

COLLABORER

July • August 2004

FIVE NOBODIES

JUNE CLEAVER
*doesn't live
in the parsonage
anymore*

The Miracle Place

TRUSTING
DURING
TRANSITION

Woman Alone

expectations in ministry

WOMEN NATIONALLY ACTIVE FOR CHRIST

FINDING OUR PLACE



Sarah Fletcher

I spied the title on the bargain table of our youth camp bookstore, *How to Be a Preacher's Wife and Like It*. Now that was interesting. In my young quest for holiness, as a seventeen year old, I perceived this as the ultimate. What could be more holy than a life as a pastor's wife. And it didn't hurt that the young man I was more than slightly interested in (eventually my husband) had answered the call to preach the evening before. Hmm. I bought the book.

I read and reread those wonderful ideas of what a pastor's wife should be. And in my naivety, I imagined myself fulfilling these roles with grace and ease.

Then dream became reality. I became a pastor's wife. Unlike the gracious, shining role model of the paperback book, I found myself often struggling, unsure, definitely "not quite what the congregation expected."

Years later, I attended a women's conference. The speaker promoted her manual for joyful living in a pastor's home. I must rise early, ditch robe and don makeup, read my Bible and pray (of course), then awake my ministry husband with a good morning kiss and a steaming cup of coffee. I didn't buy that book.

Thankfully, along our ministry path, God placed us in a church of seasoned saints who accepted us for who we were. They respected me despite my weaknesses, and expected nothing more than I offered to give. There, I found myself. I also found my place.

Finding a place in ministry is often difficult, especially when the path God reveals is one which women more noble have traveled. Just ask the two young pastors' wives we've featured in this issue. Or the two ministry wives whose lives have taken unexpected turns. Or the woman alone. Yet, because God does lead, we can each cast aside the nobody blues and find our expectation in Him.

Pastor's wife or missionary, married or single, church leader or simply church attender, we all struggle with expectations. Some are self-expectations, our own personal goals and criteria. Often these masquerade as the demands of others; while, in actuality, they're standards or hardships we've unknowingly placed upon ourselves. The things we think we just have to do. The Apostle Paul warned of these as he cautioned the Corinthians not to think too highly of themselves or compare themselves with others. Unfulfilled self expectations can leave us devastated and disillusioned.

Christians also face the added expectations of others. Well meaning brothers and sisters may erect a pedestal that's often transformed into a whipping post when their expectations and our end results don't match. Ministry by guilt has long been too familiar in our ranks. Because no one else will do it, to please the powers that be—these are motivations that maneuver, but fail to truly minister. Missionary Debbie Anderson poses the question so succinctly, "What's a girl to do?"

How can we find our place? Whether God has called us to a life of "full-time" ministry or a ministry midst the full of life, each of us fills a unique ministry role. Knowing ourselves, recognizing our gifts, and yes, acknowledging our shortfalls, help us become the person He already knows we are.

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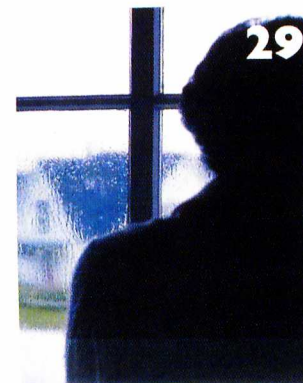
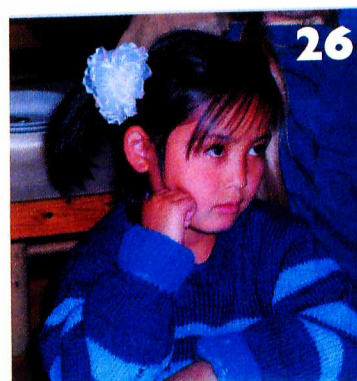


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FIVE NOBODIES



DO YOU EVER FEEL LIKE A NOBODY? Most Christian women question their usefulness sometime in life, but it's vital to remember that God has chosen *you* for something special. You are somehow important in God's great scheme of things. Since the beginning of time, female followers of the Father have played key roles in His Kingdom. Consider these Biblical examples.

—**NOBODY ONE** lives in a strange situation through no choosing of her own.

—**NOBODY TWO** faces problems galore including poverty and the death of her husband.

—**NOBODY THREE** discovers her husband's boss is a murderer.

—**NOBODY FOUR's** only claim to fame is manual labor.

—**NOBODY FIVE** lives in a city completely filled with idolatry.

NOBODIES, yet somebodies, probably not well known in their times, but each one special to her Maker. These women were certainly not perfect, but they were godly. Despite their difficulties, they served the Lord. See if you can find yourself in any of these women. Perhaps you will see a little of yourself in each of them.

NOBODY ONE is nameless, only known as a wife—Noah's wife (Gen. 7:7). Married to a preacher of righteousness, she finds herself in an odd situation, yet she chooses to be part of Noah's support system. She endures rain (*an unknown element at that time*), humidity (*what is that sticky feeling?*), taunting, and ridicule along with her husband and the rest of her family. Through no direct choosing of her own, her world is turned upside down.

Maybe all she ever wants out of life is a quiet piece of countryside on which to raise her sons and share her husband's life; but what she gets is altogether different—a boatload of animals, tight living quarters, and an unknown

future. God's covenant is with Noah, so she mostly "comes along for the ride," yet more than likely, she is Noah's helper and companion.

Is this you? Are you dealing with family problems? Do you find yourself a part of situations not of your own making? Remember, the narrative of Noah's wife is a story of good news. She is, in the end, saved out of it all. A new beginning is hers to share. Quite likely, she sees the rainbow along with Noah. May you, like Noah's wife, find a new beginning and glimpse a rainbow of promise in the midst of your life's situation.

NOBODY TWO is a nameless widow. Yes, she has problems galore. The heathen god, Baal, is gaining major importance in the land because of the influence of wicked King Ahab and Queen Jezebel. All of God's prophets are supposed to be killed, but God protects Elijah and sends him to the city of Zarephath to care for our nameless nobody (1 Kings 17:8-9).

She has lost her husband and she is poor; now a famine has spread throughout the land. With divine intervention, her oil and meal will last through the difficult days. But the worst comes later as her son dies. A hospitable woman (Elijah lives with her during the last part of the drought), she believes God, though not without some difficulty. God honors her belief, and her son lives again. God supplies her needs in difficult times but God does not make her life one-hundred percent easy. Instead, He sees her through her problems.

Do you have times like these? Can you identify with a woman like this? She is not remembered by name, but only by the city in which she lives. Yet God cares for her and she is a definite blessing to one of God's prophets. Will you be a blessing to others, in spite of your many problems?

NOBODY THREE is mentioned by name. Joanna (Luke 8:3) is the wife of Chuza, steward of Herod Antipas, the Herod who had John the Baptist beheaded. Her husband actually works for a murderer. How can she keep her faith in these circumstances? How hard will life be for her?

She actually ministers to Jesus and to His disciples during His time here on earth. Since her husband is in a government position, some danger is involved. But Joanna is so willing to closely identify with Jesus and His group that she follows her Lord anyway. Luke 24:10 records that Joanna and other women go after the crucifixion to anoint the body of Jesus. The women are met by two angels who tell them, "He is risen." A virtual nobody in the world of memorable

Biblical figures, Joanna is one of the first to experience the joy and wonder of the Resurrection.

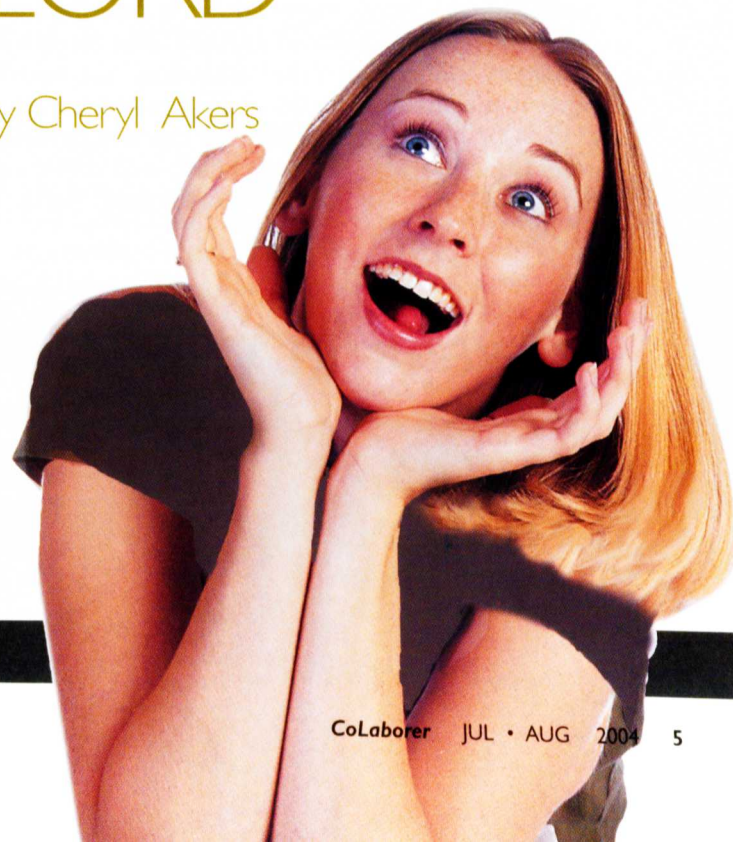
Do you find yourself here—a follower of the Lord, with no real authority or power, but willing to serve the Lord in the specific situation where you are? Little more is known about this Joanna. Yet her story reminds us of our need to serve and follow God—even in not-so-easy times.

NOBODY FOUR, our manual laborer, lives on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea in the city of Joppa (Acts 9:36). She is a well known, charitable and pious woman. Called Tabitha by the Jews and Dorcas by the Greeks, she is also a disciple (follower) of the Lord. This woman is "full of good works and alms-deeds" and is known for the coats and garments which she has made.

How tired Dorcas must feel at the end of each day. Probably making a minimal wage at her manual labor job, she must deal with difficult people. Her schedule

WHO WERE SOMEBODIES FOR THE LORD

by Cheryl Akers



A NOBODY...BECOMES A SOMEBODY WHEN SHE LIVES FOR THE LORD.

is mundane. Making clothes takes a long time. Her hands tire more easily as she ages.

Do you physically labor? Can you identify with her tiredness? Do you ever ask yourself, "Is all this work worth anything?"

When Dorcas suddenly dies, her friends call upon Peter to raise her up. Dorcas may not be so well known to us today; the facts of her life may be obscure. But God, in His infinite love and concern, sees fit to raise her from the dead. What is the end result of her life? *"Many believed in the Lord,"* Acts 9:42 testifies. So maybe the ultimate question of her worth is not in her work but in her God. Her work is not merely a means to an end; her life is not lived only in the day to day.

Like Dorcas, you are important to Him because He is the only One who can make all the work worthwhile. Trust Him to use your work to glorify His name.

