to be missionaries in their daily lives. Teach them that they, too, have a mission to fulfill for God and His kingdom. Encourage them to take summer mission trips. Allow them to serve as foreign exchange students. Nothing will open a young person's eyes like actually spending time in a foreign country observing day-to-day life and missionary life.

The TURNBOUGHS
Judy, Gladys, Jim, Jeff, and Elmer

Obviously not every child of a mission-minded parent ends up in another country. How can parents plant a broad caring vision in a homebody?

Gladys: Always pray that God will use your child. My children can still recite something they heard their father say in almost every sermon he preached: "I'd rather see my children get on a plane and fly off to a foreign country as a missionary than to have them stay here and NOT be in His will." Children must know that you want God's will for them—no matter the sacrifice—and that you are daily praying for this. They must be able to see that God's will is above all else in your *own* life. Teach by example that following God's will is the most important thing they can accomplish.

Fleda: Teaching should be biblically disseminated into all areas of little lives. God will then decide where to best place His human chess piece.

What has been the most difficult part of missionary parenting?

Fleda: Nothing comes to mind. We feel it an honor to be parents of missionaries, Christian workers, and servants. We strive to support them in every way we can. God has blessed us trememdously through our children, and we give Him all the praise and glory.

Gladys: Not seeing our grandchildren grow up has probably been the most difficult issue. We only saw

Generations of Servants

Judy's and Jeff's children every four or five years when they returned for furlough.

One unforgettable experience occurred when Judy and Ken returned from Japan for their first furlough in June of 1987. Benjamin (age five) came off the plane asking each gray-haired man he encountered, "Are you my grandpa?" As we stood waiting for them to reach us, tears filled our eyes as we saw our Ben and Tracey. We didn't recognize them, and they definitely didn't know "Grandma" and "Grandpa." After a few short weeks together, they "hit the road" to begin fund-raising for their return to Japan a few months later. Several years would pass before we 'd spend time with them again.

We were fortunate that both could spend a summer with us during their college years. This was our first chance to really get to know them. We faced a similar situation with Jeff's children growing up in Spain.

Jeff left for Spain in 1982, Judy for Japan in 1983. Only twice have we been able to assemble all our children and grandchildren in the same country, under the same roof, at the same time. This, by far, is the most difficult part of giving children completely to God. But our hope is not in this life; it's in the next, and we'd gladly do it all over again. We're now praying for our grandchildren and great-grandchildren to become the next generation of servants.

Gladys Turnbough lives in Waynesville, MO, where her husband Elmer pastors the First FWB Church. Fleda Snow lives in Decatur, GA. She and her husband Chuck are members of the Blakely FWB Church.

2003 WNAC RETREAT

Chateau on the Lake, Branson, MO
March 27-29
Theme: LIFTING UP OUR EYES

THURSDAY

3:00-6:30 Registration and Check in
7:00 **LIFTING OUR EYES IN WORSHIP**
Welcome: Marjorie Workman
Congregational singing/prayer
Mini concert by Ronda Freeman
Speaker: Ronda Sturgill

FRIDAY

9:00 **LIFTING OUR EYES IN WORSHIP**
Congregational singing/prayer
Fun time: Missouri Women Active for Christ
Special Music: Ronda Freeman
Speaker: Ronda Sturgill
10:30 Break
11:00 **LIFTING OUR EYES IN WORSHIP**
Congregational singing/prayer
Special Music: Ronda Freeman
Speaker: Ronda Sturgill
12:00 Lunch break and free afternoon
7:00 **LIFTING OUR EYES TOWARD THE HARVEST**
Congregational singing/prayer
Special Music: Ronda Freeman
Missions service: Verla Fletcher
Special missions offering

SATURDAY

9:00 **LIFTING OUR EYES IN WORSHIP**
Congregational singing/prayer
Special Music: Ronda Freeman
Speaker: Ronda Sturgill
10:30 **LIFTING OUR EYES TOWARD HOME**

Shannon Little

Sure-Footed; Single-Minded

In the spring of 2000, I felt God's leading to go to Japan as a school nurse in an international school on the northern island of Hokkaido, about 50 minutes from its capital city of Sapporo.

I saw God's hand, even in minor timing issues. My August arrival gave me several months to adjust to Japanese life, become acclimated with my new job and surroundings, enjoy the scenery, and soak in the sun before winter.

One morning in mid-November, my roommate Tonya and I headed out the door for church and discovered a winter wonderland. During the night, about two feet of snow had fallen! For a girl from middle Tennessee, this was quite a shock. My initial reaction was to rush to the grocery store and stock up on bread and milk. Then, I realized we had to shovel the car out so we could get to church.

Before leaving for Japan, I'd researched the climate, preparing for winter in northern Japan. I'd bought warm clothes, a big coat, and boots. But research did not prepare me for *continual* winter—not seeing the ground from November until April. Snow fell two or three times a week, sometimes measuring several feet—other times, only inches.

My journey to work everyday included walking a block to the bus stop, riding the bus to the train station, taking the train downtown, walking another block to the subway station, riding the subway for about fifteen minutes, and then walking a ten-minute stretch from the subway station to the school. During summer and fall this trek wasn't that bad. During winter, things became more difficult.

The walk from the house to the bus stop proved the hardest. With fresh overnight snow, the morning walk was easy. My snow boots helped me make good time. But during the day, the sun would melt a thin layer of snow that would refreeze after sunset. If no new snow fell, the following morning, I would face an ice skating rink.

Some time after Thanksgiving, I started falling on the ice, almost on a daily basis. I ususally went down in the same spot—about a half block from my house. I watched the Japanese people. Surely they had inborn ability to walk on the ice! I tried everything from shuffling my feet to gliding like an ice skater. I even strapped special spikes onto my boots for better traction. Still I continued to slip. Two weeks of body and spirit bruising brought me to the point of despair.

"Please don't let me slip and fall anymore. Guide my feet to non-slippery places and help me."

One morning, after sliding almost two feet into the street, I poured out my heart in prayer. "God, "I'm tired of slipping. It's embarrassing. It hurts. It's hard to get back up dressed in these bulky warm clothes. Please don't let me slip and fall anymore. Guide my feet to non-slippery places and help me. Amen."

I felt a little foolish praying such a selfish silly prayer. But God answered. I made it all the way to school without slipping. Over and over throughout the day, I thanked God for this "miracle."

This was only the beginning. I didn't slip going home that night or the next morning. I didn't slip for a whole week. In fact, I didn't slip the rest of the winter. Some people might say that I simply mastered walking on ice or that I finally broke in my boots, but I know the truth. I poured my heart out to God and He heard me.

