

COLABORER



July • August 2005

**The Pursuit
of Happiness**

SOLDIERS

**Conditioning
for the Race**

**My Kind of
Marathon**

SISTERS

Women Nationally Active for Christ

Labor

of my heart

**PROUD AMERICAN,
HUMBLED CITIZEN**



Sarah Fletcher

My recent trip to Central Asia got me thinking about my role as an American. Yes, I am a blessed citizen, owning freedoms the rest of the world has never fathomed. I'm thankful to God for the land of my birth. I'm proud to be an American.

However, as our group toured our hosts' city, viewing various sights and historical monuments, I sensed this same national pride in the hearts of the people there. As I heard the story of soldiers who defended the borders of their land, I envisioned the two Jima's and Arlington's of our history. A region surrounded by majestic mountains, yet by American standards, replete with disrepair and blighted with poverty, was lauded as the most beautiful city in Central Asia. And it is, in the hearts of its citizens.

"We are the same," I concluded. That is...until we prayed. Never have I seen such burdened hearts and cries of concern for the souls of countrymen. Our "God Bless America" pales to their "God Save the Peoples of Central Asia." Over and over, we heard the tearful pleas of God's people, women agonizing over the lost and committing themselves to reach those around them with the gospel.

Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness? Our sisters in Central Asia know the way through Jesus Christ. Their joy, vibrance, and passion remain undaunted despite governmental restrictions and political upheavals.

Some would argue that this zeal comes with fresh freedom—that in our nation's infancy, we were surely the same. Maybe so. Yet, though the governmental structure in Central Asia is new, the church is not. Believers suffered and endured through decades of communism, embodying the truth that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. It continues to be in some regions. Yet the church continues.

After fines and prosecution, a youth group is still willing to meet. The wife of a martyr maintains a prison ministry for drug addicts. An excommunicated daughter heads a growing women's ministry. A young bride attends a home fellowship, fully aware that all meetings are monitored by secret police. A congregation of eighty-five in a city of a million, coordinates multiple ministries to the elderly, the homeless, the desperate, and the downtrodden. A group of eight women keep the only prayer house in their region open, ever praying that God would send them a pastor.

In America, we think we must have unlimited resources and extra manpower to effectively minister and reach our culture. We excuse ourselves. We are not qualified; we don't have the time, money or skills to invest. Consider our sisters. They know a better way. They minister with the resources they have, sacrificing their own possessions, lifestyles and pursuits to reach people for Christ. They give God their best.

This American is humbled by our sisters' love and concern for the peoples of Central Asia, convicted of half-hearted pursuits to reach the lost in our free land, and challenged to take up the baton, run the race and together win the prize for the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. God is doing a mighty work in Central Asia, with or without our help. Yet what an opportunity God has afforded us, to join them in Kingdom effort, to participate in heavenly blessings and faithfully fulfill our Lord's Great Commission.

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REPORT**

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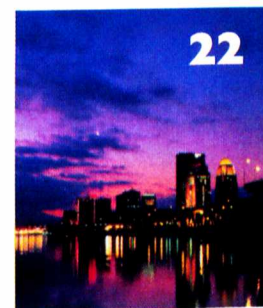
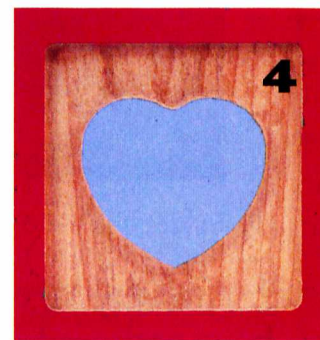
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The Pursuit of Happiness

by Ronda Sturgill

The day is July 8, 1776. People within hearing distance of the Liberty Bell have gathered around the steps of Independence Hall. A sense of anticipation and excitement fills the air. The newly drafted Declaration of Independence is about to be read in public for the first time. Suddenly, a quiet hush comes over the exuberant crowd.

"When in the course of human events... We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness..."

Shouts of joy and cheers of jubilation echo through the streets of Philadelphia as the Colonists hear of their newly found freedom. No longer are they held under the rule of King George III. No longer are they tied to the tyranny of Great Britain. No longer are they subject to injuries and injustices. Finally, they are free to form a nation founded upon the precepts of Christianity.



A few weeks later on August 2, the Declaration of Independence is signed into effect by the members of Congress. As these noble men take turns approaching the desk to sign the parchment paper, Samuel Adams loudly declares:

"We have this day restored the Sovereign to whom all men ought to be obedient. He reigns in heaven and from the rising to the setting of the sun, let His kingdom come."

On July 3, the day following the approval of Congress of the Declaration of Independence, John Adams writes to his wife, Abigail,

The second day of July will be the most memorable epoch in the history of America. I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival. It ought to be commemorated as the day of Deliverance, by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires and illuminations, from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward forever.

Just what were the Colonists celebrating on that first Fourth of July of our nation's history? They were celebrating their right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

PURSUE HAPPINESS ♦ PURSUE HAPPINESS ♦ PURSUE HAPPINESS ♦ PURSUE HAPPINESS ♦ PURSUE

In order to understand what this means, let's do a few quick word studies. The word 'pursue' means to chase after. 'Happy' is used in the Bible interchangeably with the word, 'bless.' 'To bless' means to summon God's favor upon a person or a thing. The pursuit of happiness, therefore, means to chase after a lifestyle that will invoke God's blessings upon it. Our Founding Fathers not only gave us the freedom to chase after God, they associated the pursuit of happiness with a life surrendered to God and His purposes. The pursuit of happiness and the pursuit of God could not be separated.

On July 4, 1837, in a speech celebrating the 61st anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, John Quincy Adams proclaimed to the inhabitants of the town of Newbury port:

Why is it that, next to the birthday of the Savior of the World, your most joyous and most venerated festival returns on this day?

Is it not that, in the chain of human events, the birthday of the nation is indissolubly linked with the birthday of the Savior? That it forms a leading event in the Progress of the Gospel Dispensation?

Is it not that the Declaration of Independence first organized the social impact on the foundation of the Redeemer's mission upon earth?

As we celebrate July 4, 2005, may we rejoice that we live in a nation founded upon the core of Christianity, formed upon the foundation of Jesus Christ's mission on earth.

Trust and Devotion

"Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord." Psalm 144:15

First and foremost, our happiness lies in the fact that we are people of God. We are a people whose God is the Lord. Our Founding Fathers were men whose God was the Lord. Time and time again, their total trust in God's purposes and providence are evident in historical documents and speeches. Studies show that 94% of our Founding Fathers' quotes are derived from the Bible.

Alexander Hamilton, one of the signers of the Constitution of the United States of America expressed his religious views quite clearly. When writing to a friend in April 1802 about the connection between the Constitution and Christianity, he wrote:

In my opinion, the present constitution is the standard to which we are to cling. Under it's banner bona fide must we combat our political foes, rejecting all changes but through the channel itself provided for amendments. By these general views of the subject have my reflections been guided.

I now offer you the outline of the plan they have suggested. Let an association be formed to be denominated, "The Christian Constitutional Society," its' object to be first: The support of the Christian religion. Second: The support of the United States.

Our pursuit of happiness involves support of the Christian religion. God wants all of us, not just part of us. A life of total surrender brings blessings of all kinds, the most of which is peace. When the world seems to be frantically out of control, we can trust the One who is in control. The deep sense of peace that abides within us during our darkest days is truly the peace that passes all understanding.



Thomas Jonathan "Stonewall" Jackson, known as a great military strategist, served under Robert E. Lee in the Confederate Army. He was given the nickname "Stonewall" because of his unflinching resolve as he joined his army in battle. After a particular battle, an army Chaplain recorded a soldier's remarks:

I saw something today which affected me more than anything I ever saw or read on religion. While the battle was raging and the bullets were flying, Jackson rode by, calm as if he were at home, but his head was raised toward heaven, and his lips

HAPPINESS ♦ PURSUE HAPPINESS ♦ PURSUE HAPPINESS ♦ PURSUE HAPPINESS ♦ PURSUE HAP

were moving, evidently in prayer.

In Psalm 144, David prays fervently for victory against his enemies. He calls God his goodness, his fortress, his high tower, his deliverer and his shield. God is all of those things to us, too. In our daily battles, we can lift our heads in prayer knowing that God is our Lord. We can trust Him for the outcome. We may not understand it or like it, but we can trust the One in whom we take refuge.

Happy are the people whose God is the Lord.

Wisdom and Virtue

"Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding."
Proverbs 3:13

Benjamin Franklin once wrote:

"Next to the praise resulting from and due to His wisdom, I believe He is pleased and delights in the happiness of those He has created; and since without virtue man can have no happiness in this world, I firmly believe He delights to see me virtuous, because He is pleased when He sees me happy....I love Him therefore for His goodness, and I adore Him for His wisdom."

The pursuit of happiness is equated with the pursuit of wisdom and virtue. Scripture speaks volumes about obtaining wisdom. The Lord used wisdom when He created the earth. The Proverbs declares wisdom is supreme.

Solomon prayed for it. Paul prayed for others to have it. The psalmist proclaimed wisdom begins with the fear of the Lord. Colossians 2:3 calls wisdom a treasure and tells us it is hidden in Jesus Christ. James encourages us to ask for wisdom if we do not have it. Proverbs 3:18 calls wisdom the tree of life to those who have it and happy are they who retain her.



In our pursuit of wisdom, we can start with our Bibles. At a time when people are looking for other ways to be a Christian and turning towards sources outside of Scripture to obtain spiritual wisdom, we must exercise extreme caution. When truth and myth are skillfully woven into the same story, it takes persons deeply grounded in their faith to be able to discern

fact from fiction. Unless we are well established in the Word, our faith can easily be shaken. We can easily be led astray from our pure and sincere devotion to Jesus Christ.

In 1642, Harvard University issued this statement:

"Let every student be plainly instructed, and earnestly pressed to consider well, the main end of his life and studies is, to know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal life."

Happy is the man who finds wisdom and understanding.

Ethic and Excellence

"For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee." Psalm 128:2

Happiness is the result of hard work. Proverbs 28:19 tells us that *"He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread."* However, it's not just hard work that makes us happy. It's the attitude with which we work that's important. Do we work with honesty and integrity? Do we strive for excellence in our occupation or are we satisfied with mediocrity? Do we try to do our best or just get by?

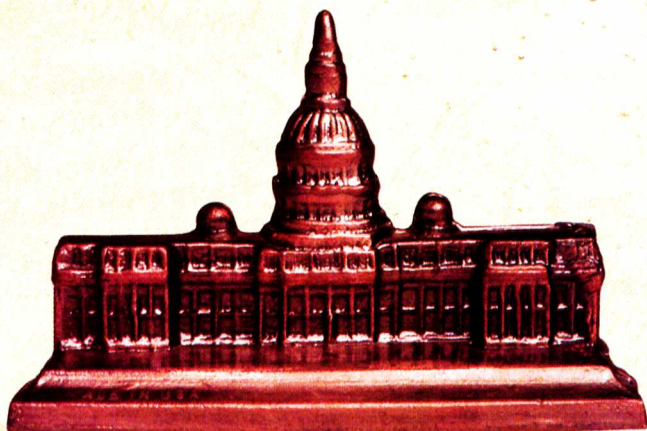
We are such a diverse people. Some of us are administrators, some of us are teachers, doctors, lawyers, business women...the list goes on and on. God made each of us different and unique. Each of us has different skills, interests and desires. Different ideas, different tastes, different backgrounds. In spite of all these differences, we do have one thing in common. We all can strive for excellence.

