

Women challenged to **live the joy of missions**

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During a national WMU missions conference, Jana McKnight (right) of Little Rock, Ark., portrays "Miss Bertha" and Vickey Lloyd of Fayetteville, Ark., plays the part of "Miss Bernice." The duo used comedy to underscore the messages of conference speakers.
(Photo/WMU)

Women challenged to ‘live the joy of missions’

By **Julie Walters**

Woman’s Missionary Union

LITTLE ROCK, Ark.—Women experience the joy God wants for them when they learn to love him with all their being, speakers told participants at the Live the Joy of Missions Conference, sponsored by national Woman’s Missionary Union.

More than 825 women from 35 states and Puerto Rico attended the national event at Immanuel Baptist Church in Little Rock, Ark.



Lorraine Powers, president of Missouri WMU, gets hugs from elementary school students after reading to them as one of the ministry options offered in Little Rock during a national WMU missions conference. (Photo/Charity Gardner)

Andrea Mullins, New Hope publisher, interpreted the theme in each general session by citing a person in the Bible who demonstrated what it means to love God with all of one's heart, soul, strength and mind and to love one's neighbor.

Edna Ellison, speaker and author of *Deeper Still: A Woman's Guide to a Closer Walk with God*, challenged participants to examine their hearts and delve deeper into prayer.

"God calls us to go deeper" in communion with him, Ellison said. She also challenged participants to let revival start with each one them.

"Be prayer warriors, not problem worriers," she stressed. "Won't you dare to let God change the world through you?"

Geoff Hammond, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's North American Mission Board continued the focus on prayer.

"God chooses im-possible situations to demonstrate his power through the prayers of his people," Hammond asserted.

Reaching the 300 million people in the United States for Christ may seem daunting, he acknowledged.



Shelda
Reeves of
Texas WMU
scrubs
bathrooms
at The
Promise
House, a
ministry to
teen girls
with
unplanned
pregnancies,
as one of the
ministry
options in
Little Rock
during the
national
WMU
missions
conference.
(Photo/Bob
Fielding)

Not keeping up with population growth, greater ethnic diversity and a climate that is increasingly religiously pluralistic all pose challenges in reaching the nation for Christ, he said.

“Will God allow us to reach the world but not minister to our own neighbor? No,” Hammond asserted. “North America desperately needs a group of powerful pray-ers to pray for our nation. We must undergird our

work with devout prayer and align ourselves with the principles of God to reach North America.

“I’m praying for a spiritual-awakening and church-planting movement. Nobody knows how to love and pray like godly women. I pray you will leave this meeting praying more.”

Hammond also thanked WMU for helping raise funds in 2007 for the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American missions—a record \$58 million.

Norman Blackaby, co-author of *Called and Accountable: Discovering Your Place in God’s Eternal Purpose*, focused on loving God with all one’s strength. Blackaby stressed the importance of being faithful with all God has entrusted to each person so God’s purposes are fulfilled.

Citing the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30, Blackaby encouraged the women to consider those things entrusted to them—not only financial resources, but also their place of service, burdens on their heart, talents, gifts and relationships.

“God is not only entrusting you with these things, but holding you accountable,” Blackaby said.

“Have you been faithful in the smaller things, like ministering to your community, so that God can entrust you with more, such as giving you a burden for a people group?”

“The true joy of missions comes not from our satisfaction, but because we walk with him and allow him to love others through our life. The challenges in missions are always overcome by joy that comes with living the mission.”

Other keynote speakers included Jill Baughan, author of *Born to Be Wild: Rediscover the Freedom of Fun*; Montira Siengsukon, NAMB field

personnel; Diana Garland, dean of the School of Social Work at Baylor University; and additional missions speakers.

Conference participants spent one afternoon serving in missions and ministries throughout the host city.

Avenues for service included prayerwalking downtown North Little Rock, apartment complexes, fire and police stations, and the state capitol; surveying unchurched areas; visiting nursing homes to give manicures and pray with residents; reading to elementary school children; and helping out in local ministries such as the Ronald McDonald House and the Rice Depot, a food bank ministry.

“Thank you for loving our city,” said Kaye Miller, president of WMU and member of the host church, at the conclusion of the event.

“Missions isn’t an option. The Great Commission is a mandate. We pray that as you leave here, you will go back to your place of service—your mission fields—and love your neighbor.”

A key celebration at the event was the 10th anniversary of Christian Women’s Job Corps.

Since the inception of the program for women in 1997 and Christian men’s Job Corps in 2004, the job-training and life-skills development ministry has grown to more than 190 sites across the nation, with more than 15,000 volunteers who serve 2,100 men and women.

News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Baptist churches, in Texas, the BGCT, the nation and around the world.