My second winter in Japan I had my doubts that this miracle would continue. Again, God kept my feet from slipping—throughout the entire season. From the moment I voiced my prayer in the street until all snow had melted the following year, I did not slip.

Last spring, after all snow was gone and slipping on ice was far from my mind, I read Psalm 66: 8-9*. *"Praise our God, O peoples, let the sound of his praise be heard; He has preserved our lives and kept our feet from slipping."* How incredible! Psalm 121:1-8 also took on a whole new meaning, especially verse 3*. *"He will not let your foot slip—he who watches over you will not slumber."*

God used my time in Japan to change my perspective on just about everything! The Bible came alive for me in a whole new way. How exciting to know that the God who made every creature is concerned about things that concern me. I want to tell every person I see just how great my God is. He has placed a desire in my heart to return to Japan to tell people about Him. Japanese people are hurting and empty; Jesus is the only one who can fill the void in their lives.

Shannon Little of New Hope FWB Church, Joelton, Tennessee, served as a short term FWB missionary from 2000-2002. She is currently preparing to return to Japan.

*(NIV)

MIR: A Home for Christmas

The Holland family moved into the Missionary in Residence house in early November and hosted a Christmas open house for the college and FWB family on December 12. Thanks to all who helped make this possible.

Though most furniture has been purchased, not all bills have been paid. Please send any contributions to WNAC, earmarked MIR House.

NO LONGER ON THE FENCE

✝ MARSHA BRITTON ✝

God drew me to His saving grace when I was in junior high. Then, I drifted. Oh, I prayed and read my Bible regularly, and I periodically attended church. But I kept God somewhere down in the mix. I didn't put Him first as the Bible says in Matthew 6:33. I wanted the benefits of being a Christian as well as the so-called thrills of the world.

I had this crazy notion that I would miss out on something exciting and fun if I completely surrendered to God. So I spent twenty-five years perched on the fence. The enemy is such a deceiver. Life on the fence stinks. There's no real pay-off from either side from a fence-perch.

A few months before my fortieth birthday, I realized how disappointed and bitter I had become. In November 2001, I rededicated my life to Jesus Christ. I leapt off the fence and into the loving arms of a waiting Savior. Now I seek Him first. He has graciously remade my burned-out, cynical heart into a heart of joy, peace, victory, and love.

If you are on the fence, make that leap. Eternity in the presence of Love Himself . . .yes, it's worth it!

(I recommend reading *The Great Compromise* by Greg Laurie. This book helped me in my struggles to surrender to Christ.)

Marsha Britton was once heavily involved in the country music scene. A Texas native, Marsha now uses her talents each week at Donelson FWB Church, Nashville, TN. She recently went on her church's mission trip to France where she ministered through song.

SPRINGBOARD
memos for WAC officers

Prayer Chairman:

Plan to participate in the Pre-Easter Week of Prayer. The guide is also available from the website: www.nafwb.org/wnac.

Helpful guides for the Prayer Walk (*Program and Plan Book*, p. 31) can be found online:christianwomentoday.com/prayer/ under "How to Pray."

(WNAC does not endorse this publication).

Pray for the National Retreat in Branson, Missouri, March 27-29.

Don't miss the
WNAC National Retreat
March 27-29, 2003
Chateau on the Lake,
Branson, MO

Missions Hotline is no longer available by phone.

To receive weekly information and missions prayer requests:

subscribe online

carole@nafwb.org

or check the wnac website:

www.nafwb.org/wnac

Study Chairman:

Here's an idea to help keep the harvest before your eyes. Do a search (concordance or Bible computer program) of the word *harvest*. Print or copy verses, one or two for each woman. Challenge women to meditate on these throughout the month and share insights at the next meeting. If anyone in your group has read John Weaver's *Inside Afghanistan*, encourage her to share this adventure account.

Coordinators and Assistant Coordinators:

Be sure to check out some of the games for your March and April meetings (*Program and Plan Book*, pp. 31, 33.)

Use the Lucy and Marge skit (*Program and Plan Book*, p. 52) to interest women and advertise your April meeting.

Are you guilty of just reading the program at your meeting? Give the Lord and your women the best. Meet with your officers and plan presentations. Use the back pages of the *2003 Program and Plan Book, Lifting Up Our Eyes*, ($6.00 plus S&H).

Make plans to attend the National Convention, July 21-22 in Tampa, FL.

Missions/Service Chairman:

Does your group plan an outreach for Easter? Consider giving baskets to a homeless shelter or women's organization.

Share the articles on pages 26-28. Would your group be willing to join in this or a similar effort? Send gifts to WNAC earmarked Foreign Student Scholarships.

Nominations for Executive Committee

Anyone who wishes to submit a nomination for the WNAC Executive Committee should send a resume to:

WNAC Nominating Committee
c/o Mrs. Peggy Outland
14869 N. Rend City Rd.
Sesser, IL 62884

Deadline for submission is March 1, 2003.

Provision Closet Needs:

Tupperware glasses
Baking pans

We're on the Web!! Check us out @ www.nafwb.org/wnac

LABORS OF LOVE

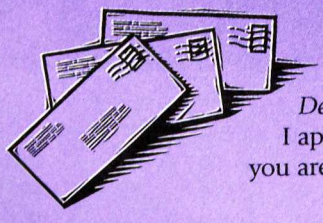
"We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father:" *I Thessalonians 1:2,3*

"The best in many years," commented Pearl Coughran concerning the California State Prayer Retreat, September 26-28, 2002. Women prayed, shed tears, sang, rejoiced, and had fun. Incidentally, Mrs. Coughran should know. She has attended every California Prayer Retreat—30 in all!

November is craft time for the Blue Bell Women Active for Christ. Their annual craft sale netted proceeds for their state project and other missions and community needs. This group is presently working to buy a sign for the church.

PICTURED: **1.** *Countryside women: Gladys Hughes, Anna Jean Walley, Jolene Hunsucker, and Pearl Coughran attend the California Prayer Retreat.*
2. *Merrily Robinson shops at the Blue Bell Craft Fair.*

Is your group involved in a Labor of Love? Send us your news and photos today.