On March 4, 1833, in his Second Inaugural Address, President Andrew Jackson stated:

Finally, it is my most fervent prayer to that Almighty Being...that He will so overrule all my intentions and actions and inspire the hearts of my fellow-citizens that we may be preserved from dangers of all kinds and continue forever a united and happy people.

Do we ask God to overrule all of our intentions and actions as we serve him in whatever capacity He has chosen for us? Do we allow God to use us for His purposes or do we try to manipulate him for ours?

He uses every one of us. No matter what our occupation, our work is our ministry. From the volunteers to the vice presidents of large corporations, no one is considered more valuable in His eyes. You see, it's not what we do that matters, but rather, the manner in which we do it. This is what determines whether we live in happiness or hopelessness.



Happy is the man who eats the fruit of his labor.

It is June 14, 1783. The Revolutionary War has just ended. General George Washington sits at his desk in Newburgh, New York. From his headquarters, he pens a farewell circular letter to all thirteen Governors of the newly freed states.

I now make it my earnest prayer that God would have you, and the State over which you preside, in his holy protection....that he would graciously be pleased to dispose us all to do justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility and pacific temper of mind, which were the characteristics of the Divine Author of our blessed religion, and without an humble imitation of whose example in these things, we can never hope to be a happy nation.

My friends, let us exceedingly rejoice in the freedom we have to engage in the pursuit of happiness in our wonderful nation. Happy Birthday, America!

All quotes taken from *America's God and Country Encyclopedia of Quotations*. William J. Federer. Fame Publishing, Inc. 1994.



Ronda Sturgill of Tuscon, AZ, serves as West Region Coordinator for the Protestant Women of the Chapel, a women's ministry located on every military installation worldwide. She and her husband Tim, a FWB Air Force Chaplain, are in the process of relocating to Wright Patterson Air Base, Dayton, Ohio, nearer to son Toby and his wife Colleen who live in Nashville, TN. A retreat and conference speaker, Ronda can be contacted at www.findinghopeinhim.com.

Will You Pray?

Commit to pray regularly for those individuals whom God has placed in authority over you. Use this list as a guide.

Fill in the names of your government leaders and elected officials. Pray specifically for each person's salvation. If the leader is a believer, pray for Holy Spirit wisdom and guidance to discern and stand for the truth.

President

Vice-President

Senators

Representative

Governor

State Senator

State Representative

Mayor

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made... for all that are in authority; that we may live a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who would have all me to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

1 Timothy 2:1-4



"As a child, I watched my father go to war. Now, as an adult, I am watching both my father and my husband go to war."

My father and husband are soldiers

Tabitha Austin Crowley



My father and husband are soldiers in the United States Army. My dad CH (MAJ) Terry Austin has served in the Army for sixteen years with prior service in the Marine Corps and the National Guard. My husband SPC Christopher Crowley has been in the Army almost five years. As a child, I watched my father go to war. Now, as an adult, I am watching both my father and my husband go to war.

Two weeks to the day after Chris and I married, he left for a year-long tour in Iraq. Three days later, my father left for his third tour in the Middle East. My life came to a standstill. How could I continue with my new husband away at war? When I married, I'd expected a partner for life—someone to be with me through the good times and the bad. How could I pretend to function normally with half my heart half-a-world away? I knew I must stay strong; still, I felt my heart breaking in two.

During that first year of marriage we saw each other a total of four weeks. In our two plus years of marriage, we've only spent about a year

together. Chris has missed both of our anniversaries, along with numerous other holidays.

It's truly a sacrifice to live like this. The Army always comes first. I will never have the career I always wanted, and when we begin our own family, Chris will miss many of the milestones.

Many people wonder how I can cope with two of the men in my life



escape, that ye may be able to bear it." It is easy to forget that God is in control, but I believe that He only gives us what we can handle. He will take care of my father and my husband while they are away and He will give me the strength I need to get through it.

I've watched a wonderful example of strength in my mother Mona. She stood by my father while he went all over the world. Now I am doing the same thing for my husband. Overall, God has been good to my family throughout all of the deployments. I do not believe we could get through it all without God's help.

Tabitha Crowley and her husband Chris are currently stationed at Ft. Campbell, KY, while her father, a FWB Chaplain, now serves in Ft. Meade, MD. Both Tabitha and Chris remain very involved in the Two Rivers FWB Church, Clarksville, TN. The couple will once again be apart as Chris faces another deployment this August.

going to war. I can only tell them that I trust God to keep them safe and to keep me strong. Of course I worry about them when they are gone, but I always take comfort in I Corinthians 10:13. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to





"This was where God was leading him."

My son is a soldier

Dianne Sargent



The Marine recruiter offered an elaborate package. Quietly I held my breath. I didn't want him in the military, but he had to make those choices for himself. Gratefully I gave a sigh of relief when he chose college. Uneasiness still lurked in the back of my mind because I knew he really wanted to make the other choice, but his brother was 12; Brian knew I needed him to be there for Chris.

The next twelve years fairly flew. Brian graduated from Free Will Baptist Bible College with a degree in music performance, got married, had a son, and was music director at Woodbine Free Will Baptist Church. Then, September 11, 2001 changed our lives. I could see it on his face; I could hear it in his voice. A choice I thought we had lived beyond was beginning to raise its head.

The restlessness set in. Satisfaction with what he was doing seemed to evaporate overnight. I began to

brace myself. Brian never made snap decisions; I could trust his judgment.

For two years he prayed, talked to his wife Kristie, to his brother, to Dr. Charles Thigpen, and to several military men. The day came when he told me he had to go. Brian was not delusional in thinking his military service would solve the world's problems. This was where God was leading him. He could not get past it. When Kristie was able to accept his decision, then he would talk to a recruiter.

I began to pray for God to stop this from happening. I didn't want him in the military now anymore than I had 12 years before. After all, Brian was 30 years old; he and Kristie were expecting their second child. It just did not make sense.

What did Brian mean upsetting my life like this? Chris was married and doing well; I was settled in my job; I enjoyed spending time with my grandsons, and now our fam-

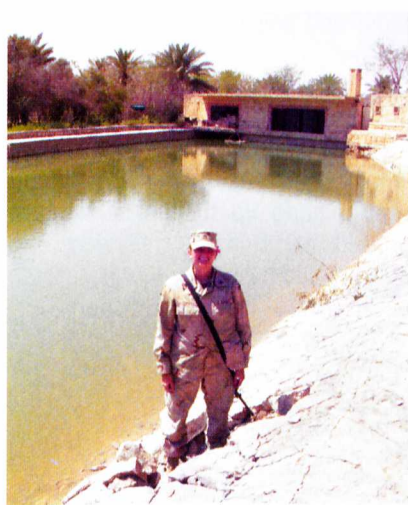
ily would be separated. My life was changing in a way I did not want.

I cried; I argued with God, but my soul found no rest. God reminded me of the vow I had made years ago. Brian and Chris belonged to God. I had given them to Him. Brian and Kristie were following God's leading. All that remained was for me to get on board. Reluctantly I did.

Presently, Brian is serving in Iraq. Once I got in tune with what God wanted, I have been able to see God's hand in all that has transpired. Brian has been able to lead several fellow soldiers to the Lord. The battalion chaplain has asked Brian to help with Sunday services and to conduct Bible studies. God is honoring Brian's decision and I'm convinced He has great plans for his life. And, yes, his mother is proud of what he does.

Dianne Sargent lives in Nashville, TN, where she attends the Woodbine FWB Church. Dianne serves as an Editor for Randall House Publications.

"It's a whole new ballgame on the other end of the deployment."



I am a soldier

Christie Conner Maher

On Valentine's Day 2003, I received a phone call that would change my life forever. A person from my guard unit called and told me that we were on alert. I was nervous, but I didn't think anything would come of it. Within a month, I was called to Active Duty. I had no idea what to expect. I was a single mother.

My son, Gage, was only seven months old at the time. I would have to leave him with my parents, who took this responsibility and cared for my child.

I began my journey in Ft. Riley, Kansas, training for about three months before we were shipped out. We arrived in Kuwait in the middle of June. It was so hot; I

felt like I was living in an oven. After three weeks of drinking lots of water, eating and trying to get used to the heat, we started pulling out to go into Iraq. I arrived in Baghdad on Independence Day, 2003. We were stationed at Baghdad International Airport. We set up our sleep area in an abandoned pool house, fashioned with beautiful tiles and marble. With no electricity, it was very hot. Once the sun went down, we had no light. We bathed with bottles of water in a bathroom with a poncho for a door.

My team stayed there for about two weeks before we moved north. I was 65 miles north of Baghdad for nearly four months before moving back to the airport. I liked being at the airport with most of my company. That's also where our church

was based. Our chaplain was the most awesome guy I've ever met. Talking to him, you wouldn't have even known we were in a wartime situation. He was so full of energy when it came to preaching God's Word.

We held our church services in a beautiful tile-floored building actually designed around a large tree. The middle of the roof was open so the tree could grow. The services were always wonderful. People sang and gave testimonies. We maintained a strong prayer chain. Some individuals accepted the Lord while we were there; Baptisms were conducted in an old bathtub.

My eleven months in Iraq seemed so long at the time, but now they feel like a dream. I returned home on Mother's Day weekend 2004. I was married shortly thereafter. My

husband, Caleb, is now deployed for a second time. It's a whole new ballgame on the other end of the deployment. In the six months he's been gone, it's been tough. Because I realize what could be happening to him over there, I just have to take it day by day. Hopefully, he should be home by summer 2006, but in the military, you never know. I pray for his safety and for the safety of all the other soldiers who have gone over with him. I pass my time throwing myself into college studies and playing with Gage. He is now almost three and the light of my life. I don't know what I would do if I didn't have him around to keep me busy. I thank God every day for giving him to me.

Christie Conner Maher attends the Ina FWB Church, Ina, Illinois.

THE GOD WHO PROVIDES

Tina Stevens

I watched the Saturday morning news updates on the events in Iraq. A US soldier had been killed in the line of duty.

My 20-year-old son, Travis, was stationed in Northern Baghdad. I immediately started praying for him, asking God, "Please cause Travis to call me. I just need to hear his voice and know he's okay." I knew full well I wouldn't hear from him that weekend. When a soldier is killed, phone lines go down until the family is notified.

The following day in Sunday school, my Junior class lesson was about praying specifically. The teacher's guide suggested I give an example of a time when I prayed specifically for something and God answered. I shared with my students that when I hadn't heard from Travis in a while, I always prayed and asked God to let him call. I was able to tell them that he'd always called.

I awoke that night at 2:00 a.m. Counting back the hours to Iraqi



time—11:00 a.m.—I began praying for Travis, again asking God to let him call. I just needed to hear his voice and know he was all right. Lying awake, I pondered the Sunday school lesson and the sermons I'd heard earlier that day. I thought on Abraham who'd taken Isaac up the mountain as a sacrifice and how at the last minute God had provided a lamb. Abraham had called his God, Jehovah-Jireh, the God-Who-Provides. Overcome with gratefulness, I couldn't help praising God for who He is and how He provides for me.