NOBODY FIVE, a woman named Damaris lives in Athens, a huge sinful city, full of worldly culture and pagan gods (Acts 17:34). She converts to Christianity because of Paul's preaching on his second missionary journey. From Paul's great sermon at Athens, *"some mocked"* (17:32), some said, *"We will hear thee again of this matter,"* but *"certain men clave unto him, and believed"* (17:34). Damaris belongs to the final group; she is a new believer. Temptations are everywhere in this metropolis, but Damaris finds God in the midst of moral decay. Paul does not succeed in establishing a church there. Athens is described as *"the city wholly given to idolatry"* (17:16). The *Unger's Bible Dictionary* states that *"the Athenians surpassed all other [Grecian] states in the attention which they paid to the worship of gods. Hence the city was crowded in every direction with temples, altars, and other sacred buildings."* But, praise the Lord, there were true

believers in Athens; Damaris is one of them. Not much is known of this particular convert except that she believes. And she is remembered for just that—her belief in the one, true God. It is enough.

Consider where you live. Within a big city with sin everywhere you turn your eyes? Inside a compact neighborhood known for its friendliness, yet a place where Satan manages to work his wiles? How is your belief today? Is it stagnant because of circumstances? Is it threatened because of your surroundings? Does it waver when problems seem insurmountable? Remember, God is still available. Our faith is in Him, rock solid and basic. You may not think yourself very special, but how great to be remembered for your belief. Simple, yet great.

Nobodies yet somebodies. Barely mentioned in Scripture and even harder to find in Biblical commentaries, none of these five were major players in Biblical events; Nevertheless, they were important to God. Their stories are powerful.

So is yours. You can influence others for Him in ways you may never have considered—in your belief, in your work, in your attitude. Are you willing to let Him use you no matter what your circumstance?

When Satan attacks you with a bout of *"I can't"* or *"I'm not important enough to matter,"* remember: a nobody in this world becomes a somebody when she lives for the Lord.

Cheryl Akers attends the Immanuel FWB Church in Jacksonville, FL. An active wife and mother of two grown children, Cheryl serves as secretary of both her local and district WAC.



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The Miracle Place

by Mary Holland

“Dad had died and so had my belief in a loving God who was supposed to care for everyone.”

Leaving America, one of the most renowned countries in the world and recognized worldwide as the “land of opportunity,” we went to Brazil.

We found Brazil no different in its thinking than any other third world country. “If you come from America, you must be rich and you’ve been to Disney World at least a thousand times.”

Thanks to the media and movie market, America has been portrayed unrealistically. Brazilians think that we all live in big homes, just like the ones depicted in the movies and we all vacation in exotic places and theme parks. That was far from the truth.

The truth is...one of the most profound things that I have ever gone through is the loss of my parents during my childhood. I was not raised in a Christian home. Not only did I lose both of my parents, but I lived without any life-changing knowledge of Christ or benefit from His comfort. No, in fact, I hit grief head-on with bitterness, anger, despair, no self worth and even serious thoughts of suicide.

To top it all off, I was separated from my brothers. I dearly loved my youngest brother. He was the

one whom Daddy had always told me to “watch after.” Now I wasn’t even able to do that.

I became an unwanted child and a burden to others. I mourned for my father daily. I had prayed to God the entire time that my father was sick. But Dad had died and so had my belief in a loving God who was supposed to care for everyone.

I felt insignificant not only to the people around me, but also to God. I became overwhelmed with the thought of death and dying.

Never in my wildest imaginations as I lay on the floor sobbing bitter tears of anger, grief and loneliness for the death of my father, could I realize that this immense loss would someday be my gain. This painful experience has created an understanding in knowing God as a Father and a leverage for ministering to others.

In Brazil, it certainly isn’t uncommon to grow up in a non-Christian home and being poor is standard. I was able to relate to the Brazilians and the barrier of different worlds was somewhat diminished. Sharing a part of my experi-

ences and myself verified a living God. My past has encouraged others and proven that God is faithful and merciful even when we can’t see it. I had never been taught to trust God’s heart even though I might not see His hand working.

Through my experiences in my own childhood, I have been able to relate to others on their level.

“I became an unwanted child and a burden to others.”

Somewhere in the miracle place of God’s hand, he took a broken, confused, troubled little girl’s life and transformed it into a beautiful story of His love.

Never in my wildest imaginations...



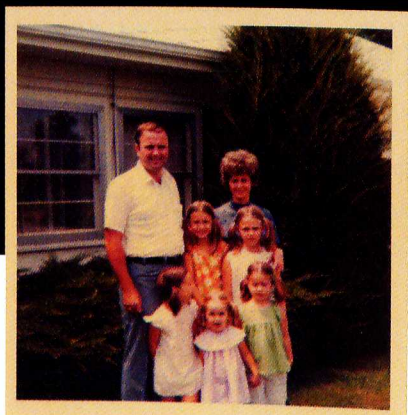
Mary Holland and her husband Curt have served nine years as FWB missionaries in Brazil. Currently, Mary is continuing her education, completing a master’s degree in counsel-

ing. God has blessed Mary with a wonderful family—daughters, Amber, Kelsey, and Brooklin.

Two young pastor's wives now serve the same congregations their parents once served. Imagine following in a mother's footsteps... a generation later.

June Cleaver doesn't live in the parsonage anymore.

by Tommi Jo Ryan and Jennie Blair



THE LEMONY smell of freshly mopped floors, the scent of orange polished furniture.

Potpourri carpet cleaner emanates from the walkways. Sparkling windows look as if you could walk right through them, perfectly fluffed pillows accent sunny bedrooms, and the aroma of freshly-baked chocolate chip cookies permeates the air. Ahh—the parsonage. What! Not my house! Not here! June Cleaver doesn't live in the parsonage anymore.

So many pastors' wives find themselves weighted with the expectation of filling the previous pastor's wife's shoes. Imagine when those shoes belong to your mother.

"He Leadeth Me"

Isaiah 6:8

Growing up in a pastor's home seemed natural. I knew nothing else. There was nothing to compare. Mom and Dad brought me home from the hospital to the parsonage. Shortly afterward, they were able to afford their own home, a dream they'd envisioned for many years. So, we moved—Mom, Dad, and five girls—to the house where I spent the first 19 years of my life. Home. We were truly blessed.

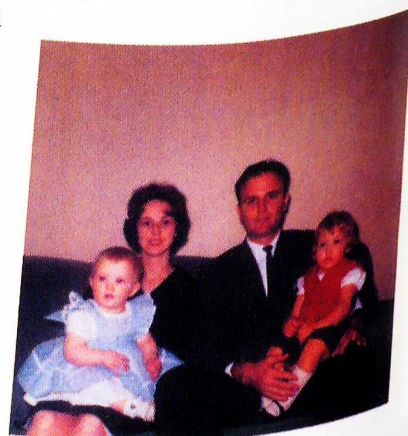
Back in 1971, times, of course, were different. Not many pastors were able to afford their own homes; therefore, most resided in parsonages. Many parson-

ages are considered a part of the church property, and in one sense, they are. But some people believe that the parsonage has a revolving door. One pastor's wife shared that people would come into her house unannounced without even a knock. Parsonages are nice, but owning a home brings needed privacy to many pastors and their families.

Back in the 70's it was very uncommon for a pastor's wife to work outside the home. Her "work" entitled her to roles as homemaker, sounding board, substitute Sunday school teacher, visitation partner, choir member, pianist or organist, VBS director, speaker, consultant, organizer, bookkeeper, meals on wheels, while at the same time, fulfilling her responsibilities as wife and mother.

My mom went to work the fall after I turned three. When I entered first grade, she began working full-time. Her job put her to work for our church and private Christian school. Mom was expected to be at all church functions, fully prepared, while holding down her full-time job and accomplishing all of the other duties and expectations placed upon her. And she did this. While I'm sure it had to be stressful at times, Mom did it all because that's what pastors' wives do.

Many pastors' wives still perform most, if not all, of these roles today.



ABOVE: The whole family on a visit back to Ina, IL. Tommi Jo is in front. RIGHT: Parents Tom and Verna Malone (and two of Tommi's older sisters) during their years at Ina.

Now many of them have full-time jobs outside of the home. Why do they work? Rest assured, in most cases, it's not because they choose to gain a career. Rather, they work to supplement the household income or to provide health insurance for their family.

Mom taught me many things about the church. It was actually a combined effort. Both Mom and Dad taught me, as well as my older sisters, to love the Lord and His people. This love for the church was developed daily in us by active participation in church outings, visitation programs, cantatas, dramas, and through many other avenues.

Our most effective method of learning was hearing my parents pray for the people of the church. We learned that by loving others unconditionally, we showed our love for the Lord. While Mom may have not had a "best girlfriend," she loved many people and they loved her in return. It is that kind of love and kinship which I have carried with me into my work and relationships with my church family.

Often times preachers' wives must assume the roles of both parents because Dad is busied several nights a week with church work. Revivals and conferences keep dads away, as well. Mom learned, as I'm sure other pastors' wives have, too, that a pastor's wife must be flexible and ready.

*"In My Life...Church...Home...
Lord, Be Glorified"
1 Corinthians 10:31*

The world has changed much over the years. June Cleaver has "left the building" or as I like to think—she's retired and now abides in her happy home in Joelton, Tennessee. The days of spotless floors and baked goodies 24/7 are gone. Mom works.

Yet the role of a preacher's wife is much the same today. Her expectations are as great if not greater, compounded by her full-time job. Ultimately, the role of a pastor's wife includes helping her husband in every way possible, being willing to work wherever and whenever, loving the church people, seeing the needs that no one else sees and filling them. Many times, when no one steps up to fill a need, a pastor's wife will take it upon herself to do the job, partly because it is expected—the unwritten code. Maybe the time has come for pastors' wives to implore help from other church members.

While there is hardly a moment's rest for a pastor's wife, she is still expected to live a standard higher than other women. This standard is also expected of her children; they, too, must act and live higher than other children. My mom faced an awesome task, adequately and purposefully teaching us girls ways to deal with this pressure. Only through much prayer, many long

My Daddy Prayed...

On Sunday morning just before he'd preach,
Down on one knee and his Father beseech,
"Dear God we thank You, for this Your day
Come and meet with us, lead us in Your way.
And if a lost soul is here in a seat,
May he come to the altar and the dear Savior meet."

Every weekday morning getting ready for school
Our family's devotions, 7:30 the rule!
"Lord be with my girls as they study and learn,
Help them grow to be servants and Your will discern.
All the other requests; be near to them, too,
And the glory and praise we will give Lord to You."

And each time we'd gather in the kitchen to eat
At the head of the table in his usual seat,
My dad would give thanks to the Lord up above,
Each Malone holding hands as a sign of our love.
"Lord we thank You for meeting each one of our needs
In Your name we pray this. Now girls, pass the peas."

Daily duties all finished, we're ready for bed.
Dad's sitting there reading, and now with bowed head.
He's praying again, these words we can't hear,
But they spoke to my heart, if not to my ear.
For I know in his prayers he was praying for me
And for my four sisters, he'd pray faithfully.

Many years have now past; we girls are all grown,
And I'm praying now for boys of my own.
Lord, I love these dear boys and I know You do too,
But what I pray most is they learn to love You.
So I'm praying now more than I ever have
That my boys see in me what I saw in my dad.

—Marianne Waddell



Marianne Waddell, pastor's wife at Cofer's Chapel FWB Church, Nashville, TN, is also a Malone daughter. Pictured here with their mother Verna are sisters: Carol, Marianne, Aimee, Tommi Jo (l-r: back) and Kristi (front).