Letters to WNAC

Dear WNAC,
I appreciate you and the good work you are doing. *CoLaborer* looks great.
Cleo Pursell
Nashville, Tennessee

Dear WNAC,
CoLaborer is a blessing that gets better all the time.
Pansy Cravens
Ontario, CA

Dear WNAC,
Thanks for all the work you all do for us. I love and appreciate each of you. Sure do enjoy the *CoLaborer*
Paulette Scott
Red Bay, AL

Dear WNAC,
We appreciate the *CoLaborer* so much. Our ladies (5) wish more ladies could see the need for auxiliary.
Pearl Coughran
Visalia,California

Dear WNAC,
I just wanted to write a note and thank you for providing the Provision Closet and undertaking projects for the missionary that directly affect her home. No matter where we have lived, my concern has always been to set up a house in a way that my kids felt comfortable and were proud to come home…a place where others felt welcome and at home as well. Since 1992, the Provision Closet has provided the essentials for setting up our house. I know the closet doesn't magically maintain or restock itself although my children think it's magical every time they go! It takes the dedication of women in the WNAC office to keep it well organized, inventoried, and monitored. I also know that the gifts and money come from wonderful women…who want our missionary houses to be homes. Thank you for this vision and continuing ministry serving missionaries where the heart is…the home.

Mary Holland and family
Missionaries in Residence at FWBBC

HELP! I'M A MOM

bright ideas for mothers from mothers

Q A

Should I enroll my child in preschool?

Yes. When our later-in-life son arrived, it was hard to choose where to send him. A woman in my church was opening a daycare. The facility was small and new so there was no question about cleanliness. There, they loved on him, taught him and took care of him. He was so comfortable, he often cried when I picked him up. The workers still ask about him and want to see him. They care.

When you have to work, all you can do is pray that your choice will better and not hinder your child. I think the early socialization has helped my son be well adjusted and not so shy. I love it.

Janita Warren
Lebanon, TN

Obviously, situations arise where necessity dictates the need for preschool. As an option rather than need, every family is unique. The correct choice for one is not necessarily correct for another. Many factors must be considered. Why do you want to enroll your child? Are there socialization needs? developmental concerns? Do you want a break? Is the child asking to go to "school"? What type of preschool is it? What values are presented? Are the teachers trained? What will cost do to our budget?

Ultimately, the choice must be made with much prayer. When our first child was born, we prayed (and worried some, too) before God opened the door for me to be a part of a Parent's Day Out program that meets two days a week at our church. We have seen God use that program to help us reinforce the values we are teaching at home. Our girls have gained a great deal. Much of this might have been accomplished at home, but we feel we made the right choice and haven't spent a moment in regret.

Is it right for you? I encourage you to look at all the factors and give it to the Lord. After all, He loves our children even more than we do. He knows what is best for them and will show us when we seek Him with all our hearts.

Katie Greenwood
Antioch, TN

No. During the first five years of a child's life, there are so many milestones—so much exploring, playing, learning, growing—I want to be a part of all those moments. While being with small children 24/7 is very challenging, it provides many opportunities for teaching them and just making fun memories. Children will model those with whom they spend the most time. If you opt out of preschool, that will be you and your family! Children are modeling you—in actions, in words, in character. What a sobering thought. God has given me just a few precious years to mold each little life, and I would be remiss to give that opportunity away to another caregiver.

Many outlets are available for socialization—church, a play date with other mom's and kids, etc. Grandparents, dad, and friends provide great opportunities for interaction as well as give you an occasional break from the daily strain of round the clock child rearing.

As God enables a family to survive on one income, He will also give Mom the tools to make the most of those days with their little ones.

Angie Outlaw
Cedar Hill, TN

Next issue: Long distance grandparenting. What can moms (and grandmoms) do to help make it work?

Send us your input. We welcome your questions, too. Email: sarah@nafwb.org

Headed to Branson?

You must be registered through WNAC. If you missed the February 27 deadline, mail this late registration form with your retreat fee immediately.

Name _____ **Amount Enclosed $** _____

Address _____

_____

Church (or WAC group) _____

Phone _____ **Email address** _____

RETREAT REGISTRATION FEE MUST ACCOMPANY THIS FORM.

GROUPS MAY PAY WITH ONE CHECK, BUT EACH PERSON MUST FILL OUT A FORM.

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO WNAC

P. O. BOX 5002, ANTIOCH, TN 37011-5002

Registration Fee
$25 FOR CHATEAU HOTEL GUESTS
$50 FOR ALL OTHERS

Spring Clean Your Prayer Closet

by Sue Winchester

Springtime. Time for that annual "spring clean." But are you ready to tackle your closets?

One of life's tedious household tasks is keeping closets cleaned and organized. Does your home have one where everything gets stuffed? The place you stash when you don't know where else to put an item? After a while you're almost afraid to open the door, let alone clean this closet. What about your "prayer closet"? Have you been there lately, or are you afraid to open that one, too? Let's put on our gloves, and muster our courage to open the door. These prayer closet cleaning tips aren't taken from Martha Stewart, Heloise, or from the pages of the infamous *Messies Manual*. They're just practical pointers from someone who's been there.

Too Little Time

Having trouble locating your closet? Maybe you've never noticed the door. Busy people sometimes overlook these side rooms. Someone has said, "If you're too busy to pray, you may be too busy." Strange, isn't it, how we always seem to make time for everything else except time alone with God. Those few moments alone with God at the start of each day can either make or break the rest of it. You may say, "I'll open the closet this evening. That's when I'll make time for God in prayer and Bible study." Sounds great, but would you do the same with your clothes closet? Imagine, "I'll just wait and get dressed this evening. After all, I'm just not a morning person." And how many times have those morning intentions turned into evening exhaustion. Ever been so tired that you couldn't enjoy devotions? Make time. Quiet moments alone with God, communing with Him (day or night) can energize you. Locate and enter your prayer closet.

Too Many Distractions

Close the door. An open prayer closet is invitation for distraction. Now that you're inside, examine the walls. Are they decorated with to-do lists, TV guides, or menus? True, a woman's life is filled with distractions. But having been a young mother and later a working mother, I find it hard to believe that someone could be distracted absolutely every second of the day. For those unavoidable distractions, consider a decorative screen or a curtain to keep them temporarily hidden from view. Maybe you just need to redecorate with simpler décor. Start small. Eliminate a little, day by day, until your closet walls contain only images of Him.

Too Much Clutter

Now to the stuff. Don't be overwhelmed by the clutter. Sort. Then pitch, pack, or give things away. Is there something that doesn't even belong in this closet? Maybe it's a sin, a lack of faith, or a bad habit. Get rid of it. You won't "find another use for it someday." And while you're at it, pitch those old suitcases—that baggage you've been storing for years. Don't hold on to "things." Even good stuff can weigh you down. Give this away. Pack up those answered prayers and blessings from years gone by. Sure, get them out from time to time. Open a box and consider its contents when you feel discouragement or defeat. But don't *live* in the past. Maintain a current, clutter-free closet.