In the midst of my prayers, the phone rang. It was Travis. "Hi mom, how are you?" his voice resonated clearly, as if he were in the same room—no static, no delay. This was amazing. I excitedly exclaimed, "Travis!" and asked how he was doing. "I'm good, real good," he answered. Then he said, "You're not going to believe this, but I'm working and I just found this cell phone lying on the ground. I thought, I'll call my mom and see what happens. And it worked—I'm talking to you from this cell phone. Can you believe it?"

"Yes! I can!" I responded. Travis said his goodbyes and told me he would try to call later that night. After I hung up the phone, I again praised my God who provides. He had provided the very words I needed to hear, "I'm good, real good."

God answered another prayer for Tina when Travis returned early to the States this past March. Tina attends the Westfield FWB Church in Katy, TX.

"We felt honored and privileged to have them in our lives and in our church."

We minister to soldiers

Tammy Hampton

On February 28, 2003, our family pushed back tears as we said farewell to several young men who attended our church. These special men were American soldiers. We felt honored and privileged to have them in our lives and in our church. We were ministering to the military during a time of war.

Our ministry to single soldiers began when our paths crossed with one special soldier who was recovering from a serious car accident. He was the son of a Free Will Baptist pastor and by the time we were introduced (through another FWB pastor), this young man had rededicated his life to God. After a time of recovery in the hospital and a month of recuperation back home in Idaho, he began faithfully attending our church. Immediately, he began bringing friends to church with him. Most of these men would pass through our home for a meal, maybe a game of basketball or just to hang out and watch Sunday afternoon football. Our family grew attached to some of these guys and we quickly sensed they were part of the family.

My heart was heavy, with the worry of a mother, as they boarded planes headed for Iraq, facing the uncertainties that lay ahead.

Our church felt as if a hole had been ripped in it; our home seemed strangely quiet and empty. These men were constantly in our thoughts and prayers. Our prayer was that God would return them to us safely and without injury. The days passed ever so slowly as we anxiously waited to hear from them. The day finally came when we received handwritten letters, then e-mail, packages and even an occasional phone call from Iraq. How wonderful to hear the voice of our special soldier on the other end of the line.

A year finally passed. We eagerly anticipated the day when the first soldier from our church would come home. It just so happened to be that special young man who had crossed our paths over two years earlier. On January 24, 2004, our family headed to Ft. Campbell at 5:00 am. We boarded buses taking family, friends, and loved ones to the airfield where the plane would be landing. We waited in the hangar for what seemed an eternity. Finally, the awaited announce-



ment came. The plane was in range. We crowded onto the chilly flight line and struggled to get a spot near the front. Our eyes looked toward the sky as we watched for the plane to come into sight. Cheers and screams erupted throughout the crowd as we caught that first glimpse of the airplane carrying our special soldier. My heart swelled with pride as these men and women unloaded and filed in front of us. As we stood among a sea of waving, American flags, I have never felt more proud to be an American. Finally, we were reunited with the young man who had been the key to our ministry with young, single soldiers.

I didn't know on that cold day in January, as we waited for a glimpse of our first returning soldier, that one day he would officially become a part of our family. As of May 7, 2005, I can say with pride, my son-in-law is an American soldier.

Tammy Hampton serves with her husband Clayton as FWB missionaries at Two Rivers FWB Church in Clarksville, TN, home to many of the 101st Airborne. The Hamptons have three children: Joshua, Jonathan, and Sarah, now a soldier's wife.

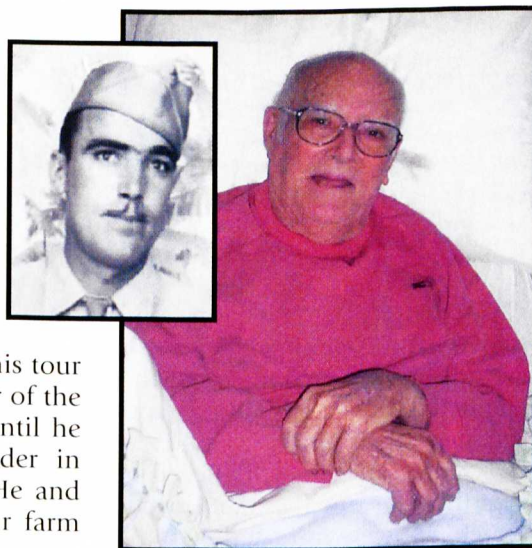
Tammy adds this note. "All of our soldiers returned home safely and without injury! We are again preparing to see some of our men deploy."



"Each one of them is a hero, and Howard Gage just happens to be my favorite."

I visit the soldiers

Sue Gage Wilcox



Our country is at war. Our thoughts and prayers are with those who are fighting to keep our country safe and free.

How blessed we have been to know a life of freedom because of brave men and women who, in the past, were willing to pay that same price. I am reminded of that truth often because I regularly make visits to the Clarmore Veteran Center. My own sweet daddy, Howard Gage is one of the residents there.

The day that daddy moved there, he was weak and a bit disoriented. When it was time for his first meal around the tables of 2A, Daddy looked at me and said, "I don't even know where I am or who these men are." I said, "Daddy, they are soldiers—every one of them." His eyes twinkled and he added, "I'm a soldier, too!" That was the beginning of his settling into his new home—his home with the other soldiers.

When I visit Daddy, I long for those who care for him now to know him as we knew him. Daddy served his country during World War II. He was a Tech Sergeant, responsible for men who still, after all of these years, keep in touch with us—men who came to love and respect him as they served together.

When he returned from his tour of duty, he became a soldier of the Cross, pastoring churches until he became a missionary builder in the Ivory Coast of Africa. He and Mother only retired to their farm east of Pryor, OK, in 1976,

I would love to know the stories about the other residents at OVC. C. E. Smith shares a room with Dad. He is a retired school teacher who taught high school math in his more productive years. He is a pleasant man with a mischievous streak when he is feeling well. His wife lives about 70 miles from Claremore and can only visit about once a month. Our family has adopted him as ours, too.

Another special soldier there is our good friend, Jack Wells. Jack has one of the most beautiful natural singing voices I have ever heard. During his military time, he sometimes entertained troops—with the likes of Red Buttons. At the Center, there are soldiers whose minds are sharp, but their bodies are spent. Soldiers whose thinking is not clear, some whose thinking is distorted. Soldiers who are amputees—some from battle, some from lives since. Wheelchairs are constantly in motion. One can find soldiers painting, reading, visiting, enjoying games or karaoke or any

number of activities that happen on a regular basis. One soldier who stands out in my mind has a permanent wide smile on his face. I often wonder what put it there.

After my visits to the center, I can return to my home knowing I am leaving Daddy and the other soldiers with doctors, nurses, aides, custodians and staff who truly care about the residents. I know that Dad's needs are going to be met. He is going to be teased, hugged, fed and sometimes kissed on the hairless top of his head. I know that he is among others who have paid dearly at some point in their lives so that my family and my neighbors can be free. Each one of them is a hero, and Howard Gage just happens to be my favorite.

Sue Gage Wilcox, Pryor, OK, is the daughter of former FWB missionary builders, Howard and Willie Gage and sister of Missouri State Home Missionary Ruth Bivens. Besides visiting soldiers, Sue is active in various ministries within her local church.

women active
in *Louisville*

**Don't forget to bring
plenty of stocking
stuffers to the 2005
WNAC Convention.**

SUGGESTED ITEMS

2-3 YEAR OLDS: Tub toys, Hair bows, Crayons, Books, Balls, Dolls and Accessories, Stuffed Animals,

4-5 YEAR OLDS: Sidewalk chalk, Crayons, Playdough, Matchbox cars, Tonka toys, Games, Learning toys, Little books, Dolls

6-9 YEAR OLDS: Action figures, Barbies, Dolls & Accessories, Costume Jewelry, Water Paints, Legos, Trading cards, Key chains, Yo-Yos

10-12 YEAR OLDS: Christian CDs, Hair Accessories, Notebooks, Key chains, Louisville or Kentucky items (Kentucky Wildcats/ or Louisville Cardinal merchandise), Pens or Pencils, Card games, Trading cards

EXCLUSIONS

(ALL AGES)

No food or candy

No bubbles

No glass items

Conditioning for the Race

by Barbara Evans

✧PURSUE GODLINESS✧PURSUE GODLINESS✧PURSUE GODLINESS✧P

Marathon: an endurance contest—(any long and arduous undertaking); a foot race or walk of 26 miles 385 yards. (*WordNet Dictionary*)

THREE YEARS AGO, I DECIDED TO RUN MY FIRST MARATHON. I soon discovered that running a marathon is not an easy thing to do. Marathons require setting goals, making large commitments of both time and mind and learning lessons in perseverance. Before a runner can finish well, conditioning must take place over time.

The Christian life is that way as well. Pursuing a life of godliness requires goals, commitments, and perseverance. Whether single and looking, single and satisfied, single mom, married without children, widowed, or married with children as I am – finishing well in life demands and comes with conditioning. Unlike a foot race, in the course of our lives we often do not know what track or event we are being conditioned for. We must trust our Master trainer, who has uniquely designed the paths of our lives.

Set Goals

Our lives are full of goals—some big, some small. Many we set for ourselves. Some we set unrealistically. God established certain goals for our lives from our creation. Psalm 139:16 declares that God wrote the book on each of us before we ever came to be. He knows our thoughts. He has plans for us. He desires to give us a hope and a future (Jeremiah 29:11). He wants us to serve Him—seeking daily to glorify Him in all we do. “*Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God*” (1 Corinthians 10:31). How we manifest these goals in our individual lives constitutes the race we run.

The decision to run a marathon requires setting achievable weekly goals. It is not feasible to believe a person can run a marathon without following some kind of training schedule. Nor is it reasonable to think that we can follow Christ without walking with Him daily. When we say we believe in Christ and do not take an active role in our conditioning, Satan finds all our weaknesses—discouragement, anger, failure—and seeks to destroy us. We must set achievable goals, then strive to reach them.

Most of us have no trouble setting goals—making grocery lists, writing lists of chores we want to do, or penciling projects we hope to complete. We all do it. Writing it down is simple. Taking action is the hard part. Saying we will follow Christ is easy. Saying we want to live for Christ, to seek to be godly and to glorify him is still not hard. Beginning the conditioning phase—now, *that* is difficult. We must stay focused on the task we’ve placed before us. Distractions come in all forms—busy schedules, temptations to do something more fun, kids, families, even church.

Commit our Time

The process for running a marathon requires a commitment of time, a training schedule. This is where the conditioning begins.

Previous exercise is foundational to a new level of conditioning. A runner must follow a schedule that allows her to gain the proper sequence of body preparation for running well—strength and endurance training. Marathons require proper conditioning. It’s

unthinkable for a person to decide one day to run a marathon, then run it the next day. She would pay a great price. Marathons require a three to four month period of conditioning. The runs begin small, gradually increasing over the weeks in order to build strength and endurance. One long run each week, built upon daily smaller runs, prepares the runner for the 26.2 mile event.

Commit our Minds

The basis for following Christ is simply asking forgiveness and receiving Him into our lives. *"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt*

believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Romans 10:9, 10). *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* (1 John 1:9). Having made this heart-mind commitment, we must choose our level of training—novice, intermediate, expert. We make the race more manageable or more difficult as we actively choose our level of conditioning. Conditioning our minds to glorify Christ requires a daily commitment. We must begin conditioning where we are. Take time each day to condition yourself for Christ.