How About Your Pastor's Wife?

A recent survey among pastors' wives revealed that:

90% always or often enjoy being pastors' wives.

65% feel fairly well equipped to be effective pastors' wives.

43% said the most rewarding aspect of their role is seeing people grow in Christ.

56% did not have close friends in the church (the greatest single problem noted in the survey).

94% said their children never or seldom complain about being PKs (preachers' kids).

21% wanted more privacy.

19% wanted to be thought of as individuals rather than pastors' wives.

25% view their husbands' over-busy work-schedule as a source of conflict.

17% agreed that their families "live in a fishbowl with more expectations and increased pressures."

60% of wives expressed the need to further their training so they can serve better.

Gleaned from the article, "What Pastors' Wives Wish Their Husbands and Churches Knew About Them" John Mark Ministries www.pastornet.net (not a FWB site)

ABOUT OUR COVER:

Our "June Cleaver" cover girl is North Carolina pastor's wife, Betty Hill. Unlike our feature suggests, Betty still lives in the parsonage. She's been in ministry now for 42 years, supporting her pastor husband Edwin. Active in WNAC, Betty has graced parsonages in both Virginia and North Carolina. For the past 10 years, the Hills have ministered at Peace Chapel FWB Church, Washington, NC.



discussions, and the Lord's working was this accomplished. This was pertinent during our time; it is still pertinent today. Preachers' wives must teach their children how to properly handle such pressures and to see themselves through His eyes.

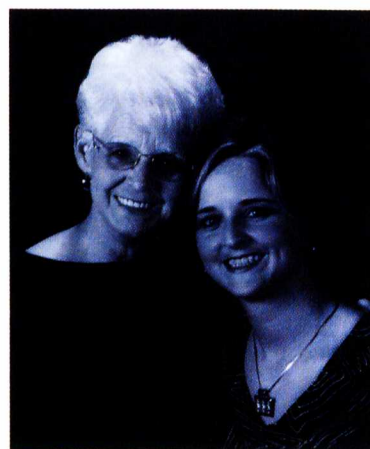
"Wherever He Leads, I'll Go"

Psalm 31:3

A picture comes to my mind of the preacher's wife. Imagine with me, if you will, a woman standing at the opened front door with rollers in her hair, bathrobe over her "Sunday best," a child on her hip, another toddler pulling at her robe, hose wrinkled at the ankles, the hint of pink nail polish at her heel and toe, her face half-clad with make-up and splattered with oatmeal, saying, "Yes, come on in. You are welcome any time."

You would be hard-pressed to find a pastor's wife who wouldn't tell you that the role she plays and expectations she encounters are what God has planned for her life. While hard to bear at times, the pastor's wife meets these expectations with a song in her heart because she's told her Lord, "Wherever You lead, I'll go. Whatever You have for me to do, I'll do." The greater goal for her life is not to accomplish these expectations but to glorify God in all she does. When a pastor's wife keeps this in focus, then everything else falls into place.

Today, I serve the same congregation Mom and Dad did 40 years ago. June Cleaver may have vacated the parsonage, but her daughter is there now. And her role is the same—to love and help her husband, to be willing to work, to love the church, to see and fill the needs, and, first and foremost, to glorify God in all things.



Tommi Jo Ryan and her husband Brad (also a PK) have ministered in the Ina FWB Church, Ina, IL, for the past three years. Presently a K-8 music teacher, Tommi enjoys reading, stamping, scrapbooking, and spending time with her three daughters, Claire, Kendall, and Olivia. She is active in the church's Friendship Circle (WAC group).

Water and Purex Soap™...

These are the things my grandmother used to clean the parsonage when she became a pastor's wife nearly fifty years ago. My mother had upgraded to a can of Comet™, a bucket of bleach, and a bottle of Windex™ when she began cleaning the parsonage nearly thirty years ago. Nowadays, I pull out my Swiffer Super Wet Jet Mop™ and my Pledge Wipes™ when I need to give the parsonage a quick once over. Boy, have things changed around the parsonage.

Growing up, I was often asked the question, "What is it like living in a pastor's home?" I always replied, "Well, I don't know. I've never lived in any other kind of home, so it just seems very normal to me." As I grew older, and became more aware of my environment and surroundings, I began to realize that maybe things were a little different at my house. I knew that others thought of my dad in a special way since he was the pastor, but I'd never considered what others thought of or expected from my mother. She was always just "Mom" to me. Now that I am married, a mother, and a pastor's wife myself, I have a whole new appreciation for the lifestyle my mother has modeled for me over the past 26 years.

The role of the average American woman has changed dramatically over the past fifty years. Likewise, so has the role of pastor's wife. Expectations have drastically changed. A few months ago I began reading the book, *How to Be a Preacher's Wife and Like It*. Written in 1956, author, Lora Lee Parrott, writes, "Small children are not supposed to be spotless. However, they can be cleaned up at *each* mealtime, and they should in all events be *spotless* when they appear with the family at church."

I am thinking, "Spotless? That seems like an impossible feat with little boys!" The author continues, "The



Three generations of Free Will Baptist pastors' wives: Jennie Blair, mother Debbie Burden, and grandmother Bea (Dudley) Kirby.

pastor's wife needs to rise at a comparatively early hour, dress herself in as attractive way as possible, to be at her very best in serving the family their breakfast and in giving them a good start for the day. It is most important to family morale that you serve *three* good

tasty meals each day, on time! Bread wrappers, catsup bottles, cooking pans and milk bottles have no place on the table from which the family is to eat." As I read, I'm thinking, "Yikes! I'll never be a good pastor's wife if that is what is expected of me."

Being a fairly new pastor's wife, I've given a lot of thought to what my role is and to what it should be. My grandmother lived in the perpetual "fish bowl" fifty years ago. Her husband and the church held extremely high expectations for her. I don't feel that way about

my life today. I've decided that the best way for me to be a good pastor's wife is to take care of my husband and my children *first*. While I am sensitive to expectations and what others think of me, I cannot let these rule my life. There is no cookie-cutter pattern for a pastor's wife. Not all of us can be outstanding Bible teachers. Not all of us can cook well. Some of us can't even play the piano. God has given us all special talents and abilities, and He expects us to use them accordingly. God doesn't expect us to try to be something we're not. He wants all women to live godly lives and to show love.

Our ultimate guide is laid out in the Bible. Every wife's goal should be to live like the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31... "*for her price is far above rubies*. The



Jennie as a young teen, with sister Katie, and parents Keith and Debbie Burden.

heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life... Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come... Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her."

1 Timothy 3:11 also outlines how wives of "church servants" are to conduct themselves, "Even so must, their wives be grave [reverent], not slanderers, sober [temperate], faithful in all things." When a church can see that the pastor's wife deeply loves her husband, her children, and also her church members, things like her looks or her talents seem a lot less important.

WAYS

to encourage a pastor's wife

What can a woman do to give her pastor's wife a lift? We asked a sampling of FWB pastors' wives to name one thing that would encourage them. Here are their responses.

"Pray with me. Lots of women prayed for me, but no one ever prayed with me."

"When I am introduced as 'my friend _____,' instead of 'my pastor's wife _____.'"

"When the church gives me money to fix up the parsonage with no stipulations."

"Being good to my children, loving and including them."

"Care about my children. One elderly couple volunteered to keep our boys whenever we went to quarterly (association) meetings. What a blessing."

"Pay the pastor well."

"When you honor my husband."

"Be a friend."

"Treat me as a normal churchgoer instead of expecting extraordinary things."

"I've been encouraged many ways—once, church people brought us dinner for a week."

"If I could have one particular person committed to pray for me. Not necessarily a close friend, but someone I could call on anytime to pray."

"Acknowledge the uniqueness of this position."

"Allow God to draw the box for my life, and not others."

God has called all women to lives of faithful service. We must live daily for Christ. As you live out your role in life, remember that God has blessed you with extraordinary gifts. Marriage and motherhood have made my journey in ministry much more special.

Jennie Blair and husband Jeff minister in the Locust Grove FWB Church, Locust Grove, OK. Jennie is a stay-at-home mom with one son, Keith (after Papa Keith Burden) and another son due this August. She enjoys teaching Sunday School & other children's classes. Jennie serves as president of the church's Women's Fellowship.

The Irony of Encouragement



Not long after arriving at our new pastorate, one of the ladies in the church asked my husband if she could do weekly ironing for us at no charge. He came to me and whispered the news in my ear. I was appalled! Ironing was a drudgery to me. I couldn't begin to imagine allowing someone in my church to do something that I hated to do myself.

Each time she saw us, she asked. This went on for a few weeks, and I finally tired of saying no. My husband and I agreed to take our ironing to her each week.

Some time later, this precious lady told us that she had wanted to do something to help the new pastor. She didn't feel qualified to teach; she didn't play an instrument, and she felt she had no marketable skills useable in the church. The one thing she really enjoyed doing and thought she did well was ironing. This woman transformed the task into an art form. Standing for hours, using several cans of starch, she worked to make our clothes and the ones for her family look their very best.

For the entire time we ministered in that church, she performed this service for us on a regular basis. I was a pastor's wife who worked a full-time job outside the home. Besides taking care of the home, I was raising two small children. As expected, our whole family was at the church every time the doors opened.

For me this was a true blessing. I realized, too, that Mrs. Mary was serving the Lord through this ministry to our family. What a wonderful gift, and one that taught me a valuable lesson.

—Ida C. Lewis



HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT how good it would be if we could carefully plan our lives, maybe stretching out those seasons we enjoy the most? Although the Word instructs us to use good judgment and plan wisely, we must never forget that ultimately, our times are in God's hands (Psalm 31:5). Sometimes, He hands us big changes.

Because I grew up in a parsonage and later married a preacher, change has been a given in my life. Even while attempting to build friendships and put down roots, in the back of my mind, there was always the nagging realization that I would eventually be moving, starting over in a new school, home and church. I had learned to accept this change, looking upon it as another adventure. In fact, this kind of change became almost comfortable. I knew it would result in my falling in love with our new set of parishioners and soon feeling at home in the new place. I had no problem trusting God through these changes. He had helped me through them so many times.

Yet a couple years ago, life dealt me a major change that I'd certainly never expected. My husband's decision to leave the pastorate for a very different type of ministry suddenly found me in uncharted waters. After the excitement of a new house and new people waned, I found myself at loose ends. The change of address (rural to city) and change of ministry (my husband now travels a great deal) com-

bined with empty nest syndrome was almost overwhelming at moments. With the circumstances of my life so very different than before, I found myself struggling to find a way to settle in and find my "niche." What was God up to in my life?

Perhaps you've undergone a change in your life that was not necessarily by choice. In the *Women's Devotional Bible*, Gini Andrews writes that sometimes "tragedy strikes and our lives change forever. A marriage dissolves, and a woman, linked to her husband by a thousand threads, finds those threads snapped and wonders who she is. Cherished friendships change in character or another person's choice cuts directly across our own, bringing us where we never wanted to be."

Maybe financial losses have knocked down your props. Has some unexpected event left you disoriented, wondering what will happen next? If you have not had this kind of experience in your life, just wait. Eventually you will.