But I Pray for Others

Is your closet jam-packed with other people's items? Clear a corner for your concerns. Intercessory prayer is a vital part of our prayer life. However,

Even a prayer closet can be prioritized.

sometimes we spend all our time praying for others and neglect to pray for ourselves and our own needs. As the old song says, we need to "steal away somewhere and pray" for ourselves sometime during the day. This private time with our Father can become a pleasant habit with practice. I used to think this type of prayer selfish, but God has shown me otherwise. How could I effectively pray for others when I needed prayer myself? My heart must first be cleansed and strengthened, giving me strength to stand in the gap for others.

Priorities, Priorities

You've dusted and redecorated, emptied and straightened the prayer closet. It's reasonably clean and clutter-free—ready for use. Now what? Most of us don't have all day to spend in our closet. Families, jobs, kids involved in activities, something almost every night at church—that's where most of us live. But don't allow these responsibilities to rob you of the joy of fellowship with your Savior. Even a prayer closet can be prioritized.

Have you ever started a prayer list, only to be overwhelmed? Missions Hotlines, prayer cards, newsletters, church needs, family concerns, presidential prayer teams, all of these and more are worthy of our prayertime. But where do we start and when do we stop? The Holy Spirit is our Help. He can direct our thoughts and impress us to pray for specific things at certain times. When He brings burdens or people to mind, follow His leading. We can also organize. Keep a notebook in your closet. Make a prayer list, then divide items, praying for a portion each day. Or categorize. Pray for missionaries on Monday, teachers on Tuesday, church workers on Wednesday, etc. Establish proper priorities in your life *and* in your prayer life. What a tremendous witness and testimony to those you love most, knowing that you've gone to the closet for them.

Maintain

Whew! What a great feeling of accomplishment. Any room that is cleaned and organized is always easier to keep. And unlike other closets, no one else can enter, stash, or trash this one. Daily maintenance will be our responsibility.

"But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father..." (Matthew 6:6a).

Sue Winchester, longtime contributor to CoLaborer, *has been active in WNAC for over 35 years at the Fourth FWB Church, St. Louis, MO. This mother of two grown children collects teddy bears as she daily battles chronic pain syndrome.*

Reproduce organizer form as needed. Keep in a regular 3-ring binder, place in Bible, or post daily on refrigerator. Reduce to fit smaller planners.

My Closet Organizer

Today's Date

Verse for Meditation

Today I am praying for

Personal needs

Standing needs

Specific requests

I offer praise for

"But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father..."
(Matthew 6:6a).

Life! Action

a column for teens

Pure freedom: A Unique Opportunity

by Hannah Fletcher

One cold morning in November, about 150 mothers and daughters met together to talk about a hot topic among old and young today. Purity. The very word makes some cringe with embarrassment. Even normally bold people will shut up like clams. But not Dannah Gresh. She addresses the issue with a boldness known to few. An eloquent speaker, she informed us that the Pure Freedom conference was not just about purity; it was about getting closer to each other.

Purity is hard to talk about, especially with your mom. At the Pure Freedom conference, we learned ways to better communicate. With the aid of special gift boxes, Dannah's mother, and Dannah's great sense of humor, mothers and daughters grew closer together while learning about, talking about, and evaluating our sense of purity.

The event even included a style show in which we evaluated outfits for modesty. Dannah Gresh gave teen girls (and mothers) some "rules of thumb" and helpful hints for choosing fashions that are in line with biblical principles of modest dress.

At the end of the day, it was amazing to see mothers and daughters hugging and praying together. During the conference, though, sometimes we split up. Moms talked with Dannah's mother, while Dannah addressed the teenagers. I think both groups were convicted and encouraged to come closer together.

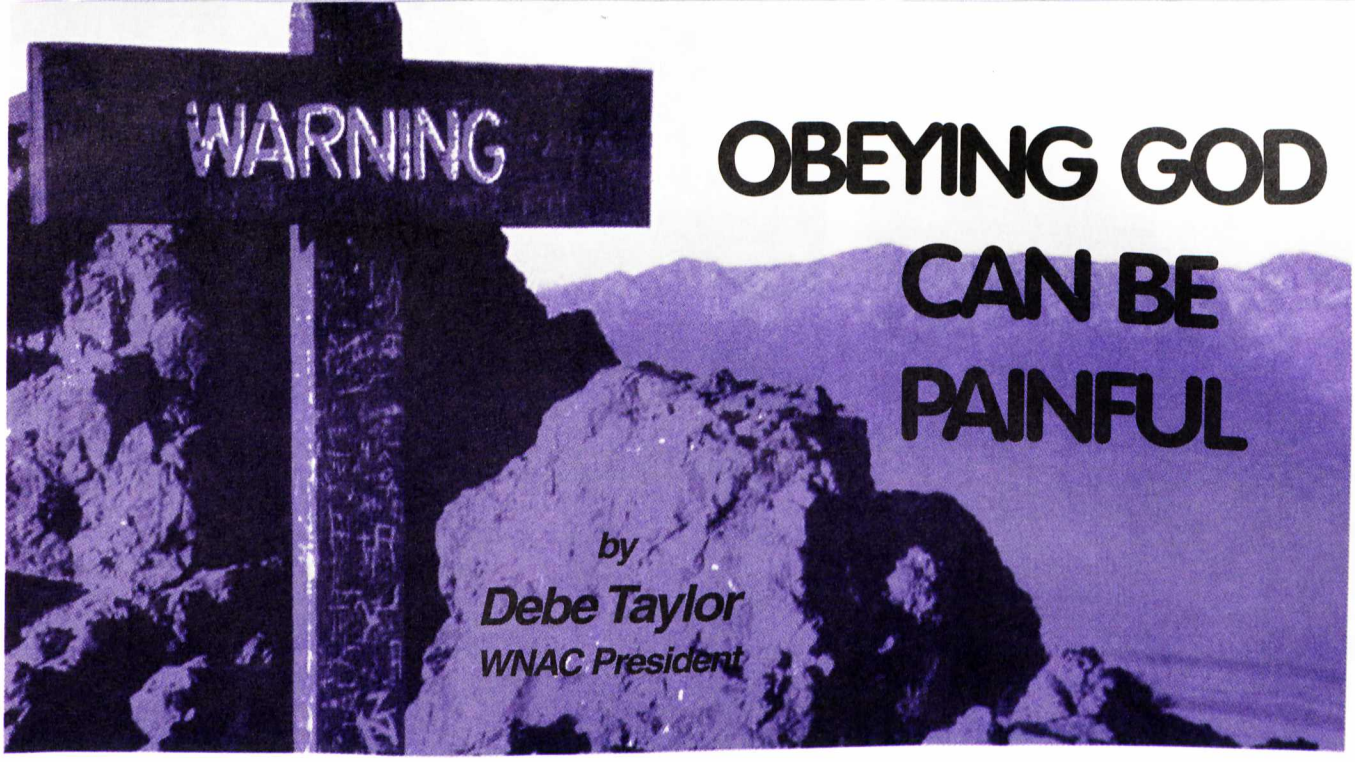
This conference targeted ages 12-18. Most persons in our group agreed that the material was a bit too mature for preteen audiences. Even though the topic intimidates some, we learned that purity is nothing to be afraid of. This conference would be a great influence on any mother/daughter relationship. Hearts were touched and good intentions were put into action that day. Dannah Gresh was an inspirational and thought-provoking speaker. I would highly recommend Pure Freedom to mothers and daughters everywhere.