One essential component is daily Bible reading. This involves a mental commitment since making and taking the time to do this is up to us. Writing down a schedule is a good start, but until we put on our 'running shoes' and take to the track we will not get very far. Distractions will come. Satan is an expert at throwing fiery darts. *"Be sober; be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour"* (1 Peter 5:8). He does not want us to condition our minds. He does not want Christ to be glorified. He wants to convince us that it's okay to skip a training session. He wants us to be failures and to feel we cannot finish well because our daily conditioning is not where it needs to be.

For example, a ten-week Bible study requiring 45 minutes of daily preparation is probably not a good place for a beginner to start. It is too easy to get discouraged. And Satan would like nothing better. *"Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever*

thou goest" (Joshua 1:9). Do not allow Satan to discourage you. Choose a manageable regimen. Consider any past training.

At times, we may find ourselves ill-prepared because we have convinced ourselves that it's okay to skip a training session or two. We may have allowed ourselves to be distracted. We have not conditioned well. Though it is not impossible to finish the race, it is certainly more difficult because we have not learned to trust God for our daily support and guidance during the process of our conditioning.

Before my first marathon, I did not complete all of my long runs. I thought it would be okay to skip some runs because I did not have the time for them. I paid the price. On the day of the race, I could tell I had not conditioned well because I did not have the ability to endure running the full 26.2 miles. I gave up running at about mile 16. I finished, but in my mind I did not finish well because I had not properly conditioned. This past year, I followed my training schedule. I completed all my runs and improved my marathon time by 35 minutes.

Daily communion with God through prayer is also an essential component to our conditioning program. We must seek His guidance, asking for wisdom and instruction along the way. Prayer enables us to set life goals aligned with God's plans for our lives—the prosperous, not harmful but hopeful, future mentioned in Jeremiah 29:11. We then can live a life that is pleasing to Him, seeking to bring glory to His name in all we do.

We must also prepare our minds daily for the heights, the hurts, and the hurdles we may encounter. Conditioning enables us to endure the various passages of life. *"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee..."* (Isaiah 43:2). God prepares us for greater things by conditioning us slowly. We will not accomplish great things for God if we do not allow Him to lead us slowly through the little things.

Learn to Persevere

Remember, God has a plan for each of our lives. (Jeremiah 29:11). He knows what we are going through because He knows where we are going.

Often, He is indeed conditioning us for a future event, a harder run. Our past conditioning allows us to endure a new level that Christ may place before us. Sometimes we do not like it very much. We may be tempted to believe the old adage that the grass is greener on the other side. We fail to see the big picture; we certainly do not understand why God would allow us to endure these things. We may think that God's conditioning is too strenuous. These are opportunities for learning perseverance. *"Brethren, I count not myself*

to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13, 14).

God gives us what we daily need to face each and every race set before us. Some courses are hard to run—the death of a child or other loved one, a terminal illness, inability to conceive, singleness, even a troubled marriage. Yet, God offers each of us the strength and endurance to finish the race.

Finish Well

There is something to be said for conditioning. When we follow the training schedule set for us and condition our minds to seek to serve Christ and glorify Him in all that we do, we joyfully find that we are adequately prepared for the course. We do indeed finish well even in the difficulty. We are able to say with Paul, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished [the race] my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Timothy 4:7,8).

Completing a marathon is much more than just physically running a race. Remember the definition: a contest of endurance, a long and arduous undertaking. It's certainly not a stretch, then, to say that life truly is a marathon.

Do you believe that you are being conditioned for something later on? Are you conditioning your mind daily for Christ, so you are better equipped to serve and glorify Him in all that you do and in everything that comes your way?

...And let us run with patience [perseverance] the race that is set before us. Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him who endured such (opposition) contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds (Hebrews 12: 1b-3).

Commit to training. Do not be discouraged. Do not give up. Keep at it. Finish well.

Barbara Evans lives in Nashville, TN, where she attends the Donelson Fellowship FWB Church. Wife of Benchmark Ministry director James Evans and mother of Christopher (9), Elizabeth (5), Jonathan (4), and Hannah (4), Barbara works part-time as a labor and delivery nurse. In her spare moments, she enjoys reading, scrapbooking, smocking, running and backpacking with her husband. Barbara's life verses are Philippians 4:6-8. She says, "I am learning to be content to run the race that God has before me right now," but admits that some days are much more difficult than others.



Day by day and with each passing moment,
Strength I find to meet my trials here;
Trusting in my Father's wise bestowment,
I've no cause for worry or for fear.
He whose heart is kind beyond all measure
Gives unto each day what He deems best—
Lovingly, its part of pain and pleasure,
Mingling toil with peace and rest.

Every day the Lord Himself is near me
With a special mercy for each hour;
All my cares He fain would bear, and cheer me,
He whose name is Counsellor and Power.
The protection of His child and treasure
Is a charge that on Himself He laid
"As thy days, thy strength shall be in measure,"
This the pledge to me He made.

Help me then in every tribulation
So to trust Thy promises, O Lord,
That I lose not faith's sweet consolation
Offered me within Thy holy word.
Help me lord, when toil and trouble meeting,
E'er to take, as from a father's hand,
One by one, the days, the moments fleeting,
'Till I reach the promised land.

"Day by Day" by Carolina Sandell Berg. REJOICE Hymnal. Copyright 1995 NAFWB, Inc.



One wife helps her husband realize a dream and reduce debt for a Chicago mission church.

My Kind of Marathon



The Talley family (Valerie, center left) and friends at the finish line.

MEET VALERIE TALLEY. Mother of three children: son Cody, (9) daughters, Kailey (7) and Kelsey (3). Part-time employee at an Orthopedic Center. Faithful member of the First FWB Church, Mount Vernon, IL. Active in WAC. Wife of marathon runner, Britt Talley.

Like many men, Britt Talley harbored a dream. A full-time metal worker and Illinois National Guardsman, he aspired to run a marathon by the age of 30. God's timing transformed that dream into a missions vision.

Britt's January 2003 call into active duty as stateside secretary in Springfield, IL, ignited the dream spark. His required daily physical training runs provided the perfect opportunity for marathon training. Pursuing the dream, he realized that an event this significant demanded a cause.

Several of Britt's compatriots had run the Chicago Marathon the prior year, collecting money for the Heart Association. Britt decided to set his heart on missions. He talked with Brother Mike Gillock, his pastor at the time, about the possibilities. God was orchestrat-

ing this as well. Brother Mike had just received a letter from home missionary David Potete, outlining his "Chicago, My Kind of Town, Debt Reduction Campaign." As Illinois Free Will Baptists, the Talleys were familiar with missionaries David and Pam Potete and Northwest FWB Church's struggles to pay down its mortgage principle. What could be more appropriate? A Chicago Marathon for a Chicago Mission.

Valerie admits, at first, she thought her husband was nuts. One year earlier when he had undergone knee surgery, doctors told Britt his knee would never be the same again. "Of course," Valerie recalls, "Britt had to prove everyone wrong."

Britt's enthusiasm soon won her over. "After seeing his excitement, I decided to be supportive," Valerie shares. She traveled with him to various churches, garnering support and pledges for the race. Valerie also admits she kept after him to run and get prepared. This was more than just a few miles—26.2 to be exact. Still, she doubted he would ever run the length of the race. The weekend of the event, Valerie and the kids made the five-hour trip to the Windy City to lend their support.

The morning of the race brought excitement. Britt and Chris Wright, Northwest Church treasurer, left the house at 5:00 a.m. headed to the start. Chris' wife Regina and Valerie began their day watching the marathon start on the news. Later, the two women joined the

Potetes at the church to track the runners on the internet. Valerie remembers, "It was so exciting, every time we called, to find out how much farther Britt had made it." Brother Potete shared these updates with the congregation throughout the Sunday morning service. After church, a large group headed downtown to meet Britt at the finish line. Yes, he made it.

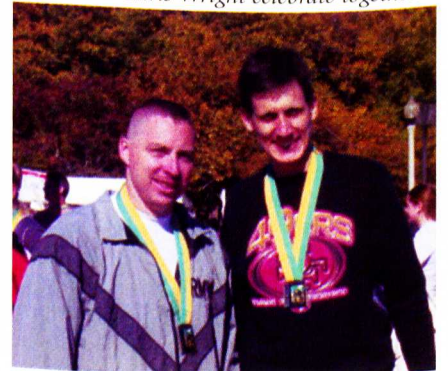
Valerie says the experience has really given her a burden for missions. "Brother David Potete, his family and his church were so good to us through the whole thing. We could feel their appreciation for everything." Pleased with the supportive response of the churches they visited, Valerie contends that the marathon was a great way to raise money.

Britt is gearing up for his second Chicago Marathon. This fall, he hopes to gain more support and enlist more runners, attempting to completely wipe out the building debt so the church can become self-supporting. Rest assured, Valerie will be there cheering her husband on to the finish.

David Potete recognizes Britt for his run.



Britt and Chris Wright celebrate together.



PURSUE PROPER SELF-ESTEEM

1. REALIZE HOW SPECIAL YOU ARE TO GOD

Write down what these verses mean to you.

Psalm 139:14

Matthew 10:29-32

Mark 12:31

2. GOD HAS GIVEN HIS PEOPLE SPECIAL NAMES

List the names found in these verses. How does each one make you feel?

Malachi 3:17

Zechariah 2:8

Zechariah 9:10

Matthew 10:16

2. GOD HAS SPECIAL REWARDS FOR HIS PEOPLE

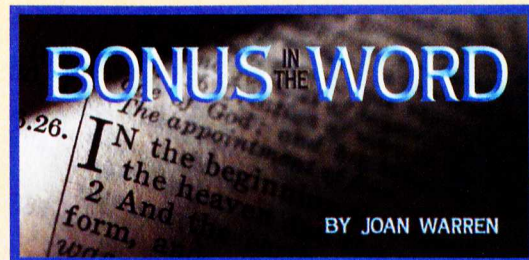
How can these rewards promote proper self esteem?

1 Peter 5:4

2 Timothy 4:8

Hebrews 4:9

Joan Warren is a longtime WAC leader and Bible teacher from Oilton, OK.



Fall in Love...Again!

Husband and wife team Richard and Sandy Atwood will lead the Friday evening through Sunday morning event at Chattanooga's Convention Center Marriott. FWB ministry roles, almost 30 years of marriage and four children provide this duo plenty of real-life sharing material. Using Scripture and drama, teaching and telling, Richard and Sandy offer a delightful mix of marriage fun and fundamentals.

Benefit from the conference, then enjoy the city. Visit Chattanooga's historical sights and Civil War battlefields, tour its Aquarium and museums, shop or relax in natural scenic beauty.

WNAC/ Master's Men National Marriage Enrichment Conference

(PLEASE PRINT)

Husband's Name _____

Wife's Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone () _____ Email _____

SPECIAL NEEDS: Non-smoking (as available) _____ Handicapped _____

PAYMENT METHOD: CHECK # _____ CREDIT CARD TYPE _____

Card Number _____

Expiration date _____ Zip of your billing address _____

MAIL FULL PAYMENT AND REGISTRATION TO:

Master's Men P.O. Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37011-5002
More information? Questions? Call toll free: 1-877-767-8039

October 28-30, 2005

**CHATTANOOGA MARRIOTT
AT THE
CONVENTION CENTER**

2 Carter Plaza
Chattanooga, TN

CONFERENCE COST

☐ **\$225 per couple**
(includes two nights lodging, banquet meal,
and all conference fees)

☐ **\$125 per couple OFF SITE**
(includes banquet and all conference fees)

(After September 15)

☐ **\$250 per couple**
(includes two nights lodging, banquet meal,
and all conference fees)

☐ **\$150 per couple OFF SITE**
(includes banquet and all conference fees)
No refunds after September 28.

