

World Missions Unlimited

Life of Israel

Psalm 37:4-6 (NIV)

Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun.

Life of Christ

Romans 12:1-2 (The Message)

So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life... and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it.

Case Study/Feature Article

Jesus' words in the Great Commission, "Go ye therefore ... and teach all nations" has been the cornerstone of the believers of Second Baptist Church. Established in 1820, our mission was to teach the Bible to all people. Our missions connections have been both near and far. But several years ago we felt that we were not meeting the needs of our changing world. Our women, some of whom didn't grow up as Baptists, began discussing who we are as WMU (Woman's Missionary Union). What is our relevance today?

We knew something had to change. We began to examine what we were saying and how we were meeting the needs of those among us. "We don't want one more thing on our calendars," our women told us. Our lives had become so busy with "things," but deep down we were searching for quality and meaning. Many thought of missions as a heavy burden, not a privilege that comes when we are fully connected to God through our unique gifts. We needed a wake up call to examine who we were and why were we here.

Through the Holy Spirit, a Dream Team began to brainstorm how we might meet the ever-changing and challenging needs around us. This time of discovery showed us that God's power is unlimited; through trusting him, the Spirit can be unleashed. Through prayer, we discovered that God was leading us to change our methods of connecting people.

Our vision, "The World for Christ—Hallelujah" had not changed, but our methods needed to change. Beginning with our name, **World Missions Unlimited**, we made a change to reflect who we are. We wanted everyone to know immediately who and what we were about and to feel a part of the unlimited possibilities around us. Our journey began with a "Launch—Matters of the Heart." We discussed spiritual gifts, and many women began to realize they hadn't connected their gifts with ministry.

We once again experienced the unleashing of the Holy Spirit. Lay-led and staff-supported Missions Initiatives began to call out to us. As an initiative is birthed, a leader often comes forth to share her desire to help. Our congregation is connected as never before. Initiatives have included Mother's Connection, Casserole Ministry, Inspirational Bookworms, Bread of Life, Prayer Shawl Ministry, ESL, Bible Studies, Inner-city Baptist Center work, Bland County Dental Clinic, Creative Hands, and work with students at University of Richmond and Virginia Commonwealth University. Each initiative is as unique as each individual's gift. All initiatives are multigenerational. Every day we see evidence of the fruits these initiatives are bearing.

A young woman new to Richmond was visiting our church and read about the Mother's Connection in our church bulletin. She attended and commented, "This group is an answer to my prayer." The core of **World Missions Unlimited** is about meeting the needs of all people. We achieve this by helping individuals identify their gifts and connecting those gifts with ministries. As this happens, individuals grow in their relationship with Christ.

The journey continues. As a request is voiced, a spiritual gift is revealed in our midst. It is a joyous journey, not a burden. "Now God gives us many kinds of special abilities, but it is the same Holy Spirit who is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service to God, but it is the same Lord we are serving. There are many ways in which God works in our lives, but it is the same God who does the work in and through all of us who are His." 1 Corinthians 12:4-6

Culture Study

After hearing about the missions initiatives of World Missions Unlimited at Second Baptist Church, the women of Fort Trial Baptist Church outside Martinsville wanted to take a new challenge. Becky McKinney, a member at Fort Trial, enlisted the design team from Second Baptist to share their model with the women at her church. As a result, the women of Fort Trial have begun their own initiatives through World Missions Unlimited. The following tells some of their stories:

Recently there was a tragic accident in our community which resulted in a Hispanic family losing a husband and father. Because of **World Mission Unlimited**, we were able to reach beyond language barriers to communicate the love of Christ with a homemade casserole and a knitted teddy bear, using our ordinary, everyday lives to minister in the name of Christ.

The casserole and teddy bear came from two of our World Missions Unlimited groups. The Food for the Soul group baked the casserole. These ladies who enjoy cooking have found a way to live out their passion by making casseroles and desserts for everyone who receives food from our food pantry. Our church secretary, Denise Belcher, often gives the bags of food to those in need in our community. "I can give someone several bags of

canned goods, but when I place that homemade casserole in their hands, they are so touched that someone took the time to make something for them.” The Food for the Soup group has answered the call to feed the physical body as well as the spiritual body.

The Women in the Stitches of Love group created the teddy bear for the child affected by the accident. They have a passion for knitting and a desire to use that passion in ministry to others. As Shirley Scott shares, “I have been so blessed as ladies in our church have come together to knit and crochet. We have knit dishcloths for Habitat for Humanity homes, teddy bears for Citizens Against Family Violence, and hats for children in our schools. It has been such a blessing to be able to do for others, and in the process, our ladies have been ‘knitted’ together through the wonderful relationships we have formed.”