I sometimes wonder if the Lord chuckles when He sees me trusting Him for my eternal destiny, yet fretting about what's going on with me right now. Our trouble begins when we forget about the greatness of our God, and start focusing on our own inadequacies, fears and little ideas. How reassuring when we as believers recognize that the Lord is right there with us. He Himself is the constant throughout the change.

God spoke through the prophet Malachi that "I, the Lord, do not change." The writer of Hebrews compares people to an old garment that will also be changed, yet "Thou [God] art the same."

When the squeeze is on and our faith is tested to the limit, He will prove Himself trustworthy. He has done it again and again. Just ask Moses, Elijah, David, Mary, the mother of Jesus, or even the Apostle Paul (And I think I've had some unexpected challenges?). Yes, we *can* rely on God's immutability.

Change is one method God uses to prune and tweak us, enabling us to bear more fruit in the future. One thing I have learned through my recent experience: resisting change is an exercise in futility. Change is inevitable. Why miss out on the wonderful new things God has in store for us, only to hang on to the past? After all, He sent His Son so we could enjoy the abundant life.

God can and will help us forget the things which are behind and look forward to what lies ahead (Philippians 3:13). Things change. People change. Circumstances change. Yet as one gospel song proclaims, "Jesus Will Still Be There".

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today and forever"
(Hebrews 13:8).

Debbie Burden lives in Antioch, TN and works as receptionist for the FWB National Offices. She is the wife of FWB Executive Secretary Keith Burden. Debbie leads Missions Partners (WAC group) at Donelson FWB Church.



A HUMOROUS LOOK AT A MISSIONARY DILEMMA

by Debbie Anderson

Growing up in Ivory Coast as the younger daughter of missionaries Eddie and Sandra Payne, I had an idyllic childhood. I was saved at age seven, renewed my commitment to Jesus at age twelve, and early-on I learned that obedience (in addition to being the right thing to do) made life much more enjoyable. There was no period of teenage rebellion in my life, nor do I remember having a fight with my older sister after I turned twelve. Helping people and bringing them joy made me happy.

Verlin, my husband, was amazed at this unusual childhood, and tried to convince me that this was not the typical American experience. When I was pregnant, he reminded me not to be upset if our children did not encounter the same docile childhood. After all, they would have Anderson as well as Payne blood running through their veins.

Even into adulthood, life continued to be good. I excelled in college, and later, my work experience was equally rewarding. I loved being a light for the Lord in the secular work force. It was still fun to work hard and make people happy.

And then we became missionaries!

Suddenly, the realm of people to please changed from an intimate, manageable group to an entire denomination where every person has his or her own distinct idea of a "perfect missionary." In almost every realm of life, some well-meaning Christians have a word of advice for missionaries (and pastors). And unfortunately, it is often not the same word.

Here are some gems of wisdom people have given our family or other missionary friends.

CHILDREN AND EDUCATION

IF WE HOME SCHOOL OUR CHILDREN: "They will be academically ignorant and lack socialization."

IF WE SEND THEM TO BOARDING SCHOOL: "They will be rebellious and lazy."

IF WE SEND THEM TO A NATIONAL SCHOOL (FRENCH, BRAZILIAN, ETC): "They will be critical of America and never fit in well in the States."

IF WE SEND THEM TO AN AMERICAN PUBLIC SCHOOL: "They will lose their faith in God."

IF WE SEND THEM TO A PRIVATE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL: "Well, you must be paid very well, because WE sure can't afford to send our kids there."

CHILDREN AND TRAVELING

IF OUR CHILDREN TRAVEL MOST OF THE TIME WITH US TO CHURCH SERVICES: "Isn't it hard for your kids to have a normal life when they travel so much?"

IF OUR CHILDREN STAY AT HOME TO MAINTAIN A NORMAL ROUTINE: "Why don't we ever get to see your children?"

CHILDREN AND CLOTHING

IF OUR TEENAGE SON DOESN'T WEAR A SUIT AND TIE TO CHURCH: "Children don't show their respect for God anymore by dressing their best."

IF OUR TEENAGE SON DOES WEAR A SUIT AND TIE TO CHURCH: "Dude, why are you so dressed up? Are you going to a funeral or something?"

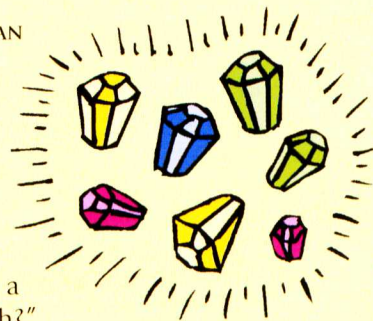
NEWSLETTERS

"MAKE THEM NEWSY. We want to know all about life in Africa."

"I DON'T HAVE TIME for pet stories. I'm a pastor. Send a one-paragraph update and a few prayer requests."

"EMAIL US PICTURES of your family and work."

"YOUR EMAIL PICTURES TIE UP MY PHONE LINE and cost me extra money."



HOUSING

IF WE KEEP A HOUSE IN AMERICA WHILE LIVING OVERSEAS: "You haven't given up everything to follow Jesus."

IF WE SELL OUR HOUSE AND RENT EACH TIME WE COME TO THE STATES: "Don't you know it is a lot cheaper to own than to rent?"

IF A CHURCH OR FAMILY PROVIDES US RENT-FREE HOUSING: "That's nice for you, but imagine how all the other missionaries feel who don't have free housing. It is really not fair."

VEHICLES

IF WE DRIVE OUR OWN USED VEHICLES TO CHURCH SERVICES: "You just drive to make money on mileage."

IF WE FLY AND RENT CARS AS NEEDED: "How can you afford to fly all over the place? No wonder so many missionary accounts are in the red."

OUR RETURN TO WAR-TORN COTE D'IVOIRE, WEST AFRICA

"HOW CAN YOU TAKE your family back to such a dangerous place?"

"WHY DID YOU LEAVE in the first place? Don't you trust God?"

"DON'T YOU THINK WE SHOULD STOP sending missionaries since Cote d'Ivoire has so many political problems?"

"IT WOULD BE A SHAME TO QUIT right before we see God move in a mighty way. The greatest days of harvest in Cote d'Ivoire are probably just ahead."

ALL-TIME MOST SURPRISING COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

"YOU'RE WEARING A STARCHED SHIRT, so you must not need my money."

"ARE YOUR NEIGHBORS in Africa black?"

"I COULD NEVER MOVE TO AFRICA and do what you do. I love my family too much." (Not even if God asked you?)



So, what's a girl to do?

With so many conflicting opinions and surprising questions, what's a girl to do? What is a girl to do, particularly a girl who loves to help people and make them happy?

It's tempting to take one of two extremes. One option is to close ourselves off and listen to no one. This clearly violates several biblical principles, as well as, giving critics a legitimate nail to hammer in our coffin. The second extreme is, of course, to try

pleasing everyone, a surefire method of landing in an insane asylum in record time.

There is a better way, though. No matter what our position in life, we all face this same dilemma: whom do we choose to please since we cannot please everyone? John 21 is one passage the Lord has used to help me find peace on this issue.

In this passage, Peter has just been restored by Jesus and given his life assignment. "Feed my sheep. You'll die for Me in your old age. Follow me." But Peter, in his nosy nature, was so much like us. As he turned around and saw John following Jesus, he had an insatiable urge to know John's life assignment, too. "Lord, and what shall this man do?"

Jesus' response was like a two-by-four across the head. He told Peter, "If I want John to live until I come back again, what is that to you? YOU follow ME." In other

words, would you please quit dabbling in everyone else's business, and make sure you're doing the right thing.

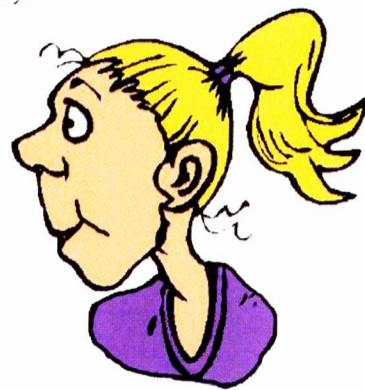
All of us have earthly authorities and people from whom we rightly seek advice. Yet in the final analysis, our assignment is as simple as Peter's. "YOU follow ME." Rarely does Jesus tell us someone else's assignment, or vice versa. Our job is to find His will for our lives and to do it. For some of us, His will may lead to far-away places. Others will live in the same town all their lives. The burning question always remains: not, what do other people think of our decisions, but what does God think?

So, what's a girl like me to do when a thousand voices whisper different ways to be the "perfect missionary?" If she's wise, she'll follow the example of Peter. Evidently he got the message from Jesus that day on the

seashore. A short time later, when the chief priests in Acts 5:29 told him and the other disciples not to preach the name of Jesus, Peter boldly proclaimed, "We ought to obey God rather than men."

The One who had so recently stood beside Peter watched from a new vantage point, the right hand of the Father in Heaven. He smiled with joy to see His obedient son, and perhaps He said, "Yes, Peter, well-done."

So we make it our goal to please Him, because no other commendation will truly satisfy.



Debbie Anderson and her husband are involved in Community Health Evangelism efforts. They are beginning their second term in Cote d'Ivoire. She describes herself as "blessed to be Verlin's wife and Cason (16), Cara (14), and Corbin's (8) mother." Debbie enjoys playing trivia and word games. When discouraged, she loves to read Isaiah, especially chapters 40-66.

Elijah's Cave

by Judy Delong

Oh, yes, I've been there...sitting in that cave...just like Elijah. Fear, depression and the hopelessness of life sent me there, just as it did him. I was tired. I'd been so busy trying to do God's work. In fact, I felt like I'd probably done more than anyone else. I felt all alone in my zeal for the Lord. Now...there I was. Sitting all curled up in a dark place, feeling sorry for myself.

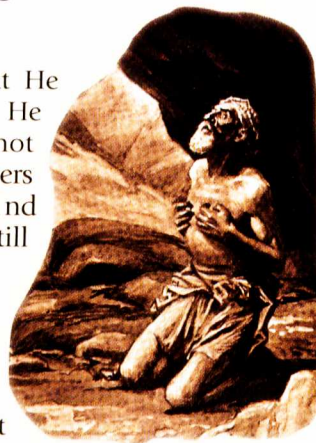
And I, too, have heard the Lord whisper in a still, small voice..."What are you doing here?" And I've pleaded my cause in prayer, telling Him all my woes and worries and how I've had to do it all on my own.

The Lord really doesn't want to hear all that. He just wants me, as He did Elijah, to think, "Why am I sitting where I am and what can I accomplish here? There's no work to do, no one to evangelize in a cave."

Then God tells me what He told Elijah, "Get up and go!" He reminds me that I am not alone, that there are others who love Him as I do...and even if there aren't, He'll still be there.

So I leave my pity party in the cave and I set out to continue to do His will. It's not wrong to have a bad day now and then...but I don't want to stay in that dark cave. I want to walk in the Light.

Judy Delong lives in Hager Hill, Kentucky. She attends Tom's Creek FWB Church where she is active in WAC.