SPRINGBOARD

LEADERSHIP

ATTEND. Plan to attend the WNAC Convention in Louisville, July 18-19. Each group is entitled to one local delegate, but all women are welcomed and encouraged to attend all sessions.

EMPHASIZE. August is WNAC Emphasis month. The WNAC office operates solely from gifts and financial support from women like you.

REGISTER. Register for the upcoming WNAC/MM Marriage Enrichment Conference in Chattanooga, October 28-30.

EVALUATE. Encourage women to go online and evaluate the retreat ministry of WNAC. This will help in planning future events.

BUY. BRING. SEND. STUFF. Purchase Christmas gifts for Angel Tree Christmas stockings. Bring or send the gifts to the WNAC Convention. Help stuff the stockings at the convention site.

PLAN. Since summer is often a down time for WAC groups, begin plans for a Back to School boost. Consult the Program and Plan Book for ideas.

NOW AVAILABLE

\$8.00

PLUS SHIPPING AND HANDLING

Order yours today!

LET US PURSUE

**2005 WNAC
PROGRAM &
PLAN BOOK**

MISSIONS

READ the testimonies about the Sisters' Prayer Fellowship (pp. 25-29). If anyone from your area attended, invite them to share the blessings and impact of this event.

HIGHLIGHT the various ministries in which Central Asian women are involved. Consider partnering in an effort.

NEED a project? Phone or email Richard Atwood richard@nafwb.org (HM), Steve Lytle steve@fwbgo.org (IM). (615)-731-6812

STUDY

UTILIZE the mini Bible study on p. 13. **HIGHLIGHT** titles from well-known author Debra White Smith who will speak at the WNAC seminar.

ENCOURAGE women to follow a training schedule for daily Bible study.

PLAN a children's summer reading party. Provide Christian books, snacks, etc.

NEEDS

PROVISION CLOSET. Sheet sets of all sizes; cookware (sturdy pots and pans), gift cards.

WNAC OFFICE. Funds to underwrite recent purchase of a G-5 Macintosh Computer; scanner and InDesign Creative Suite software.

SERVICE

HONOR soldiers in your church or community. Send a care packet to any deployed or to family left at home. Send thank you cards to these defenders of personal freedoms.

RUN or walk in support of missions. If nothing is organized in your area, consider personal or small group runs.

SEND a child in your community to your church camp or fund a local summer outreach.

SUPPORT MISSIONS

Support WNAC. Your WNAC Emphasis gift helps ensure the continuance of mission-minded ministries like the Provision Closet, Foreign Student scholarships, and CoLaborer magazine.

PRAYER

INTERCEDE for soldiers, chaplains, and other military personnel. Pray also for national leaders.

MAKE prayer reminders for Central Asia. Attach the names of the five nations to scented votives or small silk flowers, reminding women to pray that the sweet savour of Christ would permeate this region. Pray especially for the governments in these lands; in some areas, believers suffer persecution.

PRAISE God for freedoms we enjoy in our country. Spend time in thanksgiving for this often overlooked blessing.

OUR WEBSITE

www.nafwb.org/wnac

Contact us:

wnac@nafwb.org

CHATTANOOGA CONFERENCE

WNAC and Master's Men announce their third National Marriage Enrichment Conference, October 28-30, 2005, at the Convention Center Marriott in downtown Chattanooga, TN. Benefit from the conference; enjoy the city. Relax in scenic natural beauty, visit historic sights and Civil War battlefields, tour its Aquarium and museums, or shop till you drop. Find pricing and registration information on p. 21, online at www.nafwb.org/mm or call 1-877-767-8039.

FEEDBACK... FEEDBACK...

Dear WNAC,

God bless you for sending to our account. It is a blessing of the Lord. We praise God for WNAC.

Jerry Rayburn family
Arizona

Dear WNAC,

Thank you for the gift you gave me for my E-TEAM trip to France. I ask that you continue to pray for me and others on the team. Thank you again for sharing in this experience with me.

Mary Kathryn Driggers
South Carolina

Dear WNAC,

I would like to thank all the ladies groups that sent Box Tops for Education to Free Will Baptist Christian School. They came from Florida to Michigan and everywhere in between. Last year we received \$160; this year it will be \$430. Next year our goal is \$750. You are all wonderful and precious to our ministry. Thanks for your thoughtfulness. Can't wait to hear from you next year.

Dawn Real
St. Croix, Virgin Islands

Dear WNAC,

I just wanted to write and tell you how much I enjoyed the Branson 2005 Women's retreat. The speakers were inspiring, and the music was beautiful. The hotel made me feel like a pampered princess and the staff was very gracious to me and those in my party.

A lot of people worked behind the scenes to make this retreat a success. To all of those individuals, you did your jobs beautifully. Thank you from the bottom of my heart...Thank you for all that you do to make our women active for Christ.

Wendy Southwell
Atoka, TN

Dear WNAC,

Hola. I just wanted to let all of you know how much I enjoyed the retreat in Missouri. It was wonderful to be with so many FWB ladies, some old friends, and some new. I especially appreciated the emphasis on missions and God's heart for the world. Even though I am a missionary, the speakers really challenged me to do more and pray more for missions. I also want to say thanks for the special perks you gave us missionaries—the chocolates, meal vouchers, and honorariums. Gracias.

Kristi Johnson
Spain

Dear WNAC,

Thank you for the phone and gift cards you sent me. I'm sorry it took a while to get back to you but I really appreciated it. Thank you for all you do.

Autumn Morgan
Nashville, TN

Dear WNAC,

Thank you for your recent gift to our account. Because of faithful donors like you, we are able to leave for France in June. May God bless all of you for your commitment to the Great Commission.

Matt and Cristina Price
France

Dear WNAC,

I attended the recent WNAC Retreat in Branson, MO. I really enjoyed hearing from our missionaries and found the messages given by Debbie Griffin and Lynette Morgan very informative and uplifting. I would love to see all our retreats dedicated to missionaries both home and foreign. Please pass along my appreciation to everyone who had a hand in the planning. I will be back the next time there is a WNAC Retreat in Branson.

Judy Sprout
Topeka, KS

Emphasis Month Provides Opportunity for a Blessing

by Sandra Jackson

WNAC's emphasis month offers each and every one of us an opportunity for a blessing. Year after year, our missionaries and members of the WNAC office labor to provide the manpower, literature and knowledge needed to win souls for Christ.

They give of their lives sacrificially. They ask nothing of us in return but our constant remembrance of them in our prayers. Prayer is the greatest need of our missionaries, but reality proves that their ministries cannot survive without the funds to supply their material needs.

It is here that we can obtain our blessing from the Lord. The Emphasis programs provide specific needs of the missionaries and leaders of our missionary programs. Praying for those needs and

giving to those needs open the windows of heaven for God's blessings.

Blessings fill the lives of our missionaries as they watch the woman, steeped in idolatry, now turn to the Lord as her one and only God. We share in that blessing as we beseech God to work in the lives of those individuals the missionary meets.

Again their lives are blessed as they hear of a college student, once struggling with the bondage of sin, released to find peace that only God can give. We share in that blessing as we pray for God to open the eyes of youth when they hear the message of God. We also share in that blessing as we encourage our youth to go and work with

missionaries, witnessing to lost and dying young people.

The missionary rejoices as he sees the walls of a new church put into place. We share in that blessing as we hear stories of those who helped to build those walls. We are blessed when we are a part of the group that helped to build those walls.

The greatest blessing of all is observing people who have learned of God's saving grace. Through their service, the missionary receives his blessing. Through our prayer and sacrificial giving, we obtain our blessing. Don't miss your opportunity for a blessing. Participate in WNAC Emphasis.

—reprinted from the Georgia FWB Bulletin.

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



☀ WAC members from First FWB Church, Wagoner, OK put their quilting skills into practice, providing 27 quilts for children in distress through their local Department of Human Services. A blank label attached to each quilt made it possible to personalize each child's gift. According to DHS worker Shane Greer, receiving such a quilt may be the only act of love some children have ever known. Work began in February, using donated materials and a unique "Six Hour" pattern, enabling the group to piece, add batting and quilt simultaneously. The group presented the gifts in April, but plans to quilt again in the fall. Along with children's quilts, they'll also be making lap robes for a local hospice program. Anyone wanting information about the project or the quilt pattern may contact Mary Jones (918) 485-8355.

☀ Hickory Grove WAC, Abbeville, AL, hosted a Valentines Day banquet. Around 75 people attended. Besides enjoying a delicious meal, the group celebrated the good news concerning their pastor who has suffered from cancer. Expecting surgery and an extended hospital stay, their pastor received a doctor's report: no signs of any cancer.

☀ Seventy-eight attended a "Tea Time" Mother's Day banquet planned by



Lawnwood FWB WAC, Tulsa, OK. Speaker Ruth Bivens, missionary to Hispanics in Monett, MO, encouraged women to be aware of opportunities God places in their paths and be missionaries, showing forth His love. Using shoes, she illustrated various places we can be about the Father's work.

☀ During late April and May, several groups responded to needs within the Missionary Provision Closet. State WAC Meeting attendees in Florida, Illinois and Alabama showered the Closet with various linens and home items. Representatives from these states and two individual churches, Rejoice FWB, Owasso, OK, and First Bible FWB Church, New Castle, IN, came by the WNAC office to hand-deliver their gifts. WNAC, FWB Home and International Missions personnel are grateful for all gifts and for the generous and continuous responses of women to this valuable ministry.



PICTURED: 1. WAC quilters from First Church Wagoner, OK. INSET: Mary Jones, WAC Coordinator presents quilt to Shane Greer of Wagoner Co. DHS. 2. Lawnwood WAC (OK) pose together at Mother's Day Banquet. 3. WAC of Hickory Grove, (AL) celebrate at a Valentines Banquet. 4. JoAnn Wood, (FRONT) Rejoice FWB (OK), displays gifts from her church. Juanita Shepherd (AR) and WNAC's Marjorie Workman help stack and sort. 5. Illinois State WAC sends gifts for the Provision Closet. 6. Towels, towels, and more towels arrive from Florida State WAC. 7. Missionary Cathy Corley delivers gifts from Alabama State WAC.