Hannah Fletcher is a fourteen-year-old freshman at Nashville School of the Arts, TN. She is the daughter of CoLaborer *editor, Sarah Fletcher. Hannah's small discipleship group recently studied Dannah's book,* Secret Keeper.

Pure freedom Ministries (Bob and Dannah Gresh) provide resources for teens (both girls and guys), parents, and youth leaders concerning the subject of sexual purity. Besides their conference ministry, the Greshes also offer resource kits for weekend retreats and small group studies. Either of Dannah's studies could be used in a YWAC setting. (Encourage mothers to read the material first.) For more information contact their website: www.purefreedom.org or call (814) 234-6072.

And the Bride Wore White combines Dannah's personal testimony with biblical principles for purity. For older teens. A leader's guide is available.

Secret Keeper is written on today's teen level. Dannah explores biblical examples of modesty and challenges teens to make dress decisions according to Scripture.



OBEYING GOD CAN BE PAINFUL

by
Debe Taylor
WNAC President

"Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." *In I Samuel 15, King Saul has disobeyed God's instructions for the destruction of the Amalekites. The prophet Samuel now addresses the issue – obedience to God is a must, regardless.*

For years I have associated obedience to God with His blessings. Although there's a definite parallel between the two, I recently discovered a truth that's new to me. Sometimes obeying God can be painful. Thinking back over the years of my Christian life, I realize there is validity in that statement.

"Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." What an enormous request God made of Abraham. Through the years, God had taught Abraham the importance of obedience. Therefore, Genesis 22:10 is recorded for us – *"And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son."* Although God's provision spared Isaac's life, Abraham still felt the pain of obedience.

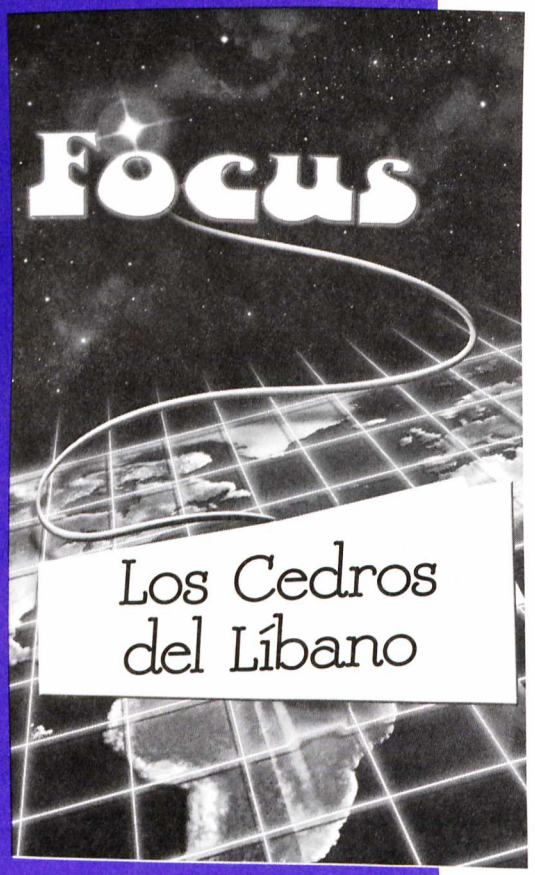
God's request of Ezekiel leaves me shaking my head. In Ezekiel 24, God warned Ezekiel that his wife would die. He instructed Ezekiel not to mourn or weep—don't even shed a tear. Ezekiel was to go about the day as any other day. *"So I spake unto the people in the morning: and at even my wife died; and I did in the morning as I was commanded."* Obedience for Ezekiel was not a question, but it was painful.

Bewilderment is the only word that describes my response to God's command to Hosea. *"Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the Lord."* One commentator states, "From Hosea's heartbreak he gained insight into the hurt of God." You do not have to read very far into this book before you realize the heartache Hosea suffered because of his obedience to God.

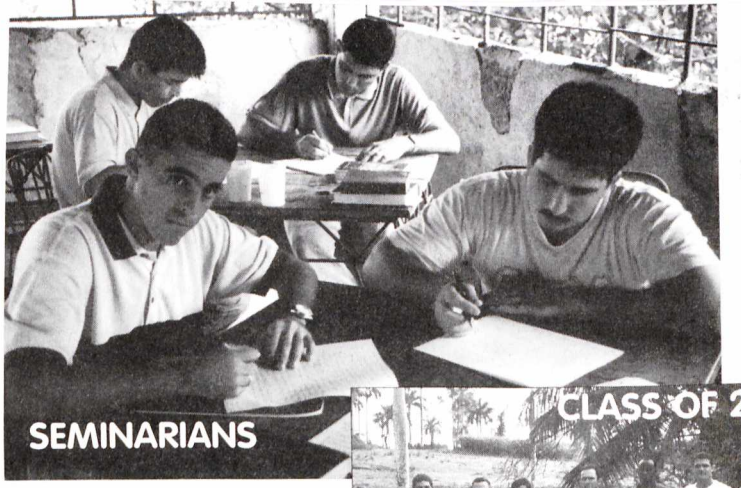
Even Jesus experienced pain when struggling with God's will for His life. During His prayer time in the Garden of Gethsemane, Christ requested if it be the Father's will, that this cup would pass from Him. Scripture records, *"And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground"* (Luke 22:44). Jesus' experience with the pain of obedience began in the garden and followed Him all the way to the cross. *"And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross"* (Philippians 2:8).

What God requests of you may never bring pain. Still again, it may. He may ask you to sell your home, change your career, give sacrificially, or even offer your children unconditionally. Obedience to any or all of these requests may bring pain. Yet, I am convinced that ultimately God will bless us for our obedience. Pain is worth the price.

"Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways" (Proverbs 8:32).



