

Stories of faithfulness highlight WMU board meeting

January 16, 2024

BIRMINGHAM, Ala.—From Alaska to Maine, nearly 200 missions leaders from across the country gathered on Missionary Ridge in Birmingham for national Woman’s Missionary Union’s board meeting Jan. 6-8.

The board welcomed as members Texas WMU President Jackie Faughn and three other new state WMU presidents: Robin Barden of Alaska, Sandra Hughes of California and Denise Clymer of New Mexico.

‘Christ is enough’

Sandy Wisdom-Martin, executive director of national WMU, said missionary speakers often inspire listeners with story after story of amazing ways they’ve seen God at work in their midst—people coming to Christ and being baptized, dancing on mountaintops of spiritual experiences.

But she recalled a missionary who served 12 years with the Southern Baptist Convention’s International Mission Board who reminded her for every mountaintop, there are usually weeks, months or years when God’s servants are stuck in the valley.

And those years of prayer, tears, rejection and hardship have to be passed through in order to see the grace of God, said Wisdom-Martin, former executive director-treasurer of Texas WMU.

She noted Adoniram Judson, famous missionary to Burma in the 1800s who didn’t have one convert until his seventh year on the mission field.

“Adoniram’s son Edward once said: ‘If you succeed without suffering, it’s

because others suffered before you. If you suffer without succeeding, it's so others may succeed after you,'" Wisdom-Martin said. "You have to get to the point where you believe Christ is enough. He is enough, and he is worthy of every heartache and sacrifice."

Be faithful in the midst of opposition

IMB President Paul Chitwood thanked WMU for being "advocates in prayers for our missionaries," and Kevin Ezell, president of the North American Mission Board, likewise expressed gratitude for the support WMU offers.

Ezell emphasized the urgency of sharing the gospel.

"Time moves at a rapid pace, and we have to make the most of our time, to live in the moment. You see that sense of urgency in the Apostle Paul," Ezell said, citing 1 Corinthians 16:5-9.

"Paul saw opposition as a reason to stay, not an excuse to leave," Ezell said. "He was determined. Let's not get discouraged. Let's not get distracted. We are about the mission. When opposition comes, embrace it, but at the same time understand it and be faithful in the midst of it."

'Ocean of love'

National WMU President Connie Dixon compared God's love to a vast ocean, saying it is long, deep, wide and high.



WMU President Connie Dixon compared God's love to a vast ocean, saying it is long, deep, wide, and high in her address at the January WMU board meeting. (WMU Photo)

"God's love reaches every corner of our experience," she said. "While it cannot be measured by any comprehensible standards, God wants us to know this ocean of love. Like describing an ocean, its total beauty cannot be understood until you see it for yourself. It is the same with God's love. Until you actually experience it and possess the true peace with God, no one can describe its wonders to you.

"We as WMU need to show that kind of love to the world. Our unwavering focus is making disciples of Jesus who live on mission as we seek to help every man, woman and child understand missions and their role in fulfilling the Great Commission."

Veronica Stone serving with IMB and Osvaldo and Vanessa Lerma serving with Send Relief along the Texas border shared ways God is working in their lives and through their ministries.

Participants attended breakout sessions on a variety of topics from age-

level missions discipleship to mental health to communication and leadership skills. Additional opportunities included a walk-through of areas of study in WMU curriculum for 2024-2025, a WorldCrafts shop, tours of the WMU building and artifacts, and health and wellness checks by Baptist Nursing Fellowship.

The WMU Foundation hosted a silent auction and book sale that generated more than \$1,300 in donations for the Missions Camping Endowment and sponsored a station where participants wrote notes of encouragement to WMU/WMU Foundation scholarship recipients.

The board also set the 2024 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering goal at \$205 million and the 2025 Annie Armstrong Easter Offering goal at \$78 million.

The next scheduled WMU board meeting is June 1.