 Great
EXPECTATIONS
 69th Annual WNAC Convention
 July 19-20, 2004 + Kansas City, MO

MONDAY, JULY 19

Great OPPORTUNITY

8:30-12:00—**Women Active in Kansas City**
 1:00-3:00—**WNAC Seminar: HGTV-WNAC Style**
 7:00—**NAFWB Worship**

TUESDAY, JULY 20

Great BLESSING

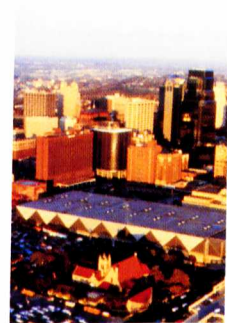
9:00-10:45—**69th Annual Session of WNAC**
 Debe Taylor presiding
 Creative Arts Contest awards
 Mini concert: Handbell Choir, Mtn. Grove, MO
 11:00—**Missionary Service**
 Speakers: Missionaries Don and Ruth McDonald, Japan
 12:30—**WNAC Fellowship Luncheon**
 Speaker: Lynette Morgan
 Tickets: \$25 per person. Available from WNAC.
 7:00—**NAFWB Worship**
 9:00—**State Presidents/Field Workers Reception**

WEDNESDAY, JULY 21

Great IMPACT

8:30-12:00—**Women Active in Kansas City**
 9:00-4:00—**Convention Blood Drive**
 7:00—**NAFWB Worship**

EXPECT *Great* **THINGS FROM GOD**





TWO *Great* IDEAS



Show-Me HGTV—WNAC Style.

Join a live audience of hundreds of women for this broadcast style seminar on Monday afternoon. HGTV-WNAC personalities Debbie Burden, Wanda Powell and Joyce Little will offer demonstrations, pointers, and stories of the heart as they explore the topics of hospitality, grace, treasures and values. Their practical suggestions and hands-on approach will help you

- keep a spiritual/material balance
- fill your home with fragrance and flair
- learn proven methods and hostessing tips
- stretch your boundaries, not your budget
- utilize your gifts to fulfill the Great Commission.

Four segments, back-to-back, complete with door prizes, music, and an occasional word from our sponsor will make this one seminar you won't want to miss. There's no cost and the session is open to all women.



Women Active in Kansas City.

Want to make a difference? WNAC is partnering with Reach That Guy, allowing you to be a Women Active for Christ. Serve Christ by serving others—feeding the hungry, caring for the needy, providing for the poor. Monday and Wednesday morning groups will assist the Harvesters Food Network. Wednesday's offerings also include ministry opportunities at the City Union Mission. Think of it as a great way to begin or end the Convention.

**To purchase
Fellowship
Luncheon tickets
or for information
about registration
or specific WNAC
Convention events
call toll free:
1-877-767-7662.**

2004 Local WNAC Delegate Card

This certifies that _____
(delegate name)
is a duly authorized delegate to the
Women Nationally Active for Christ Convention.

Church Name _____

Church/City/State _____

(local coordinator or local secretary's signature)

Important: This card properly signed and accompanied by a **\$5 representation fee** entitles a local delegate to register for voting privileges.
Only one delegate per church.



a baby? a grandbaby? Wishing, waiting, wondering. WNAC invites you to join the journey of two women. Experience the great expectations of a first-time mom and a soon-to-be grandmother as they journal through the months.

mother

May

Life is busy. I am trying to finish the school semester. Hopefully work will slow down soon. I continue to get bigger—few complaints, but just tired. Getting to bed quite early is *not* a problem. I came to my doctor's appointment with a whole list of questions, mostly about summer plans, travel, etc. I am working with the Kids' Choir at church. We held a Friday day camp preparing for our Sunday musical. I didn't know if I would make it through the day. I did, but Saturday, I could barely move. Thankfully, I recuperated enough for Sunday. The waiting and expectation will be over before I know it. There's not a lot of time left. We need to start making preparations. My sister came and painted the baby's room. She couldn't finish the border because the paint wasn't dry. We are starting to look for furniture and such. Names are still a point of discussion. We've pretty much decided on a boy name (a family name). I want the same initials, so we will work on the girl name from that. I have an idea, but My husband likes option two, but I like one better. I guess it's just a wait and see as to which one of us gives in.

June

I thought once summer came, things would slow down. I thought wrong. I've been so busy at work. I am also taking nine hours of summer school, getting as much of my master's degree finished before the baby comes. I will lack only one class—perfect time for baby and daddy bonding. It's getting difficult to sit, stand, or walk for long periods of time. I forget how big I am, so I bump into things and people. I wasn't too graceful before, but now.... The harder it gets to bend down and pick up things, the more I drop. Thankfully, I can pick up things with my toes. Each day brings greater realization that a baby is actually coming. Of course, part of that results from the baby's increasing movement. When I sit in my chair in the evening, (the time of day I am most likely still) my stomach moves. This baby doesn't realize people are supposed to be still in church, either. The baby's quite active then. Basically if I am still and quiet, the baby is not. I still find this an amazing feeling that can't really be described. My days get long if I don't take time for some kind of rest, but I can't complain. I had a lab test for gestational diabetes. That orange stuff was nasty! As I waited, I got really sleepy. The lab tech made fun of me. He said later I would probably get really hyper. I'm still waiting for that to happen. We spent two nights at Well Baby classes. We did learn a few things and were reminded of some others. We discovered we knew more of what to expect than some in the class. We also went to weekend childbirth classes. I fell asleep during the slow breathing practice. I am now at 30 weeks and will soon begin seeing the doctor every two weeks. The latest lab reports came back with no problems. She wants to schedule another ultrasound. I'm just glad to see the baby and hopefully find out whether or not it's a girl. The doctor also gave me a prescription to help the heartburn. It worked; I haven't had any problems in days.

grandmother

My Dearest Grandbaby,

Today we saw a video of your sonogram. It is so amazing! You have your daddy's face. I could see his nose and the shape of his face. I decided that you are a boy, but then a friend at church said her grandchild's sonogram looked just like the father and the baby turned out to be a girl. That blew my theory.

We could see you moving all around. Your arms and legs are so well defined. You even stuck your thumb in your mouth as if you were sucking your thumb. You must be a boy because you are so active and busy. Your Aunt Katie and I ran that video over and over in slow motion trying to see what you are. I guess since your mom and dad want to be surprised when you're born, nothing was recorded on the video to reveal your sex. They should make a separate video for Grandmas. Your heart rate is high, so maybe you're a girl. Either way, I'll be proud to be your.....

Nana



SPRINGBOARD

LEADERSHIP

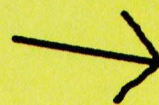
MINISTRY. This issue reminds us that all of us are "ministers of the grace of God." Though much of the focus is on pastor's wives, encourage all women to find and fulfill their ministry roles. Brainstorm with women concerning ministry opportunities that already exist in your church or community, and future opportunities for ministry that women could seize.

SURVEY. The WNAC SURVEY has garnered excellent response. Results will be shared at the 69th Annual Convention in Kansas City. Look for more of these types of feedback opportunities on our website.

EMPHASIZE. August is WNAC EMPHASIS MONTH and a perfect time to highlight WNAC ministries. Use the play in the Program and Plan Book to share the blessings and visions of our organization. Consider making a display or bulletin board. The PowerPoint* presentation, "Who Are We?" given at the 2003 WNAC CONVENTION, is available for \$2 (covers costs and mailing) from the WNAC office.

*(Presentation formatted in PowerPoint 2000. May not play in some earlier versions.)

FIND
MORE
IDEAS



SERVICE

PARTICIPATE in **Women Active in Kansas City** at the WNAC Convention. Contact wnac@nafwb.org or 1-877-767-7662 for more information.

PLAN to honor your pastor's wife either at the August meeting or during Pastor Appreciation Month (September.)

PICK a local person who could use some help with yard work. Volunteer to spend a day as "Summer Servants."

MISSIONS

SHARE the **FOCUS** article about the work in Central Asia.

CONSIDER adopting one of the areas mentioned as a missions project. Find project and promotional ideas on the WNAC website.

PRAY for missionary speakers at the 2004 WNAC CONVENTION and the 2005 WNAC NATIONAL RETREAT.

READ aloud "What's a Girl to Do?" (p. 14) Discuss ways to help solve this missionary dilemma.

STUDY

SHARE the review of Moments for Singles on p. 30. Buy a copy for your group or church.

ENCOURAGE women to plan a fall women's Bible study. For study ideas, contact WNAC.

SWAP good Christian books among your group to enrich summer reading.

NEEDS

PROVISION CLOSET. Queen sheet sets, gift cards or phone cards.

WNAC OFFICE. Funds to purchase a G-4 or G-5 Macintosh Computer; Quark XPress software, a color laser printer; and an electric stapler.

Coming to
Kansas City?

WNAC
National Convention
July 19-20, 2004

We're on the Web!!

Check us out @

www.nafwb.org/wnac

WOMEN OF THE HARVEST MAGAZINE

LOOKING FOR A SPECIAL GIFT for your missionary?

Women of the Harvest is a bimonthly publication specifically designed to encourage and connect women serving cross-culturally. Devotional and practical articles offer helps for cross-cultural living. \$24 a year delivers it to your missionary. Order gift subscriptions at 1-877-789-7778. Find out more about their ministry at www.womenoftheharvest.com

PRAYER

MAKE Pastor's Wife prayer reminders. List daily and personal requests for which women could pray.

PRAY for summer camp ministry in Central Asia and for US students serving there.

SHARE personal requests among your group. Pray especially for those who may be dealing with depression or "nobody blues."

PRAY for WNAC Executive Secretary-Treasurer Marjorie Workman and WNAC President Debe Burden as they lead the 2004 National Convention.

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,"
1 Thessalonians 1:2,3



❁ They call it a winning tradition. For the past 15 years, Women Active for Christ of the Goodwater FWB Church, Newton, AL, have celebrated

Christmas through Meals on Wheels. Women prepare the meals; men of the church provide the wheels. The group meets at the church the Friday evening before Christmas to prepare, cook and package meals of ham, turkey and dressing, rolls, dumplings, green beans, and cake. This year some 90 plates were delivered to the homes of sick and elderly in the church and community.

❁ Haymond FWB, Cromona KY, Women Active for Christ (and one elf), made merry while preparing food baskets for the needy.



❁ When Rejoice FWB Women Active for Christ sent member JoAnne Wood to hand deliver a check for Provision Closet supplies, the WNAC office sent her shopping to buy needed mis-

sionary items. JoAnne returned later that same day with goods in hand.



❁ Rejoice FWB Church, Owasso, OK, also sent the Provision Closet a sackful of kitchen hand towels, hand crocheted by faithful WAC member, Hulene Bowden. Over the years, Hulene has made and sent literally hundreds of these, supplying the entire home and foreign missionary forces with the useful items. This recent sackful is the last. Hulene awoke Easter morning in the presence of the Savior. She was 95.



PICTURED: 1. Goodwater WAC, AL, prepare Christmas Meals on Wheels. INSET: Coordinator Judy Thomley presents plates to delivery men: James Gilley, Jerry Smith and Leroy Shiver. 2. Haymond WAC, KY members (l-r): Carol Isaacs, Sharon Little, Freeda Lucas, Freedis Bailey, Cherryl Monroe, and Linda Mullins. Not pictured is President Becky Bates. 3. Joanne Wood presents check from Rejoice WAC, OK, to Marjorie Workman. 4. Hulene Bowden, OK, and the last of her missionary gifts.