Los Cedros del Líbano


SEMINARIANS

CLASS OF 2003

History

Los Cedros del Líbano (Cedars of Lebanon) Seminary was born under the ministry of missionary Thomas H. Willey. Los Cedros opened in January 1944 and continued to train students until the Cuban Revolution (late 1950's) when the school was closed. The seminary reopened in 1987/88 and has operated ever since as a Bible school with teaching levels comparable to our Bible colleges in the United States.

Location

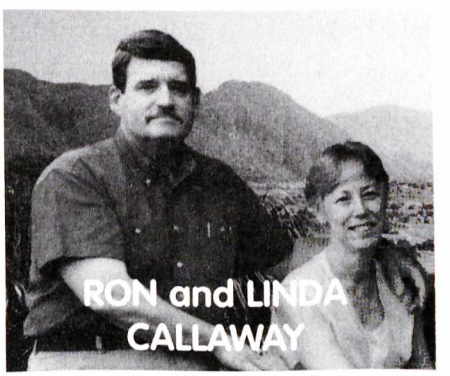
Approximately 7.5 kilometers from the city of Pinar del Rio, Cuba, the Seminary is situated in a community called El Cangre, Many residents in El Cangre are now Christians and members of local FWB churches.

Enrollment

In its modern era, the seminary has graduated 25 young pastors, ten in February 2003. Seven more are now in their senior year (five FWB, two from a sister denomination). A new freshman class of ten started this past September. Due to lack of sufficient funding, the seminary cannot start a new class every year.

Faculty

The faculty of Los Cedros del Líbano is comprised of selected Cuban FWB pastors, as well as one or two other pastors from other evangelical groups who teach certain classes. Missionaries Ronald and Linda Callaway also travel to Cuba yearly in January and February to work in the seminary. Linda teaches English and helps develop a seminary choir. Ronald teaches two intensive classes. Every weekend finds the Callaways visiting different churches where Ronald preaches and teaches and Linda helps with children's ministries. The Callaways have been working with the Cuban FWB Convention since 1989.


RON and LINDA CALLAWAY

Pray:

—for Ronald and Linda Callaway as they work among the Cuban believers.

—for students as they travel to ministry assignments each weekend.

—for the seminary wives and families.

—for financial needs at the school.

—for continued growth of the Cuban church.

Classes

Seminary days begin with early morning prayer and chapel. The first class convenes at 8:00 a.m. with a break at ten. The second class meets until lunch. After a noon meal and siesta, each student goes to his assigned work on the seminary grounds—perhaps in the kitchen, perhaps in the fields, perhaps in construction. The school is supported by Cuban churches (with some help from FWB Foreign Missions). Students pay no tuition, but perform physical labor on campus. They receive only a few dollars each month, plus travel money to and from weekend ministry assignments.

Seminary classes convene Tuesday through Friday. After Friday lunch, students travel to assigned weekend ministries. Because transportation is so lacking in Cuba, Mondays are spent traveling back to the seminary. Some ministry assignments may be as far as 80+ miles away.

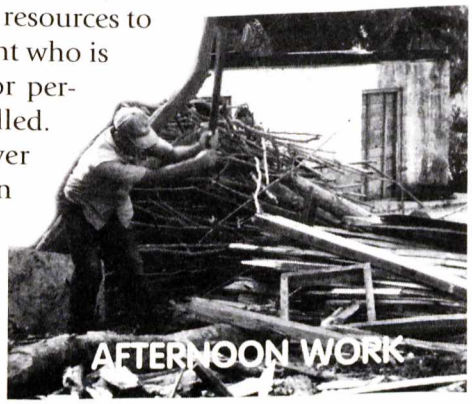
Ministry Assignments

Every student is assigned a ministry from his first day of freshman studies. This assignment changes each year. Ideally, students will gain four years of experience in different ministry situations during seminary years. Students may be assigned to work in a larger church under a pastor, or sent to a new mission work to visit the lost and teach the Bible in house churches. During their years at seminary, students learn to preach, teach, lead music, administrate the church, do manual labor on church property, visit the sick, evangelize the lost, exhort the wayward, etc.

Married students (the majority) often see their families only one weekend a month unless their assignment has housing facitilities for the family. In this case, the wife helps carry on the ministry of the church during the week when her husband is in seminary classes. This past June (2002), the Cuban FWB Convention held its sixtieth anniversary celebration at Los Cedros.

Needs

One of the seminary's greatest needs is daily prayer. Faculty and staff are constantly observing the students. The school has far too few resources to waste time on a student who is not willing to work or perhaps is not really called. Students need prayer that they will remain focused on our Lord Jesus, to do His will and work—whatever the cost.


AFTERNOON WORK

WNAC has awarded the school a portion of its Cleo Pursell Foreign Student Scholarship (2001 & 2002).

Other Prayer Concerns

—Pray for believers in Côte d'Ivoire and for guidance concerning our mission presence there. Praise the Lord for the churches in the city of Abidjan that continue to expand.

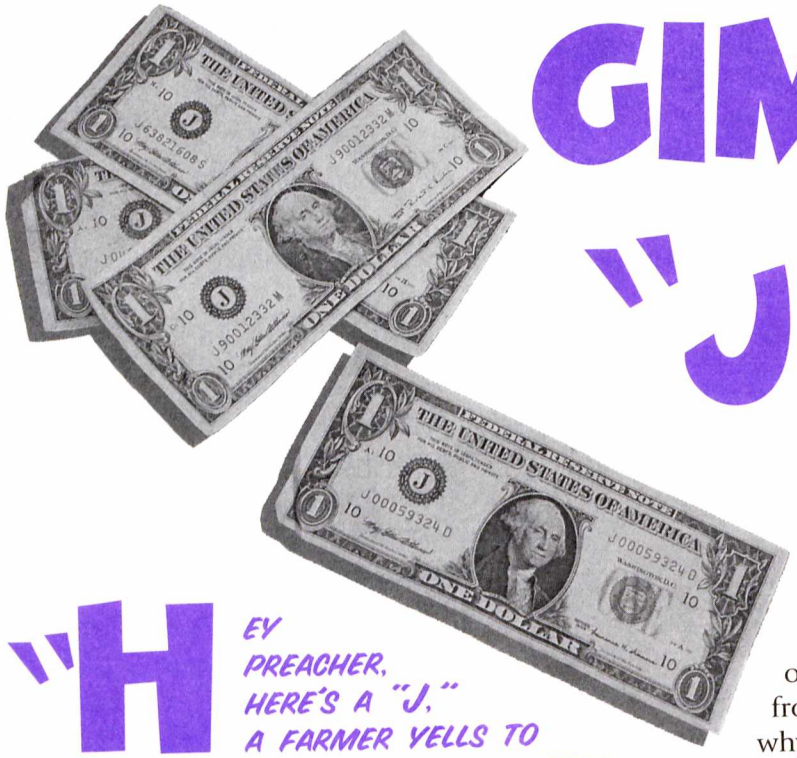
—Pray for Greg Floars, home missionary to Marquette, MI, who has encountered health problems (recent heart catherization). Praise God that this church is growing.