Is your group involved in a special project or noteworthy endeavor? Share your ideas and

LABORS OF LOVE

SEND NEWS AND PHOTOS:

EMAIL: sarah@nafwb.org

MAIL: P. O. Box 5002

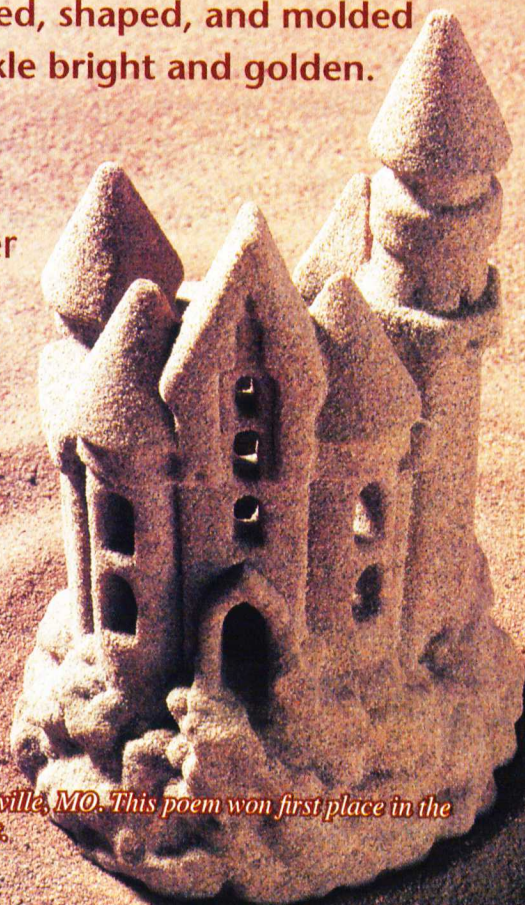
Antioch, TN 37011-5002

SAND

In God's time and in God's plan,
We build our castles in the sand,
And wait for waves of life to break,
And pray God holds them to their shape.
But if He decides to wash away
All our efforts of the day,
He will show us other shores
And help us to rebuild once more.

Just like tiny grains of sand
Within the palm of God's own hands,
We are sifted, we are measured,
We are loved and we are treasured.
We are sculpted, shaped, and molded
Until we sparkle bright and golden.

—Vicki Turner



Vicki Turner lives in Cartersville, MO. This poem won first place in the 2004 Creative Arts Contest.

Pursue

HOSEA 6:3

70th Annual WNAC Convention

July 18-19, 2005 + Louisville, KY

SUNDAY, JULY 17

12:30 WNAC Executive Committee Luncheon/ Meeting

MONDAY JULY 18

9:00 WNAC Nominating Committee Meeting

1:00 WNAC SEMINAR—"Romancing Your Husband"
Debra White Smith

2:00 WNAC SEMINAR—"Are We There Yet?"
Sandy Atwood

TUESDAY JULY 19

8:30 MAIN SESSION

Special Presentation: Heart to Heart Ministries,
First FWB Church, Owensboro, KY

Creative Arts Contest Awards

"A Sweet Savour of Christ"—50/50 National Project Report
Central Asia Sisters' Prayer Fellowship

WNAC Reports

10:30 MISSIONARY SERVICE

Special Music: Salvation Rain

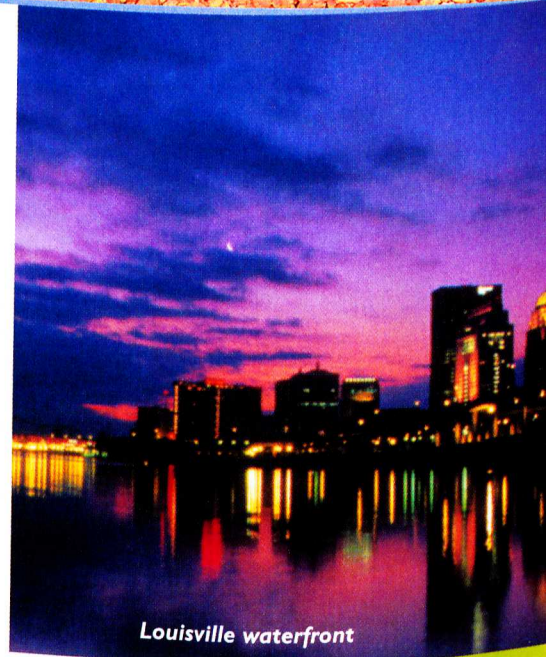
Message: Anthony and Lea Edgmon

12:00 FELLOWSHIP LUNCHEON

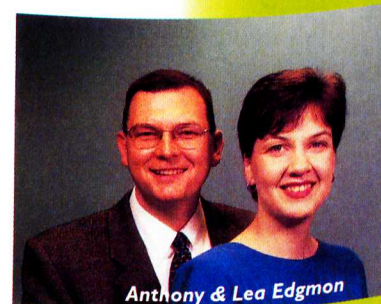
Speaker: Teri Peacock as Viney Mae

9:00 WNAC RECEPTION

State Presidents/Field Workers (by invitation only)



Louisville waterfront



Anthony & Lea Edgmon

2005 Local WNAC Delegate Card

This certifies that _____
(delegate name)

is a duly authorized delegate to the
Women Nationally Active for Christ Convention.

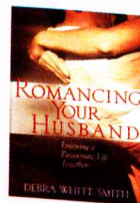
Church Name _____

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.

Pursue a great opportunity. Hear acclaimed speaker and author Debra White Smith explore ways of "Romancing Your Husband" at 1:00 p.m.



Monday. Her book by the same title received recognition as

a 2003 Gold Medalion finalist. With over forty books to her credit, Debra will combine laughter and learning as she shares this vital topic. This is one seminar even husbands won't want their wives to miss.



Debra White Smith



Sandy Atwood



Teri Peacock

LOVE, LAUGHTER AND LESSONS

"Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies." Proverbs 31:10

The old saying goes, "You often don't know the value of something until you lose it." That statement came true for the sisters on March 2, 2005, the day our mother, Nettie Lou Jernigan, went home to be with the Lord. In the days following her homegoing, we truly discovered her worth.

Oh, we already knew she was a godly woman and a loving mother, but her widespread influence became apparent to us during those first few days. Calls, cards and letters came from across the nation declaring that she was a best friend, the truest friend, a gracious lady.

After hearing and reading those words of sympathy, we sisters began discussing the worth of our mother. Her value was so great to us that we questioned if we could move on in life without her. We knew she would not want us dwelling on the sadness, so our thoughts turned to happier times. We found ourselves talking about the lessons Mother taught us, four of which stood out in our minds.

LESSON 1: You need to have fun and laughter in life. Mother was notorious for clipping cartoons and jokes from newspapers or magazines and mailing them to family member. She never failed to let us know she saw us in the funny. Unknown to some, there was a mischievous side to Mother. She loved catching us in a snafu. She wouldn't let us live it down.

She loved to laugh and to make people laugh. She also taught us to even laugh at ourselves—"don't take life too serious." What's more, she encouraged us to laugh at each other. Our tender psyches survived quite well, thank you. Mother obviously believed Solomon's words, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine."

LESSON 2: Take what life gives and do your best. Mother was not one to feel sorry for herself. Even after three bouts of cancer, an equal number of strokes and the rescinding of her driving privileges, Mother did not feel sorry for herself. She found new hobbies and still managed to visit us quite often. She took her own advice and

made the best of her lot in life.

Every time we had a problem or whenever life was beating us up, Mother was always there to love, support and encourage. But she wanted nothing to do with pity parties. With her help, we always came out on top. She wanted us to be the best we could be (without joining the Marines).

LESSON 3: Always be hospitable. We learned early on what it meant to be hospitable because our Mother was. Advance notice or not – she was always gracious when company arrived.

Verla mentioned a time when we were home missionaries in Idaho and 17 people came to visit us on the same weekend. So, do the math: 7 in our family+17 out-of-town guests=24. That's 24 people, 2 bedrooms, 1 bath. Mother never missed a beat and we never heard her complain. It may have driven her to the potato cellar to scream. If so, we never heard her.

We learned from her example. She taught us to always offer to host the visiting preacher or missionary. Mother wrapped the gift of hospitality and gave it to all of us.

LESSON 4: Take charge. Mother never had to be told what to do; she just always did what needed to be done. She could take charge in a flash. That great ability of hers won her the coveted title of *the monitor*. We acquired the take-charge skill from her. And, yes, life can be a bit tense at family get-togethers with so many monitors in the house, but somehow we make it through. Rhonda had the privilege of being with Mother until the very end. She was there at 4:17 a.m. on March 2, when the doctor called the time of death. Later she shared with us that right up until the final breath, Mother was still in charge—still giving orders. And we have wondered, suppose God needs a monitor in Heaven?

Nettie Lou Jernigan left us a rich legacy—love, laughter and lessons. Her price truly was far above rubies.

This tribute was written by Nora Hampton, Rhonda Thomas, Debe Taylor and Verla Fletcher—proud daughters of Nettie Jernigan.



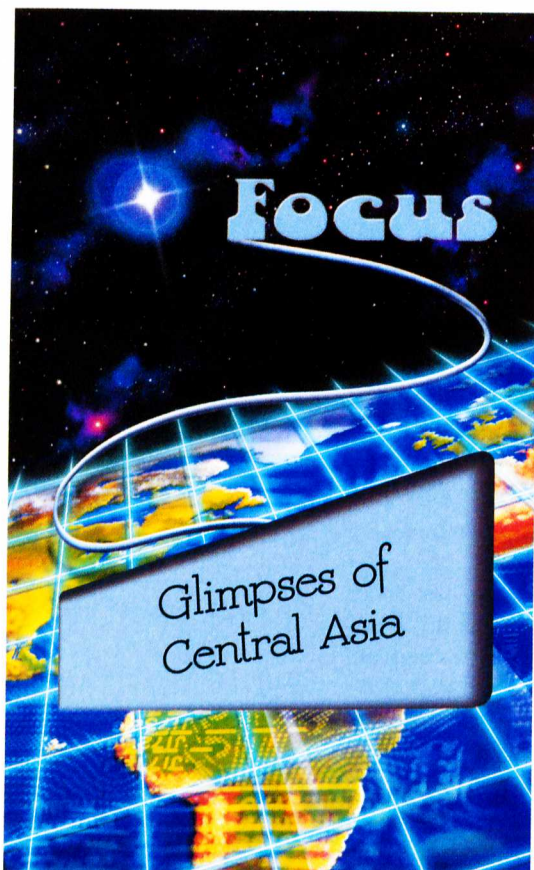
Nettie Lou Jernigan
October 17, 1930–March 2, 2005

DEBE'S DELIGHTS

"thy commandments are my delights."

Psalm 119:143b

Debe Taylor
WNAC President



Pray!

—for political stability within the nation of Kyrgyzstan.

—for Kazakhstan believers who face new governmental restrictions severely limiting religious freedoms.

—for believers who face scrutiny due to the recent Islamic uprising in Uzbekistan.

—for continued freedom of believers to meet publicly in Turkmenistan.

—for prisoner and drug rehabilitation ministries in Tajikistan.

—for the establishment of 7,000 new churches in Central Asia by the year 2015.

—for gospel outreach to 10,000 young people within three years.



FOR ANYONE WHO'S EVER BEEN ON A MISSIONS TRIP, returning home brings a sense of isolation. Armed with albums, loaded with stories, the traveler longs for others to know, to see and feel all she's experienced. And they cannot. They were not there. They can only get glimpses. We asked US women who were *there*, to comment on the recent Sisters Prayer Fellowship, knowing God can use even glimpses to open eyes and hearts to the world.

QUITE AN EXPERIENCE

In April, two teammates and I flew from Geneva, Switzerland to Frankfurt, Germany, where we joined FWB women from the US, traveling together to Almaty, Kazakhstan. These women were a great source of blessing and encouragement (like a little taste of home). We felt honored and privileged to be among them.