Is your group involved in

a
**LABOR OF
 LOVE**

Share your ideas.
 Send news and photos
 to: P. O. Box 5002
 Antioch, TN 37011-5002
 EMAIL: sarah@nafwb.org

FINALLY...AN ANSWER



For years, the WNAC office has grappled with bundle mailing problems. Our mailing service continually assured us that bundles were strapped with cords that could not be cut apart. Yet month after month, we

received word that our supposedly bundled magazines had arrived, piecemeal, a few at a time.

We thought the problem was solved—our new mailing service used different packaging. Yet, this past issue once again brought calls and complaints of mishandled magazines.

Finally we have an answer.

Our mailing service informed us that according to Postal regulations, a “firm bundle” is only deliverable to a business or commercial address. Any bundles going to a residential address, will, by Postal procedure, be split apart.

What does this mean to our system and to you as a subscriber?

Single subscribers: Absolutely nothing. Your single magazine will continue to arrive as mailed.

Group subscribers: If your bundle comes to your church or to a business address, it should arrive “firm.” Let us know if this is not the case.

If your bundle presently comes to your home or a residential address, please call us toll-free 1-877-767-7662 to make necessary changes. We want to ensure that *all* magazines arrive properly.

HELP! I'M A MOM

bright ideas for mothers from mothers

Q How can I help my child deal with a bully?

Dealing with a bully can be tough for both children and parents. We automatically want to shield and protect our child from such a person. Though we may be tempted to take matters into our own hands, it's generally best to let a child fight his own battle. Our role should be to provide encouragement and good counsel.

ADVICE FOR YOUR CHILD

LIFE IS NOT DEFINED BY A BULLY. No matter what a bully chooses to criticize, taunt, or destroy, he does not change who a person is. A bully's actions do not determine our reactions. We make a choice.

GOD CREATED EACH PERSON SPECIAL. Often, this “specialness” becomes a prime target. It's the child who is different who is often tormented. Yet realizing that each person is unique helps us know that all of us are vulnerable. Share the “Clover” article on p. 25.

A PERSON WHO HURTS IS A HURTING PERSON. Most times a bully is acting out of pain or hurt. Either he has found himself a victim of someone else's taunts, or he secretly desires a quality or characteristic of the person he is bullying. For example, the child of a broken home who taunts the child lavished with love.

IT'S ALL ABOUT CONTROL. As a child of God, we surrender our lives to Him. We want Him to be in control. And God is bigger and stronger than any bully. Psalm 27:1 and Romans 8:37 are great encouragement verses.

DON'T SEEK REVENGE. Romans 12:19 teaches that God takes care of “paybacks” so we don't have to. We just need to tell and trust God. Follow the Golden Rule.

ACTIONS FOR THE BULLY

PRAY. Pray with your child not only about the bullying, but also for the bully. Pray for salvation. Is this person a Christian? Pray that God would

soften his/her heart. Include this person in your family's prayer time as well.

LOVE. Matthew 5:44 says we should love our enemies. Cultivating a loving attitude toward a bully is not easy, but it's right. Encourage your child to praise this person for good qualities. Treat a bully with kindness and respect.

FEED 'EM. Romans 12:20 tells us to feed our enemy if he's hungry, and give water if he's thirsty. A classic Child Evangelism story, “Just a Bag of Jelly Beans” gives the account of one family who put this principle into action. It's worked in many bully situations.

GIVE IT TIME. Kids are fickle. A bully one day may be a best friend tomorrow.

SEEK AUTHORITY. If the situation becomes physically dangerous or gets out of hand, contact a proper authority (parent, teacher, law, etc.). Do this cautiously. If possible, let your child be the spokesperson, not you.

NEXT ISSUE: What can you do when children lie to you?

PICNIC PLEASERS

from the WNAC Cookbook

GRILLED LEMON CHICKEN

1/3 c. butter
1/4 c. lemon juice
3 T. water
1 T. soy sauce
1/2 tsp. paprika
1 tsp. honey
1/2 tsp. Dijon mustard
1 clove garlic, minced
1/4 tsp. salt
Dash cayenne pepper
1 frying chicken, quartered

Sauce: Place all ingredients (except chicken) into saucepan and heat until butter melts, stirring well. Grill chicken over medium coals about 15 minutes per side or until chicken is done. Brush frequently with sauce.

Janie Hiler, Smyrna FWB,
New Smyrna Beach, FL

MACARONI & CUCUMBER SALAD

8 oz. tube pasta
1 T. vegetable oil
2 med. cucumbers, thinly sliced
1 med. onion, thinly sliced
1 1/2 c. sugar
1 c. water
3/4 c. vinegar
1 T. prepared mustard
1 T. dried parsley flakes
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. pepper
1/2 tsp. garlic salt

Cook pasta according to package directions; drain and rinse in cold water, place in large bowl. Stir in oil, cucumbers and onion. Combine remaining ingredients. Pour over pasta salad and toss. Cover and chill 3-4 hours. Stir occasionally. Yields 8-10 servings.

Rhonda Rial, Locust Grove FWB,
Locust Grove, OK

PICNIC POINTERS

Whether it's a church or WNAC event, a neighborly outreach, or simply a family treat, here are some pointers that will keep your picnic safe and delightful.

—KEEP foods hot or cold. Maximum time at room temperature is 4-6 hours. Hot weather or direct sunlight greatly shortens this time.

—AVOID mayonnaise or dairy based foods unless refrigeration is available.

—THAW uncooked meats completely in the fridge or microwave, never outside. Grill meats thoroughly, especially hamburger, chicken and pork.

—COVER all foods. A white tablecloth draped over dishes works best as it reflects the sun.

—COOL salads by placing bowl in a larger bowl lined with ice or ice packs.

—FREEZE water in square reusable plastic containers. Pop out and layer in cooler. (More compact and lasts longer than cubed or bagged ice.)

—INCLUDE these items: a stocked First Aid kit, antibacterial wipes and paper towels.

I Didn't Want Jesus to Die for Me



DEBE'S DELIGHTS

*"thy commandments
are my delights."
Psalm 119:143b*

Debe Taylor
WNAC President

Many years ago, during our nightly devotion, our then four-year-old son, Bradley, became very restless, almost to the point of being disruptive. As I continued to read the story of the Crucifixion, Bradley got very still and began to cry. Of course, by this time, I was thoroughly exasperated with him. When I finished reading, I asked, "What is your problem?"

As if it were only yesterday, I still can hear his soft response, "I didn't want Jesus to die for me." All of a sudden, I knew—Bradley was under conviction. It would be several months before Brad "asked Jesus to his heart," but that night marked the beginning of his decision to accept Christ as Savior.

Reading the story of the costly price Christ paid for our sins, we might also say that we didn't want Jesus to die for us. Yet, Isaiah 64:6 reminds me that none of us had it within ourselves to save ourselves. "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind,

have taken us away." Paul wrote to the Christians at Rome, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Simply put, we needed a Savior.

I love the words of Peter. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (I Peter 1:18-19). In order for us to have a right relationship with God, Jesus had to die for us. Now when God looks at me, He does not see my sin, but the precious blood of Christ which covers my sin. All because Jesus died for me.

As for Bradley, after many years of wandering far from God, he has come "home to the Father" and back home to live. On Easter Sunday, he sang the only solo in our cantata. The song? "The Day He Wore My Crown." Ask Bradley today and he will tell you, "I'm glad Jesus died for me." So am I, Son, so am I!

What comes to mind when you hear "popular"? What about "freak"? What kind of society do we live in that allows such generalized labeling of people? Even in our youth groups we have division. At school the popular are placed on pedestals; the rest of us are just for show. What is life—I mean a life LIVED—unless something is sacrificed?

Pass the group and stay the way you are. What may seem like a sacrifice now will prove a cherished memory later. The four leaf clovers are really no big deal. Do they bring the pleasure and luck they promise? Of course not! Just so, the popular never live up to their expectations.

Be a three leaf clover. Is it not they who make the whole of the field? The lovely patches of green would not be in existence were it not for the three leaf clovers. Four leaf clovers would be meaningless, were it not for the many overlooked three leaf clovers. There are so few four leaf ones and they're spread too thin. But three leaf clovers are humbly dignified, graciously overlooked. When you look at the patch of green as a whole, what do you see? The individual or the group? Don't let the world tell you that you've got to take on this life solo.

Blend in, but stand out. Be a part of the big picture. Remember, you're a child of God. You are His creation, His pride and joy. God makes the three leaf clovers with just as much love and patience as the four leaf

"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind..."
Romans 12:2



by Krista Anderson

clovers. Isn't this all that should matter? God knows just as much (and cares as much) about you, as He does the person in the poster on your bedroom wall.

Four leaf clovers, by any other name, are still clovers. Popular people are STILL people. Popular or not, you have a purpose, and that purpose lies in the hands of God. The hands that hold your future are the same hands that made the stars in the night sky, as well as the clovers that you pass by every day.

So, next time you see a clover, remember this: it is serving this world every bit as much as the next. The three leaf clovers have simply been denied the credit that is due. But as for us, our credit is awarded us when GOD tells us that we have done our job dutifully, and HE is most proud of us.

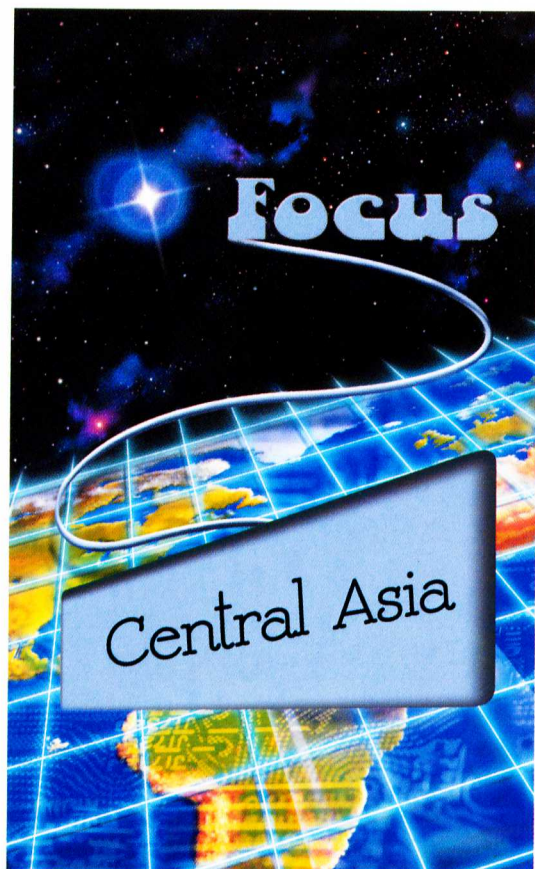
For His recognition, for the opportunity to hear Him say, "Job well done, my faithful and loyal servant," I willingly pass the group. For in "the group" lie only the pleasures of this world. I choose, for His glory and His alone, to be a three leaf clover.

We were all made the same, woven out of a fabric of love. Just as the green spreads through the patch of three leaf clovers, so let the love of Christ spread among us, extending to the ends of the earth.



Krista Anderson recently graduated from Nashville (TN) School of the Arts. She plans to enter FWBCC this fall to study English and missions. In a senior tribute at her church, Krista gave this advice to her youth group, "Guard your purity." The clover and calligraphy design at left is one of Krista's original art pieces.