—Pray for expectant and new missionary mothers: Andrea Moore, Brazil; Stephanie Morris Arizona; Kristi Johnson, Spain; Christy Reynolds, Rhode Island. MK's Miranda (Owen) Craddock and Amy (Lotz) Lytle are both expecting their first child.

—Pray for all MK's.

—Pray for families who lost both homes and loved ones in winter tornado storms. Ask that God will enable them to rebuild the ruins, physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

WEBSITE ADDRESSES
(for current requests)
www.nafwb.org/wnac
www.homemissions.net



GIMME A "J"

AS TOLD BY
DAVID SHORES

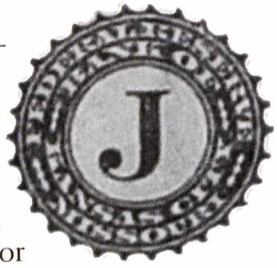
"HEY PREACHER, HERE'S A "J." A FARMER YELLS TO GET MY ATTENTION. ANOTHER LADY QUIETLY TAKES ME ASIDE AND GIVES ME HER STACK OF "J'S."

WHAT'S A "J"?
IT'S A DOLLAR FOR JESUS.

It all began in a Wednesday night children's class at the Ina FWB Church, Ina, Illinois, where I was pastor. The teacher suggested that children collect dollars for Cuban seminary students who were traveling each weekend to preaching points. "Because these students had no money or job," she explained, "it would be very difficult for them to get an education and preach, too."

Other church people heard about the children's project. Someone in the church proposed a two-year pilot program, supporting twenty seminary students at a monthly wage of $15 each (an average wage in Cuba), a total of $7,200. One person suggested collecting dollars with a "J" on the seal. To the U.S. Treasury department, the "J" stands for the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City. To all of us, the "J" stands for Jesus.

Not long after that, I retired from the pastorate and left the Ina church. I continued to collect "J" dollars for the Cuban students. Mornings often found me at the Bonnie Café, a local restaurant and "meetin' place." In conversation, I would ask if anyone had a "J" dollar, then offer to buy it from the person. After a few explanations of why I was buying these dollars, people just started giving them to me. Now local regulars keep an eye out for these "J" jewels. And no one at the Café ever asks why others are giving me money. They just know; they just give.



TO THE U.S. TREASURY DEPARTMENT, THE "J" STANDS FOR THE FEDERAL RESERVE BANK OF KANSAS CITY. TO ALL OF US, THE "J" STANDS FOR JESUS.

Several people at my present church, the First FWB Church in Mt. Vernon, Illinois, do the same. Every Wednesday evening, people call me over to their pew and unload their "J" savings. Each month I gather the "J's" and give them to our church treasurer. He sends the gift on to Foreign Missions. "J" gifts now average over $100 a month! The record for the most "J's" ever received at one time from an individual stands at twenty-six.

Friends, neighbors, church families, community—they've joined in the cheer,

Gimme a "J"!

See previous page for more information concerning Cuban seminary pastors.

MONDAY

The church in Uberlândia, Brazil, will have programs for Easter and Mother's Day. Special music by the adult choir, children, and teen ensemble will be presented as well as a drama. Pray that the many unsaved visitors who attend these events will have hearts open to the gospel message.

Japan will host an E-TEAM and overseas apprentices in early June. A group from Cross Timbers FWB Church in Nashville, TN, also plans to minister in Japan at that time. Pray for wisdom for the missionaries as they make preparations for these summer ministries. Ask God to direct the May strategy session of the Japan field council.

Mike and Cathy Corley plan to return to Russia in June following a six-month stateside assignment. They will move from Chelyabinsk to Krasnodar to help start a Bible institute in that city. Pray that the necessary visas and other documents may be obtained without difficulties. Ask the Lord to bless the Corleys' ministry.

Pray for the salvation of the husbands of five Christian women in the First FWB Church in Panama City. They are: José, Abdi, Chevo, Ricardo, and Omar. Pray also that the church will be able to purchase the adjacent property for parking and for housing for the future pastor and his family. Ron and Linda Callaway are serving as interim pastor.

Pray for General Director James Forlines and his assistant, Shirley Lauthern. Ask God to give James direction, wisdom and vision as he oversees the Foreign Missions department. Pray for Shirley as she handles many details each day.

Pray that the *Embracing the Vision III* video will impact people and bring praise and glory to God.

TUESDAY

Robert and Judy Bryan, 25-year veterans of missions in Côte d'Ivoire, have transferred to the field of France. Presently on deputation, the Bryans plan to move to France this summer or early fall. Their objective will be to develop a leadership program of study for the Free Will Baptist churches of both France and Spain. Pray for Robert and Judy as they complete deputation. Ask God to prepare them educationally and spiritually for their new ministry.

Bobby and Sue Aycock in Barbacena, Brazil, are grateful for the Lord's blessings on their work. They have overseen the construction of three church buildings as works mature. Other outreaches are under way. Although nearing retirement, Bobby and Sue have some goals they would like to accomplish. Pray that their ministry will continue to be fruitful as they appropriate the Lord's grace daily.

Free Will Baptists currently have one couple, two single women and one single man teaching in China under English Language Institute/China. Ask the Lord to give them open doors to witness and to soften hearts to the gospel.

Steve Lytle is director of field operations. As he works with missionaries to develop field strategy, pray that God will give him special wisdom and insight.

Believers in Côte d'Ivoire have endured civil war. Pray that their faith will remain strong, they will have joy in hardship and their testimony will lead others to Christ.

Pray for the persecuted church worldwide. Atrocities are being committed against Christians in many countries. These are our brothers and sisters in Christ, so pray that God will be their refuge and strength.

WEDNESDAY

Brenda Wendlandt, Ben Bailey, Alicia Hart, and Joni Thomas are on short-term assignment teaching English in Japan. Brenda and Ben are working with the missionary team in the Tokyo area. Alicia and Joni serve with the missionaries on the northern island of Hokkaido. Ask God to open Japanese hearts to the short Bible lesson included in each session. Pray that these young people's lives will attract people to Christ.

Clint and Lynette Morgan will soon present the results of their research concerning avenues for Free Will Baptists to minister in restricted access countries. A door has opened for a potential partnership with the Baptist Union in Central Asia. Pray for God's guidance for the Board of Foreign Missions when the Morgans bring their recommendations to them at the end of this month.