The Sisters' conference was wonderful, amazing, humbling, exciting and encouraging. It is quite an experience to meet women who treasure their faith deeply because they have known religious persecution. The church is very much alive in Central Asia. The passion of these women for their Lord is visible on their faces and recognizable in their prayers. A spiritual awakening is sweeping through these countries and God wants to bless you through your involvement. I challenge you to locate these five -STAN countries on a map and begin to pray for the churches in this part of the world.

Dana Portell
FWB missionary to France

OVERWHELMED WITH PURPOSE

"We just want to be able to meet again and have church with our brothers and sisters." These words from a Central Asia sister echoed the cries of many who attended the conference. It was sobering, yet absolutely wonderful to worship with ladies from one closed country. Just five weeks ago, their government permitted them to once again meet in churches. Even now, they cannot evangelize. Prior to the recent ruling, for over five years, they could neither openly fellowship nor worshiped our Father with almost 600 other women joined together in beautiful chorus before the Lord? How satisfying this must have been.

Worshiping here, once again, on my own soil, I'm overwhelmed as I inevitably picture their faces in my mind and recognize my freedom to stand in public before my Lord and with His children.

I'm overwhelmed to see how blessed my American church is, and to internalize the truth that the church of America (you and I) has been blessed to bless others. Make no doubt about it, we have been blessed—not to update our kitchen cabinets according to the latest style and drive the finest \$30K vehicles, but to help our dear brothers and sisters in the Lord and to extend His kingdom around the world. We, the American church, are destined to supply resources, materials, curriculum, Bibles, translations, and missionaries for the ends of the earth.



Other Prayer Concerns



God has purpose in the placement of His people (Acts 17:26). He gives men the power to make wealth (Deuteronomy 8:18). Oh, that we would not get caught up in materialism, satisfying our own menial desires. God has granted us freedom, ease of travel, a widely-spoken language, and very great wealth for a purpose. A purpose much grander and deeper than the temporary excitement of "stuff."

This thought is what has touched me from my recent trip to Central Asia. I want to use my freedom, my resources, and my English language to extend God's kingdom throughout a portion of His world. Will you pray for me in this regard?

Tracy Jennette
Nashville, TN

SISTERS

As I read my invitation to attend the Sisters Prayer Fellowship in Central Asia, I knew that I should go. I had no idea who would be going or how much it would cost; I just knew I needed to be there.

During the conference, we were told to write our name, address, and a prayer request. This information would be exchanged between sisters. Because mine was in English, I thought it would be given to another one of our group. What a joy when an older lady sought me out and showed me a piece of paper—my prayer request! With no translator in sight to help us converse, all I knew to do was to point to my heart and then to hers and say, "Sisters." Believe it or not, she understood. She gave me a hug, started crying and kept repeating, "Sisters. Sisters." What a blessing to know I have a sister in Qaraghandy, Kazakhstan who is praying for me.

Jody Sullivan
Huntington, WV

ONLY PRAISE

I am so very thankful for what my ears heard, eyes saw, and heart felt on our life-changing journey to Kazakhstan. What an amazing trip! Wow. God is so good. I can only praise Him.

Shirley Jackson
St. Peter's MO

BIBLE BOND

Our Great God who accomplishes His plan on a global level, also works in the small desires of our hearts. Before I left on the trip, I prayed that I might bond with a lady from Central Asia and give her my special Bible. I also dreamed of receiving hers, yet I did not want to take an only Bible, preventing her from study of the Word. I asked God if He would do this; He should pick the person, since I didn't want this to be a manmade thing. One morning at the conference, I talked with a woman. We shared prayer requests and exchanged addresses. At almost every break, she came and talked with me. Later that night, as we were leaving, she appeared at our bus. Through our interpreter I learned she wanted me to have her Bible. I, in turn, gave her mine. This was such a special and very humbling moment. A few minutes later, she reappeared, this time giving me her hymn book as well. Ephesians 3:20!

As I thumb through her well-read Bible, noting places she's marked, I feel so privileged. I pray for her and her family and I remember our sweet bond.

Karen Ferguson
Houston, TX

—Pray for International Missions Director James Forlines as he travels August 11-12 to attend the National Association of FWB in Côte d'Ivoire.

—Pray for the continued fruitful ministry of Tom and Nancy Hughes, veteran Brazil missionaries since 1971, as they begin retirement in July.

—Pray for home missionary Roger Raper (CO) as he completes construction on a new church building.

—Pray for Don Bailey (TX) as he leads his mission congregation in a building program on their newly acquired property.

—Pray for chaplains and Christian military personnel as they proclaim the gospel of peace in the midst of conflict.

—Pray for mission churches as they conduct various summer ministries (VBS, camps, retreats) with limited resources and personnel.

—Pray for the persecuted church around the world.

Go—You Gotta Go!

by Bobby Bowen

Ilost a very special friend last September. We had known each other for over thirty-five years. She had struggled with a disease called scleroderma for the last twelve years of her life. It was so very difficult to watch my friend's body slowly being destroyed.

The thing that made Annie so special was her love for missions. She never felt called to go to the mission field full-time, but she did what she could. Her nineteen short-term trips took her all over the world. Her last trip led her to Okinawa just a year before she took the ultimate trip home. She loved to do the jobs nobody else wanted to do. She wasn't a magnificent speaker; she didn't particularly like to work with kids. She would rather drive a nail or paint a wall.

Annie taught me a lot. She taught me to listen and learn. She taught me to love people of all nations. She taught me to sacrifice all to win a few. She taught by example and not by eloquent speech. She was a real missionary.

My best friend, Jody Sullivan, received a letter telling her about an upcoming mission trip to Central Asia. Since we always travel together, Jody felt we both should be involved in this. I wasn't quite so

convinced. Deep down in my heart, I was hoping she would change her mind while there was still time. She was determined, however, and plans were underway to travel to—we had no idea where. Where on God's earth is Kazakhstan anyway?

The day came all too soon when I received a phone call—"Annie won't be with us much longer. You need to come see her." We sat together on the couch, and as my visit drew to a close, I leaned over and told her, "Jody and I have been invited to go to Central Asia." I will never forget the look in her eyes. I watched, and in her mind she left that living room. She was there, on the field once again. She looked at me, and through her tears, she said the words I will never forget—"Oh, go, go, you gotta go!" I would be amiss if I said that I had no more doubts about this trip, but somehow I knew everything was going to be all right.

I was blessed to spend a few of Annie's last hours by her bedside. I watched as she smiled at the sights that only her eyes could see. I knew she would not make it through the night. Again, as my time with her drew to a close, I leaned over and said, "Save me a seat, okay?" With love in her voice for an old

friend, she said with a whisper, "Okay." I left. The phone call came only six hours later. My friend had gone home.

I realize now what I saw in her eyes the night I told her about this trip to Kazakhstan. I saw passion for the work of the Lord. I saw a deep love and compassion for people who don't know Him as their Savior.



Bobby (left) with longtime friend and traveling companion Jody Sullivan.

I saw a longing for the world to be saved.

That's what I hope others see in my eyes since this trip. I want others to see such a passion and deep longing for the work of missions. I want to be the one who says, "Go, go, you gotta go!"

My world-traveler friend's work is over—mine must continue. She went with me, in my heart, to Kazakhstan. I'm not sure whether the Lord lets His saints in Heaven look down upon this earth, but if He does, I'm sure He let her see what was happening in Kazakhstan. She saw the women's prayer conference. She admired the strength and courage of those women who risked their lives just to attend a three-day prayer service. She met with me all of the wonderful people who serve Him in that beautiful country. She knows what this trip did to me.

Someday we'll be together again, and if she's able, she'll save me that seat right next to hers at the banquet table. Then we'll have all of eternity to see the fruits of the prayerful meeting of sisters of Central Asia. We'll be able to watch as the redeemed pour into the portals of Glory as a result of the powerful prayers of His righteous in Central Asia. Then, we'll have all of eternity to catch up on everything else. Yeah, I think eternity will be long enough.

Bobby Bowen serves as WV State WAC secretary. She attends the Prince of Peace FWB Church in Huntington.

Trip videographer for FWB International Missions, Bobby viewed most of the conference from the balcony.



A FIRST-EVER WNAC MISSIONS TRIP

ORIGIN

Early last summer, missionary Lynette Morgan shared with the WNAC office the exciting news that leaders of the Baptist Union within Central Asia wanted to plan a women's meeting (500-700 estimated attendance). Would WNAC help financially? Would WNAC women attend and participate?

FINANCES

This announcement laid the groundwork for the 2004 WNAC 50/50 Project. Delegates at last July's convention voted that each WNAC local group give a suggested donation of \$100—\$50 for the WNAC office (decreasing its deficit) and \$50 for the Central Asian Sisters' Prayer Fellowship (conference cost per woman). Group and individual gifts for Central Asia topped \$20,000 enabling 400+ women to attend the conference.

ATTENDEES

From the onset, WNAC and IM personnel prayed that God would assemble His team. Team members were responsible for raising their own funds and garnering needed prayer support. The assembled group included WAC officers and staff, missionaries, business people, and prospective ministry candidates from seven states. A coinciding vision trip added men (husbands and singles) to the group.

ACTIVITIES

Participation went far beyond the three-day meeting. Team members sang, shared testimonies in churches, conducted two English classes, handed out Bibles, visited believers' homes and toured ministry facilities. They shared in daily prayer meetings, as well as, pre-conference prayer.

Positive response from both Central Asian church leaders and team members themselves suggest that this first-ever WNAC missions trip will probably not be the last.

Greetings from Kazakhstan. My name is Ana. I live in Almaty. I was born here on February 8, 1984.

In a one-day, north-to-south visit (20-30 km) within Almaty, a person can see all my country's climatic regions—from desert valley to snowing peaks. I think Almaty is the most beautiful city in the world.

I praise my Lord; He loves each city. He has blessed my city tremendously. He planted many truly Evangelical churches here. I have attended the First Baptist Church of Almaty from my childhood. I'm a Christian: I repented in the summer Christian camp when I was ten years old.

In my church there are many ministry opportunities available for young people. One of my favorites is the summer camp program. I also enjoy evangelism efforts among our local population, specifically children, youth and students. Every summer my friends and I organize summer camps for unbelievers to bring the good news of the gospel into their lives.

Why do I like these opportunities? Because it is the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ. My favorite Bible verse, Matthew 28:19, says, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations..." God revealed to me that the Great Commission was not only for His disciples, but also personally for me. I have a great passion for serving Jesus on this earth.

A second privilege from God is my work and service for His glory at the Bible Institute for All Nations in Almaty. I'm an interpreter and translator there (from Russian into English). Teachers, professors and instructors train students for pastoral, missionary, music and Sunday school ministry.

In 2004, I also translated for Kazakh students. Instructors from America came to teach and equip them in the Word of God. At the end of October, twenty new pastors from that group graduated and



One Sister in Central Asia

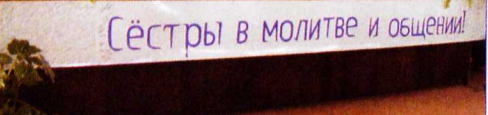
committed their lives to the Lord's ministry.

I have been able to share the Gospel with many friends who are unbelievers. I've also invited these friends to a summer Christian English Camp where they receive knowledge about salvation. Unbelievers are very interested in these camps because they provide students a free chance to practice their English.

This year I will graduate from the University of International Business. Being a Christian in the university is not a very respectable position, but it deepens my faith. My fellow students want to get everything from this life, except Jesus and salvation. This makes me very sad.