Renee Beach feels called to minister to women and has found a way to live out that calling and passion in a Woman to Woman Bible Study. “We have such a sweet fellowship of women who have a desire to study God’s word and learn how we can be Christ’s presence in the world today. Our time of prayer and study has drawn us closer to Him and each other.”

Susan Johnson, co-developer of World Missions Unlimited, put it so well. Susan is a fourth generation leader in WMU, but she too knew that it could be so much more, and she longed for an organization that would reach out in new and relevant ways. She says that while she greatly values the importance of praying for and learning about missions, “I had done that for so long I thought that was all I had to do, but World Missions Unlimited has taught me that I am a missionary.” We are truly unlimited in what God can do through us as we use our God given spiritual gifts and passions.

Now we are doing for other churches what Second Baptist did for us. Women from Fort Trial have felt the call on their lives to help other churches experience the revitalization and excitement that we have found through World Missions Unlimited. They have become a letter that has been read across our state, “...a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.” 2 Corinthians 3:3

Involvement

Are all the members of your church actively involved in missions and ministry? Evaluate the types of missions efforts going on in your church. See who is involved. It’s time to get others excited and motivated. Using the World Missions Unlimited model, your church can unleash the Holy Spirit as people discover their gifts and passions and connect them with ministries. For more information about World Missions Unlimited, contact WMU of Virginia at 1-804-915-5000 or 1-800-ALL-BGAV.

Commitment

Have the stories in this article stirred something within you? Are you looking for a way to become personally involved in missions? What are your gifts? Are you using them in ministry? Today, right now, commit yourself to discovering your passion. Get on the road to finding the exciting work God has for you to do—then start doing it!

Myths and Facts about World Missions Unlimited

Excited about a faith that is more than Sunday morning attire? Wanting a connection with others who have similar interests? World Missions Unlimited can provide a vehicle for you to discover your spiritual gifts and passion and use those gifts to serve God in your community. A process that affirms gifts from all generations, denominations and cultures, World Missions Unlimited offers boundless possibilities. Throughout Virginia and now Capetown, South Africa, believers are finding their passions and channeling their energies for the Kingdom.

Heritage Matters

Woman's Missionary Union has a rich history of leading in missions and is growing in ways that will bless the future, not define it. Rejecting the notion that WMU is defined by what was, they want to shape the future. Believers seek resources that teach missions, not promotions and are excited about an organization owned by women and run by women.

The World is Chaordic*

Fact: People are seeking wisdom and understanding in today's world where life's questions seemingly go unanswered. Order and civility are in, control is out. Believers are excited about finding a faith that is more than Sunday attire and reject man-made truths that are not truths at all. Christ-Followers want help in balancing their lives, finding peace, and discovering meaning.

Spiritual Hunger Abounds

People in the pew are looking for a way to feed their souls and experience a deeper relationship with God. Connecting with others who have the same spiritual longings excites them and this spiritual hunger is emerging from the church pew and the marketplace as a laity movement. They reject surface talk and superstar Christians and want authenticity.

The Search Is On

Fact: Believers are searching for a community of authentic faith which crosses generations, denominations, and cultures. Their motivation is not defined by worship styles or traditional mission connections but is ecumenical, multicultural,

and non-hierarchical. They are excited about discovering their spiritual gifts and desire a trusted presence in the midst of the process.

Linking Is In & Other Matters

Linking is not about meeting together but about connecting hearts. People want to establish meaningful relationships and be a part of life-changing experiences. They want to make a difference in the world and most enjoy doing it together. They desire ministry connections and become excited by small groups and cross-cultural friendships. People reject being placed in a group or seemingly forced to “be a member.”

There Is No Shortage of Leadership

Leaders must be approached, tapping passions and challenging the engagement of spiritual gifts and skills. Leadership is not bestowed or gained through systemic structures but is surrendering, learning, and activating one’s faith through actions of servanthood. Leaders are excited to find a place to lead when they are allowed to lead from their gifts and passions, and reject the guilt induced by placement in positions by default.

Names Matter

Names convey an image and description of who we are, and they should elicit a response of inclusion rather than exclusion. WMU can be Rekindled, Recreated, and Rejuvenated yet be true to its original purpose and core values.

*Chaordic – patterned in a way dominated by neither chaos or order.