The World Missions Offering will be received on Sunday, April 20. This special offering undergirds the Foreign Missions office, enabling missionary support, mobilization of the denomination and recruitment efforts. Approximately $150,000 was given in the 2002 WMO. The 2003 goal is $200,000. Pray for a generous offering from churches and individuals.

Jim and Shirley Combs in Araras, Brazil, continue ministering at the Lar Nova Vida children's home. While some children stay at Lar Nova Vida for only a short time, others remain for several years. The children's choir and orchestra have contributed to the growth of the newest church in Jardim Candida. Over the last 10 years more than 190 children have been sheltered and have had the gospel seed planted in their hearts. Pray that many of these children will be saved and live fruitful lives for God's kingdom.

THURSDAY

The missionary team in Spain is working to plant churches in Alpedrete and Moralzarzal. Pray that God will prepare hearts to receive the gospel message. Several people, some unsaved, are studying the Bible with team members. Pray for understanding of spiritual things and for their salvation.

The Foreign Missions board will meet April 28-30. Pray that God will grant unity as board members seek His will, vision, wisdom and direction.

Free Will Baptists have a presence in Mongolia through one family and one single man teaching English. Pray the body of believers in Mongolia will be enlarged through their ministry. Ask the Lord to help believers make a clean break with former religions. Pray for more workers for Mongolia.

Neil Gilliland, director of member care, counsels with missionaries and MKs. Ask the Lord to give him wisdom and spiritual discernment for each situation that arises.

Members of the France Muslim Team are in the process of completing deputation. The group plans to leave in August for language school in France. Pray for Sean and Jill Warren, Tim and Di Keener, Micah and Becky Derby, and Darren and Dana Portell as they prepare for departure. Pray for a smooth transition for their children: Sophia Warren, Eli Keener, and McKenna and McGwire Portell.

Pray for Patsy Vanhook as she starts a Christian bookstore ministry in Nantes, France. Several months of preparation have gone into this project, including two two-week training sessions for Patsy in Strasbourg, France. Pray that the bookstore will attract many people and be used by God to draw people to Himself.

FRIDAY

Carlisle Hanna continues his ministry in India. Ask the Lord to give Carlisle strength for his days and wisdom for the work. Pray that God will bless the faculty at the Bible institute in South India, and pray that graduates will be effective Christian leaders.

Pray for Don Robirds, director of public relations, and his assistants, Deborah St. Lawrence and Brian Ellison. Ask God to give them creativity and direction as they prepare publications, literature, and audiovisual presentations. Pray that items produced will be informative and effective for mobilizing individuals and churches for involvement in world evangelization.

Molly Barker, Dennis and Trena Owen and Jaimie and Tammy Lancaster serve in Uruguay. Please pray for the believers in Uruguay as they step forward and take on more leadership responsibilities. Pray for harmony between the churches and a strong spirit of unity as they reach out to their neighborhoods.

Pray for Rob Conley, director of financial operations, and his staff: Gladys Gragg, bookkeeper; Geneva Walker, accounting clerk; and Nancy Jones, part-time accounting clerk. Ask the Lord to guide Rob in the various aspects of financial administration for Foreign Missions.

Eddie Payne, director of mobilization and recruitment, and his assistants are helping the E-TEAMs and overseas apprentices prepare for summer ministrys. Pray for Eddie, Judy Lytle, and Angela Emerick as they work through the multitude of details involved. Ask the Lord to have His hand upon each person serving in short-term missions. Pray that some will answer the call to career missionary service.

Lift Up Your Eyes . . . And Pray

WNAC Pre-Easter Week of Prayer

for World Missions

April 14-18

Words for Women

Executive Secretary-Treasurer
Marjorie H. Workman

Nudges That Count

"Why don't you join the church?" my pastor's daughter asked as we were playing together on a Sunday afternoon.

"I'm too young," I replied. My heart raced as hope swelled within. I was barely eight. I didn't know a single teenager who belonged to the church, much less anyone under twelve.

"No you're not," she said. "I'm a member of our church in Wilson." (Her Dad pastored four churches at the time.)

"Was it possible?" I thought. "Could I really take that step?" There was a longing in my heart to do so. I knew what belonging to the church meant—you walked, talked, and lived differently than those who did not belong. I pondered the possibility all afternoon. That night, I waited with great anticipation and hope for the invitation. I joined. Back then, being saved and joining the church were synonymous. My dad, a faithful deacon, followed up, making sure I understood what I had done.

At age twelve, I was prompted by my pastor to attend a series of soul winning classes that several churches were doing together. I jumped at the opportunity and didn't miss a single class. At the conclusion of the final session, without any forewarning, I was called on to pray the dismissal prayer. Breathless, with knees knocking, I stood and prayed my first public prayer in front of Mom and Dad and all adults.

Soon after my thirteenth birthday, my youth leader, a faithful WAC (auxiliary) member, encouraged me to give the devotion at a district woman's meeting. Overwhelmed with nerves and excitement, but with Mom's help in writing, I did it!

In high school, my English teacher repeatedly said, "If you really want to go to college, you can. No one is too poor." Oh how I hoped she was right. My heart was set on going to Bible College. However, being one of five children and a tenant farmer's daughter, financially, it didn't seem possible. My teacher gave me hope. I graduated not only from Bible College, but from graduate school as well.

Where would I be without those "nudgers" who encouraged me? Those mentors and counselors who took the initiative to speak up have shaped and molded me throughout my life. They gave me hope. Isn't that what Women Active for Christ is all about? Women helping people. Communicating hope to the poor, the lost, the downtrodden, the struggling, and the depressed. Encouraging the younger women, the family, the new believer and others.

The most important nudge we can give is pointing others to the Hope of the Ages—Jesus Christ. In fact, Paul says in *2 Corinthians 5:14, "The love of Christ constraineth us..."* or compels us. Paul knew what it was like to be enslaved to a cause. Once he experienced the love of Christ and found freedom from sin's bondage, he redirected his passion and became a bond slave to the King of Kings. Paul recognized that *"He* (Christ) *died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again"* (2 Corinthians 5:15). It is through the resurrection of our Lord that we have hope. Hope, not just for today's problems and challenges, but for eternity. Scripture, His presence, and His provision—all provide us with hope, a hope that needs to be shared with others.

"The easiest course of action is to not get involved," said Verna Birkey in *Women in Leadership*, "but by making yourself vulnerable, you make yourself valuable. I'm thankful for those nudgers in my life who didn't choose the easy way out.

What about you? During this Easter season, may the *"God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost,"* (Romans 15:13). Be a nudger! Share hope with someone near you.

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