Pray:

- for camps in Central Asia.
- that God would thwart governmental attempts to close down two camps (one in Tajikistan, one in Kazakhstan).
- for the Central Asia Team as they travel and work in camps June 23-July 13.
- for project Central Asia 300: planting 300 new churches by the year 2005, almost doubling the present number.
- for wisdom and direction concerning the Hanna Project, an NGO (Non-Government Organization) focusing on humanitarian needs, ultimately opening doors for the gospel.



OUR ROW IN THE HARVEST

Four years ago, the FWBFM staff felt God directing them to minister in restricted access countries, areas of the world closed to the Gospel or difficult to enter with missionary visas. He led us to Central Asia.

Last year Clint and I spent five weeks in Central Asia visiting Kazakhstan, Kyrgystan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, four former Soviet republics. We fell in love with the people; we were blessed and challenged by the ardor and dedication of believers in these countries.

In October, 2003, we officially set up a partnership with the Baptist Union—over 300 churches ranging in size from 15 to 800+ baptized believers—who hold to the fundamentals of FWB doctrine. These people demonstrate a compassion for the lost and a great desire to plant churches.



During our visit, one church leader asked, "How can we make a project together? How can we move in the vineyard of our Lord? We want it to be useful for you, too. We want to pray for you, too. We want to be partners in the work; not just asking." These questions and declarations clearly manifest the desires and commitment of our new partners. Frans Thiessen, president of the Kazakhstan Baptist Union, said, "Everyone has his row in this harvest." This pushes us to ask ourselves, "What row is ours in the harvest of souls in Central Asia?"

How can we help our brothers and sisters working in God's field there? How can we work together to bring about the greatest harvest? First and foremost we must pray—fervent, vigilant, earnest prayers for believers living in

During our visit, one church leader asked, "How can we make a project together? How can we move in the vineyard of our Lord? We want it to be useful for you, too. We want to pray for you, too. We want to be partners in the work; not just asking." These questions and declarations clearly manifest the desires and commitment of our new partners. Frans Thiessen, president of the Kazakhstan Baptist Union, said, "Everyone has his row in this harvest." This pushes us to ask ourselves, "What row is ours in the harvest of souls in Central Asia?"



areas resistant to the Gospel—prayer that will move mountains.

Then we must fulfill our role as responsible partners, willingly and consistently bringing our resources to the table in order to realize the maximum results for our efforts. This calls us to offer our money, time, personnel and materials.

We are moved and touched by all the Central Asian church is accomplishing despite limited resources and meager incomes. For the few with jobs, average income is only about \$100 a month, yet they give willingly and sacrificially. This challenges us to call upon fellow believers in the USA to follow their example and give accordingly that the kingdom be expanded in those areas of the world cut off from the good news of salvation.

We are overwhelmed at the many different ministries these believers coordinate. They run soup kitchens out of their Houses of Prayer (churches) for those who have nothing to eat—a noon meal five days a week. Daily children's ministries provide food and a clean place to "hang out," with Bible stories and lessons. Churches in the Baptist Union: own and staff an orphanage (home to 56 children ages seven and up, who are loved, cared for and taught by Christians); own and operate nursing homes; carry on vibrant prison ministries and follow-up rehabilitation centers which have prepared

many full-time Christian workers; run a school for children of deaf parents, effectively reaching these individuals; have free medicine outposts in different churches and even a free dental clinic in one church; print books and literature on an ancient printing press, folding literature by hand; run a correspondence school letting children complete Bible lessons at home; provide clothes closets for the needy; conduct a ministry to delinquents; carry on a booming, summer camp ministry...the list goes on and on. Truly they are obeying God's command, "...freely ye have received, freely give." Their goal in life is to make Him known.

Realizing we cannot meet all the needs in Central Asia, we are asking God to show us which row is ours.



CHURCH PLANTING EFFORT

When we asked about ways to help, we made it clear that we wanted to participate in church planting efforts where no other evangelical group is working, and help penetrate

areas where people have never heard. Our present row includes these ministries.

SUMMER CAMPS. We see summer camps as one means of planting seed for a great harvest. Over 20,000 children attended last year; with 80% unbelievers from Muslim and atheistic families. Our first summer camp team (14 young people, 5 adults) will minister in four different camps this summer. The churches do not ask children from non-Christian homes to pay camp fees. They incur the expenses of these thousands of children. At \$25 a child, we want to accept this challenge, sending as many kids as we can to camp. We are also looking for groups willing to give money for tents, sports equipment and other camp necessities.



PARTNER CHURCHES. We are seeking 100 churches to partner with a Central Asian church in starting a new church. Leaders have estimated the cost at \$20,600 per church plant. Churches there have committed themselves to raise half. They are asking that a sister church in the US raise the other \$10,300 over a period of three years.

VEHICLES. The largest church in Tajikistan, with over 200 members, has only two vehicles. These are owned by the church and used for evangelism. Not even one of their members owns a car. They must depend upon public transportation (at personal cost) to take them out to towns and villages to evangelize. They need a vehicle or two or three. It is imperative that churches obtain more vehicles to help them in reaching the unreached of their area. If this is to become a reality, they will need financial assistance.

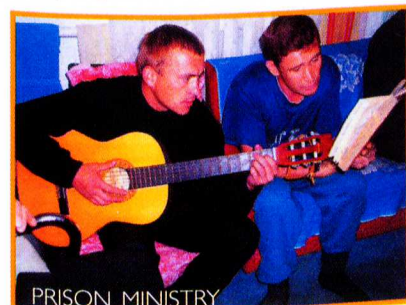
Will you help our brothers and sisters, our partners in Central Asia, reap the harvest? God has blessed us to be a blessing. He expects us to give back to Him through giving to others. If American Christians could only see how these believers, out of their poverty, give their all, we could not but give...and give...and give.

WNAC has come through for the Kingdom over and over again. Will you make a difference in this latest frontier of missions, before our Lord returns?

—LYNETTE MORGAN



SOUP KITCHEN



PRISON MINISTRY

Other Prayer Concerns

—Pray for FWBs in Japan who are celebrating 50 years of missionary work. Ask God for fruitful years of future ministry.

—Pray for Patrick McDaniel, on short term assignment in Russia (June 2004-March 2005).

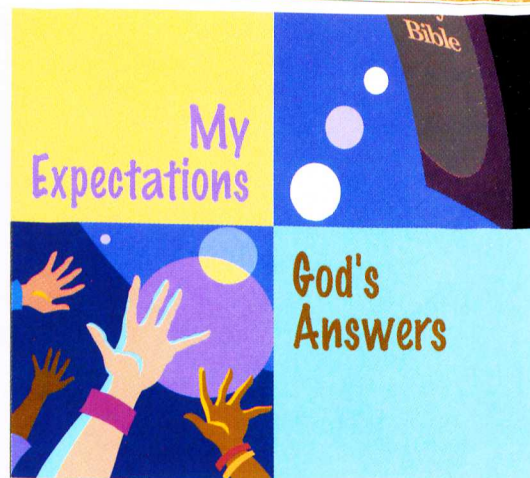
—Pray for new MKs Marc Edgmon (Spain) and Ethan Keener (France). Pray also for expectant parents Josh and Christi Smith and Nathan and Linda Snow.

—Pray for Mike and Deleen Cousineau, that God would place a hedge of protection around them as they return to ministry in Cote d'Ivoire.

—Pray for Darrel and Lila Nichols and son Gabriel as they begin mission work in Panama.

—Pray for home missions churches involved in building programs.

—Pray for Jesus and Velma Delangel, recent graduates of the Gwen Hendrix Hispanic Bible Institute, as they minister to Hispanics in Greenfield, CA.



God, Right My Wrongs

Sunday morning my son arrived at church a few minutes late. After the service he pulled a yellow slip of paper from his pocket... "14 mph over speed limit." A friend asked if I'm going to "fix" the ticket for him—his first offense. I shook my head, "No."

He chose to break the law, thereby breaking the healthy relationship between government and citizen. He alone is called to give an account for that breach. If it were not for a gracious officer's discretion (84 in a 55 zone is 29 mph, not 14) his penalty would be much greater, creating a hardship not only for him, but for his friends and family as well.

My son had a flawed view of himself and faltered in his decision to do right. He failed to realize what others thought and expected of him. And he forgot that as a child of God, he has responsibilities to himself, his country, the laws of the land, other drivers, his neighbors, his family and above all, to God. His actions revealed his expectation—that God would allow him to cruise through life in excess of established limits, giving little regard to the welfare of others who share the road. He expected God to right his wrong.

And, we're guilty of the same things. We want our own way and when we mess up, we expect God to step in and make things right. God forgives, but sin's consequences are not necessarily cancelled.

David's sin with Bathsheba is an example of sin's penalty and man's cry, "God, right my wrong!" *"Have mercy... blot out my transgressions... wash me... cleanse me... deliver me"* (Psalm 51:1-14). Yes, God forgave David, but the consequence of broken relationships troubled him throughout the remainder of his life. *"...the sword shall never depart... evil against thee... the child... shall surely die."* (2 Samuel 12:7-19). Sin's consequences—traffic tickets, broken friendships, ruined marriages, split churches—exact payment from all.

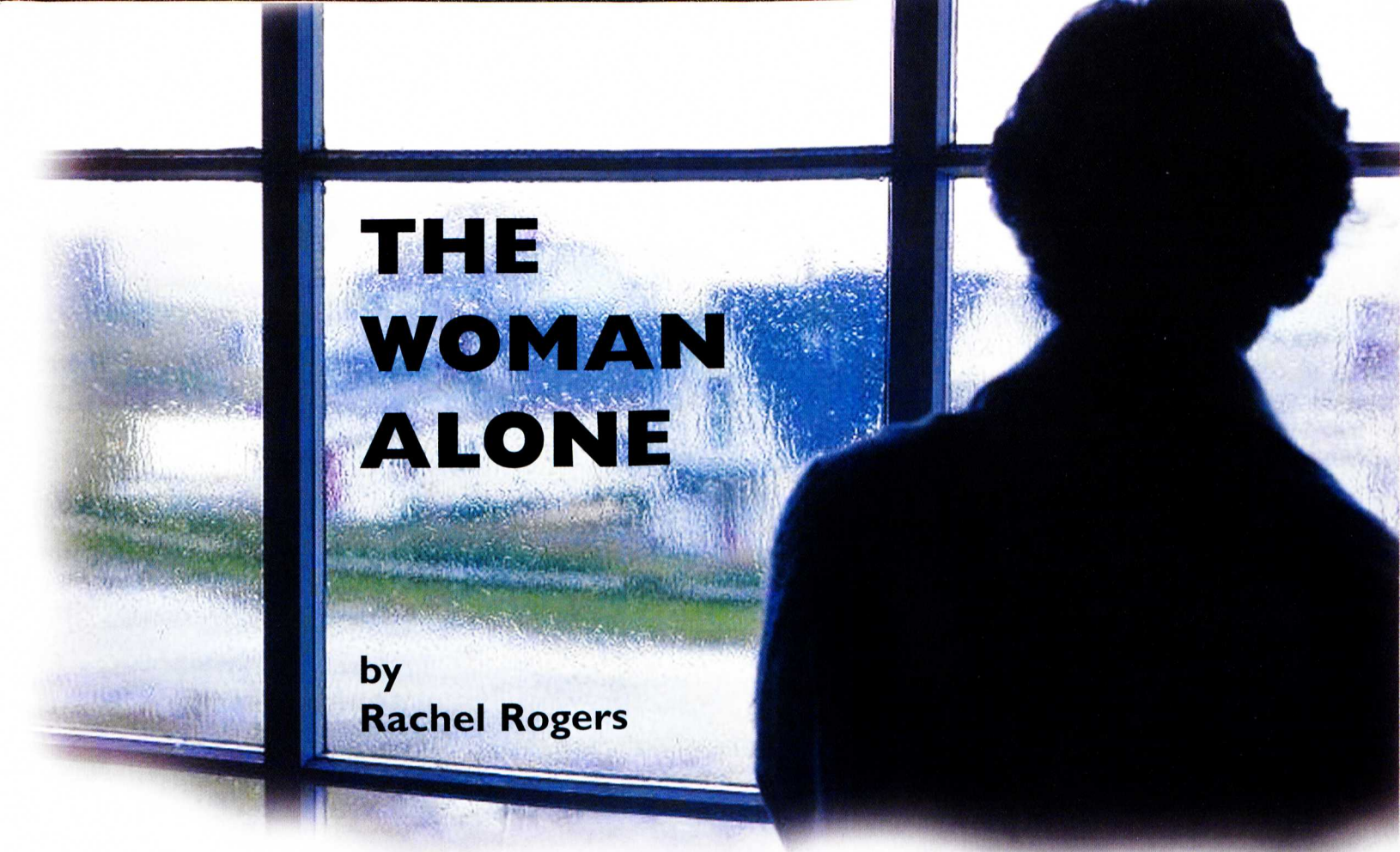
God will forgive our sin and assist in righting our wrong if we will but ask.