"To Show Them Christ," is purpose number one for me and the slogan of my life. I think this should be for every Christian.

Ana once again put her translation skills into practice, helping US women communicate with Central Asians during the Sisters Prayer Fellowship.



WHAT A MEETING! THE SISTERS PRAYER FELLOWSHIP, APRIL 19-21, 2005, drew five hundred eighty women from at least seven nations. They came by plane, by bus, by car and even on foot to Almaty, Kazakhstan. They came without cost, thanks to generous gifts from Women Active for Christ and the sacrificial offerings of churches and missions organizations in Central Asia. They came to pray.

A PRAYERFUL MEETING

*"Prayer is spiritual work, hard labor, a constant and continuing work."
"People whom God uses are people who pray much."
"Can there be any relationship with God without prayer?"*

It began with prayer; it ended with prayer. Women prayed without ceasing. From Tuesday evening until Thursday evening, the focus never wavered. Though a sermon on prayer, a devotion on prayer principles, a drama, music and poems about prayer dotted the program, the main agenda was prayer.

"You are a Sweet Saviour of Christ" served as the conference theme. The fragrance was sweet as the prayers of the saints ascended as incense before the throne of heaven. Hour after hour, request upon request, women cried out to God. Spontaneously, without hesitation, prayers flowed from their lips. Sometimes in small groups, sometimes as a congregation, silently, audibly, women prayed.

For a solid day, they prayed for their nations. A church leader would present the needs of a nation, then reverently standing or kneeling, women would voice those needs in prayer.

Supplications for ministries filled another day. Almost fifty women leaders shared testimonies and concerns, then cast their visions for their particular ministries. From orphanages to leper colonies, rehab centers to radio ministries, each individual's sharing revealed a focus on evangelism and a passion for the lost.

Throughout the conference, women prayed for families, for pastors and for persecuted brothers and sisters. Because communication between regions and nations is limited at best, each request resounded fresh and new.

A TEARFUL MEETING

*"Forgive those who hurt us, forgive those who hurt us, so we can have a clean heart."
"Lord, we don't want any more grief; hear our prayer."
"Let Him speak for us and heal our hearts."*

As the prayers flowed, so did the tears. Tears of repentance, confessing national sins. Tears of anguish, asking God to stop governmental restrictions, fines, imprisonments and beatings waged against believers in some regions. Tears of remembrance, watching the Russian version of *Blood Stain on the Silk Road*, and reliving the sacrifice of one of their own. Tears of concern, sorrowing over the lostness of their leaders and their citizens. Tears of joy, rejoicing that prayers were being answered even as they were spoken.

PICTURED: (clockwise from top center) WNAC group with translators; From Russian to English via radio headsets; Parting a new sister; Central Asia is blooming with fragrant prayers; Prayer groups; Sharing prayer requests; Group Photo 1; Group Retreat Sisters banner; Feeding the multitude; Tables set; Listeners; Giving thanks for the offering; New Coordinator of W





A JOYFUL MEETING

"We have a new sister!"

"I thought it couldn't get any better; then, they brought out the ice cream."

Women experienced the joys of fellowship. Though local groups often share in kingdom efforts, widespread fellowship throughout Central Asia is not the norm. Almost 75% of the women who attended had never been outside their local area. Just the visual reminder that many others share their faith brought encouragement to some. One woman commented, "Never in my fifty years have I seen a meeting like this." No woman had. It was a first.

The seemingly endless supply of soup, bread, and hot tea at meals brought sheer joy to those from areas plagued with food shortages. A single dessert of ice cream cones the last day even gathered mention in the services. A kitchen crew of over sixty kept dishes washed, tables set, vegetables scrubbed and outdoor vats boiling.

The joys of food and fellowship do not eclipse the joys of the harvest. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy," (Psalm 126:5). As WNAC's Executive Secretary-Treasurer spoke on resolving conflict, women listened. One woman named Gulya heard the American leader's invitation to find peace through Jesus Christ. She responded. Through a translator, Mrs. Workman led her through the plan of salvation and prayed with her to receive Christ. The joybells of heaven surely echoed through the mountains of Kazakhstan.

A LIFE-CHANGING MEETING

"When we pray, it isn't God who changes—it's us."

"It's given our women a desire to pray for the nations."

New life, fresh fire, greater vision. These phrases describe recent reports from Central Asia. Women already committed to living and sharing their faith now realize a broader view of God's work in the world. A conference offering (five different currencies totaling \$1000 US dollars) is helping build a house of prayer in a restricted access country. One translator has now become a believer. As a result of the meeting, Baptist Union Women's Fellowships will travel and work to encourage women and establish women's groups.

The seventeen American women who attended experienced life changes as well. These nations now are people. These people now have faces. Each face now tells a story. And stories from the lips of women who value their faith enough to sacrifice are not easily forgotten. Yet, forgetfulness is probably the greatest hindrance to life change. Life change cannot be fully measured within a three-day event. The challenge is to live out the vision—to not forget the meeting in Almaty, but rather to communicate and urge others to give and to stand with these sisters in prayer and fellowship.



rief; Corporate prayer; Young sisters; Glimpse of the crowd; Lynette Morgan gives greetings; Marjorie Workman prays with
Photo 2; Little sisters; Preparing gift bags; Sowing in tears; Ministry leaders share; Kneeling before the throne; Branson
omen's Fellowships.



BEHIND THE SCENES

A LOOK INTO THE LIFE OF A FWB DIRECTOR'S WIFE

**PAM HUNTER
RANDALL HOUSE**



"EVERY LIFE EXPERIENCE in our marriage has led us to the place we are today," says Pam Hunter whose husband Ron serves as Director of Randall House Publications. For Pam, that place is stay-at-home mom in Joelton, TN.

She enjoys reading Christian fiction, decorating her home, watching good family films, researching topics and interacting with people on the Internet.



Michael and Lauren are ready pupils in their home schoolroom.

Though her place is home, her passion is Bible studies. Pam desires to see women learn more and have a closer relationship with God. That passion and desire now have a unique outlet. Pam serves as owner/moderator of a newly formed Yahoo internet group for Free Will Baptist women: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/freewillbaptistwomen/>. This too, came about through life experiences.

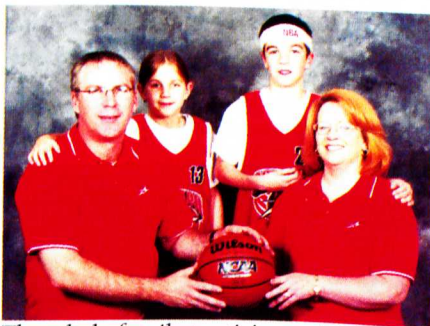
Seven years ago, Pam was diagnosed with fibromyalgia. The disease progressed; she became bedridden. For almost two years, she

was unable to go to church, unable to fulfill ministry roles she had once enjoyed. During this time, she joined an internet support group for fibromyalgia sufferers. There she met and developed a friendship with a FWB woman. Their fellowship fueled a dream for a larger forum, a place where FWB women could interact and find a special bond through their faith. Open to any FWB woman, the group continues to grow weekly.

Pam presently homeschools children Michael (11) and Lauren (10). Her illness influenced this decision. With her husband's travel schedule, and her lack of mobility, this seemed a wonderful option. She will begin her fourth year in the fall.

Teaching is not out of Pam's area. She graduated from FWBBC in 1989 with a Secondary Education Speech and Drama degree. FWBBC is also where she met her husband Ron.

She credits her grandfather for putting the two together. She and Ron dated during her freshman year. However, over that summer, as her grandfather faced death, she decided to transfer to another Christian college in order to be near him. He was promoted to glory on



The whole family participates in their church's Upward Basketball program.



his birthday, a week before classes began. She returned to FWBBC and continued dating Ron. The Hunters were married in 1987.

A lifelong FWB, Pam grew up in the First FWB Church in Dayton, OH. She is the only child of Ohio State FWB Clerk Mike Stokes and his wife Judy. Pam was saved at age seven, but at 17, she really committed her life to Christ at youth camp. She participated in the first two years of Truth and Peace.

Once a pastor's wife, now a director's wife, Pam sees her ministry role as one of support—upholding, encouraging and praying for her husband. She's "at home, holding down the fort, teaching children, while he does the traveling and puts in the hours to serve our people."

The Hunters do travel together when possible. Each child makes a trip with Dad at least once a year. Ron and Pam also value time alone. The family is active in the Donelson FWB Church in Nashville, where Pam sings in the choir and helps coach Upward Basketball. Yes, she's up and going again. Vitamins, supplements, and diet change have contributed to her comeback. Today, Pam says she is 90% healed.

Words FOR WOMEN



Executive Secretary-Treasurer

*Marjorie H.
Workman*

You Prayed; God Answered

Have you ever sensed prayer? A time you could just feel prayer wrapped around you? Without a doubt, you knew people were praying. My recent trip to the Sisters' Prayer Fellowship in Central Asia was one of those times.

Alfred Lord Tennyson said, "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of." How true. Before the trip, I had requested prayer for:

- Good flying weather
- Protection in travel
- Getting through customs without problems
- Strength at the end of the 30-hour trip without sleep and with a full schedule ahead
- Quick acclimation to team members and our Central Asian sisters
- Adjustment to the eleven-hour time change
- The ability to communicate clearly and accurately through a translator the message I had been invited to give.

God is faithful and gives us more than we ask. For instance, the last leg of our flight to Kazakhstan was a six-hour stretch. Desperate for a little sleep after 24 hours of travel, to our amazement, the plane was nearly empty. It was a huge plane with three seats on each side and four or five seats in the middle section. In that middle section, a person could actually lay down. We each claimed a row. It felt so good to stretch out. Thank you, Lord, for a nearly empty plane and a chance to get a little sleep. On the return trip, the plane was full.

Another answer to prayer came in the Thursday session when I spoke. My desire was for God to use me. Many folks were praying for the conference—and for me. My assigned topic was a difficult one, Conflict Resolution. I had no idea what type of conflict to reference. Family? Church? Marriage?

Knowing I would be speaking through a translator added to the difficulty. You can't

say much without stopping for the translation. You have to stay focused in order to complete your thought or story. You must not use slang expressions or idioms. These will not translate to the culture. Oh how I needed God's guidance in preparing for my topic.

I love the surprises God sometimes gives in answering our prayers. One of the neat things the Central Asian women do when a speaker finishes is to pray. Everyone stands (Central Asians always stand or kneel to pray). One by one they begin to pray. As soon as one finishes, another begins. This will continue until the speaker or emcee steps to the mike and begins praying the final prayer. So, it was not surprising when I concluded my message that one by one the women prayed. But it was surprising how much of the message they repeated and asked God's help in applying. Yes! God had heard and answered our prayers—the message had been understood.

He was not finished. As I was leaving the stage, a young woman in the audience said something. The translator said, "She wants to become a believer. Go, take her hand and bring her to the front." We talked and prayed and Gulya invited Jesus into her heart. We now have a new sister in Central Asia.

What a privilege prayer is. God wants us to come to Him and share our hearts. We don't need to worry about saying the right words; the Holy Spirit is there to translate for us. Romans 8:26b says, "...for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

Thank you for praying for the Central Asian Prayer Conference. God heard your prayers. He answered all the above and many more.

Prayer is simply talking to God and listening for His response. What blessings might be eluding you simply because you have not asked?

Fall in Love...Again!

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