A healthy view of who we are frees us to love others. Understanding what others expect provides a way to avoid confusion, diffuse anger, and limit frustration in relationships. Adopting God's perspective empowers and enables, enriching friendships and strengthening relationships.

"Search me, O God... renew a right spirit within me"
(Psalm 139:23a; 51:10b)



Suzan Hutchison, Colquitt, GA, is active in the New Salem FWB Church WAC where her husband Tim serves as pastor. Suzan enjoys gardening, reading and collecting seashells.

The background of the top half of the page is a photograph. It shows the dark silhouette of a person's head and shoulders in the foreground, looking out of a large window. Outside the window, it is raining heavily, creating a blurred, streaky effect on the glass. The landscape outside appears to be a grassy field or park with some trees in the distance. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

THE WOMAN ALONE

by
Rachel Rogers

DO YOU KNOW HER? Have you seen her? The woman alone? We live at such a fast pace. Preoccupied with self and family, we do not take time for others as we should.

Often we fail to see the woman alone. She too, is a person. Like everyone else, she has needs. Yet some of her needs are uniquely different from those of society's coupled majority.

HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD. The business world may deem the woman alone as incapable of handling financial matters as head of household. Too often, a woman alone in the work force is taken advantage of because an employer knows she must work. Society tends to look upon her as self-sufficient, blindly dismissing any emotional or material needs.

HAPPY-GO-LUCKY. Quite frequently a woman alone is misunderstood in her lifestyle. Envied by some, actually used by others, she's perceived as someone with much

time on her hands, a woman without responsibility, just happy-go-lucky. This false impression fosters a lack of concern for her personal welfare.

NEEDING A FRIEND. Many fail to realize that a woman alone needs moral support, encouragement, someone in whom she can confide and/or turn to for help. Too often, no one seems to bother or really care. For the Christian woman who is alone, the Lord Jesus Christ himself sticks closer than a brother. He understands her deepest needs. He loves and cares at all times. I am a woman alone who can testify to the Lord's compassion. These are just a few ways He has befriended me.

SUFFICIENT STRENGTH

By knowing Christ as my personal Savior and friend, I can call on Him anytime, any place and in any circumstance. He is ever present and eager to help me. He has helped me to trust Him—for my daily strength, to supply all my

needs. He gives me a peace that the world knows nothing about. Isaiah 26:3 says, *"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee."* When my steps grow weak or I am feeling down and wonder how I can go on, Jesus holds my hand. Though I may not see or understand His ways, He is there to guide my steps (Psalm 46:1).

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

The Lord has helped me discover and use my gift of helping. This may not seem a glamorous or exciting role, but God loves me and gave me this gift. He has helped this woman alone show His love through service to others. The attitude with which I serve speaks louder than a sermon. I am reminded of Dorcas and others in the Bible who helped. I find joy in helping others.

GRACE OF GRATITUDE

The Lord has helped me develop the grace of gratitude. For many years I had a problem with my

eyes. This condition required numerous surgeries. The Lord healed my eyes and took care of this health issue. Praise His name.

SPIRIT OF FORGIVENESS

The Scripture says I must forgive those who trespass against me or my Heavenly Father will not forgive me (Matthew 6:12). God has His own secret stairway into my heart. Forgiveness is a very high step. I must keep that step swept clean and polished with care.

CHEERFUL GIVING

A preacher friend of mine once said, "You only have what you give away." As a woman alone, the Lord has helped me learn this lesson. It blesses my heart to see how God gives in return. Luke 6:38 says: "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom." We just cannot outgive God.

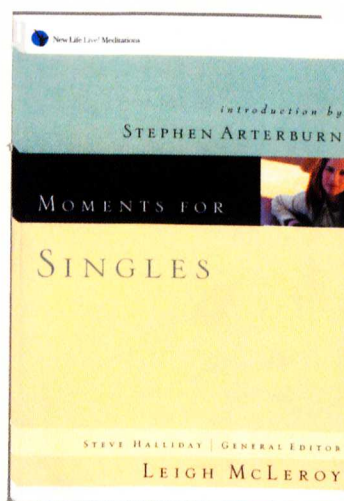
OUTLOOK ON LIFE

I must choose the right viewpoint. My choice determines many things. Therefore, I choose not to let circumstances pull me down. Rather, through His strength, I will rise above them. No matter how the world perceives me or treats me as a woman alone, I will keep looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of my faith. Ephesians 3:20 declares that "He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all" that I ask or think.



Rachel Rogers has been a woman alone for many years. Widowed, she lives in Florence, SC. She is an active member of Peace FWB Church and a longtime partic-

ipant in WNAC efforts. Mrs. Rogers is the mother of daughter Mirial Gainer, missionary to Japan and son Vernon of Atlanta, GA. Rachel enjoys traveling, reading, doing word search puzzles and playing word games.



MOMENTS FOR SINGLES

by Leigh McLeroy
NAVPRESS: \$11.99
AVAILABLE FROM WNAC

Leigh McLeroy tackles the issue of singleness unlike any author who has broached the topic of living as a Christian single in a couples world. She has a clear view of living single because she is, as she describes herself, a "not-yet-married-but-still-quite-hopeful" single.

From the opening page to the closing chapter, the reader will feel she has been given private audience into Leigh's journal as she exposes with honest transparency her struggles, disappointments, joys and enjoyment of life. She gives no license to the "me-it-is" or "woe-is-me" prescription of our day.

The underlying theme woven throughout the book is the broad canvas that in whatever blight of life one finds herself, it is not about self. Instead, the joy of life comes with purpose and balance. From one devotional moment to the next, Leigh's clear message is that our purpose and balance has its beginning and end with our day-to-day relationship with God. Without nourishing our ongoing relationship with our Heavenly Father, the single life (or any given marital status of life) will end up miserable, unfruitful and empty. Leigh's continual turning her focus, and ours, back to God as the all-important relationship of life made her book appealing and fresh.

I would recommend this book to "not-yet-married" singles (young or seasoned), divorced or widowed. It would likewise be helpful reading for our married sisters to understand the unique gifts of her single sister in the pew.

—Reviewed by Charolette Talent

Charolette Talent served almost 20 years as a FWB missionary in France, ministering to college students. She now lives in Nashville, TN, where she is beginning a new Sunday school outreach for career singles and couples.

Words for WOMEN

GUEST EDITORIAL



WNAC Executive Assistant

*Yvonne
Hampton*

Leaving the Parsonage Too Soon

"I'm sorry," the doctor said, "your husband didn't make it." With those words my life changed forever. When my 36-year-old husband, Floyd, died suddenly, I was devastated, to say the least. He was my sweetheart, friend, encourager, spiritual advisor, and my pastor.

Floyd was a wise man. I shouldn't have been surprised when I went to his office for the first time after his death and found a 50-page paper he had written on grief. He left cassette tapes and booklets telling me what to do if and when I became a widow. They were so helpful in my recovery from grief. But there was nothing there to prepare me for the changes that would occur—leaving a lifelong work and ministry—because I was no longer married to the pastor.

Moving from the fishbowl to obscurity may sound like a good thing. But for someone who had lived in parsonages all her life (my father was also a pastor), it took some adjusting. If my situation had been precipitated by retirement, I could have prepared and planned for it. Had I been older and looking forward to a well-earned rest, it would have been easier. But it's a different story when you're in ministry full-swing, planning to spend many more years there, and you're suddenly faced with the prospect of leaving that life.

Having been advised not to make any major changes in the first year after becoming a widow, I decided to remain where I was. Oh, the hurt of seeing my husband's books replaced by those of the new pastor; the pain of seeing someone else move into the place I'd called home. And most difficult was seeing another preacher take my husband's place in the pulpit. I cried every Sunday for a long time. But I was determined to stay and work through it. I believe that decision helped me make a complete recovery and gave me the strength to move on.

My daughter's grief was different from mine. Her dad's death took away her sense of security. More than anything else, she missed his watchful eye. Fortunately, she was strong

both spiritually and emotionally and handled herself admirably. She accepted the fact that she was no longer the "princess" at church. Another pastor's child rightfully occupied that place in the minds and hearts of the congregation. My daughter willingly stepped aside. I was proud of her because this could have been a very difficult transition.

How blessed we were to have a church full of fellow believers who truly loved us for who we were and not just because we were the pastor's family. During my year's stay in the community, midst my many adjustments, the church family made it easy for me to accept my new role. We were included in family gatherings. Folks helped with everything from moving me out of the parsonage to finding a new home, mowing the yard, providing firewood and helping us financially.

The new pastor became a true friend. The pastor's wife confided in me and depended on me to help her adjust to her new role. I am indebted to this family who loved me and prayed me through this most difficult time. With their help, I began taking steps to recovery and finding a new place for myself. Of course, many more steps lay ahead.

Then one day, about a year after Floyd's death, the Lord began turning the page; a new chapter in my life emerged. Thanks to the help of a loving church and friends, I was ready to refocus my life and begin a new ministry. The WNAC office needed an Executive Assistant. They asked me to consider the position. The time was right and life moved on. God proved Himself faithful as a provider and helper. I'm a stronger Christian for having spent time in the parsonage. But today, I'm glad for the new life role God has given me.

Yvonne has worked in the WNAC office since September, 1986. Remarried in 1996 to Larry Hampton, Yvonne is now the grandmother of four. She is active in the Woodbine FWB Church and also serves as secretary of Tennessee's Cumberland District Women Active for Christ.

PAST BLESSINGS • PRESENT OPPORTUNITIES
FUTURE DREAMS



GREAT EXPECTATIONS

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