



## **REPORT TO FELLOWSHIP COUNCIL JANUARY 2007**

We praise God for using the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches to advance His Kingdom during the past year as churches were planted, missionaries were sent, and people came to faith in Christ. Women of Grace USA is privileged to be a part of the FGBC and co-workers with you, and we appreciate this opportunity to report on this ministry.

The mission of Women of Grace USA (WGUSA) is to challenge Grace Brethren women to be radically in love with Christ and actively engaged in God's mission to reconcile a lost world to Himself. Everything we do revolves around six core values:

- Depending on God's Word
- Seeking God in prayer
- Sharing God's message
- Mentoring women and girls
- Training emerging leaders, and
- Pursuing real relationships

By integrating these values throughout a women's ministry, women will be mobilized and equipped to use their gifts in serving their local church and community, and influencing their world for Christ, which is the essence of the Grow/Go/Lead Vision of the FGBC.

For several years we have been evaluating our organization to determine how we can most effectively accomplish this mission. How can we connect with, influence, and challenge Grace Brethren women of all ages? **We concluded that we must reshape ourselves from an organization of women's missions groups, to be**

- **A resource** to help women's ministries achieve their purpose, and
- **A network** of women in Grace Brethren churches; thus being
- **a partner** with the local church in fulfilling its mission.

To facilitate this change, we have rewritten our bylaws to include these key points:

- Changing to a board of directors form of governance
- Individual membership in WGUSA to be based on a minimum \$10 per year contribution to WGUSA and affiliation with a Grace Brethren church, not on membership or participation in any group
- Board members will be drawn from the membership of WGUSA, thus opening the door to enlist board members from across the FGBC, not limited to certain groups

Existing Women of Grace groups, both on the local and district level, will continue to function, send in an annual report, and be involved in missions through missions awareness and education, prayer support, and financial gifts to Women of Grace missions projects.

Of the six core values of WGUSA, three are especially relevant to the vision of the FGBC: Mission, Mentoring and Leadership Development. These are supported and developed by the major resources and ministry opportunities of Women of Grace USA.

## MISSION

In cooperation with GBIM, GBNAM and CE National, **Women's Ministry Teams** provide opportunities for hands-on involvement in ministries worldwide. Due to an overwhelming response, it was possible to send 2 teams to the Central African Republic in June 2006. Each team of 10 women spent 2 weeks working primarily with the orphan children and the widows who care for them under Project Hope and Charité. The March 2007 team will connect with women in Prague, Czech Republic.

The annual magazine, **Women's Spectrum**, includes testimonies and articles by women who are influencing their friends and neighbors for Christ, as well as news about opportunities for personal, financial and prayerful involvement in missions. It provides a connection with Grace Brethren women around the world, and informs women who are new to Grace Brethren churches about the ministries of the FGBC. Response to the magazine has been 100% positive, and we anticipate an even greater response this year as a result of more aggressive promotion and easy ordering options. **Truth Makes a Difference** will be the theme of the 2007-2008 *Women's Spectrum*.

Helping qualified Grace College women to consider a missions/ministry career by participation on short-term missions teams is the purpose of WGUSA's **Honor Her Scholarship Fund**. The 2006 scholarship recipient, Sarah Dompier from Eagle River, Alaska, traveled with a GO team to the Philippines last summer.

**Prayer and Giving.** Intercessory prayer for God's purposes to be accomplished around the world is a hallmark of the ministry of WGUSA, as well as one of its core values. Women pray for missionaries featured in *Women's Spectrum* and in the WCI Prayer Hotline, and for missionaries and ministries supported by their own churches. And in the fiscal year 2005-2006, women gave more than \$45,000.00 to ministries such as

- Latin American Church Planters' Summit;
- San Francisco and House Church Interact: LCD projectors;
- Grace Schools: renovation of Alpha Hall Lobby;
- Sponsoring SMM;
- Women of Grace USA;
- and many more projects that help new church plants and other ministries.

## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND MENTORING

Of all our core values, and of all the programs and helps for leadership development that we might provide for women, Women of Grace USA is convinced that the one core value with the greatest potential for impact on the future of women's ministries, and the development of future leaders in the church as a whole, is a strong focus on mentoring, woman to woman, and woman to girl. When you, as a church leader, analyze who the major influencers are in the lives of your church's future leaders, you will discover that at least half of them are women. It is crucial that women – who are mothers, grandmothers, Sunday School teachers, children's church leaders – be trained in practical theology and godly living, and that they be committed to passing on those values to the next generation (Titus 2:3-5). Women of Grace USA is focusing on two areas where this training is taking place:

**Women's Leadership Summit 2006.** About 30 women gathered in Syracuse, Indiana, last October for "a yearly gathering ideas", interaction and encouragement in women's ministry. Using the theme, "One Vision, Many Voices," women were encouraged to evaluate the voices clamoring for our attention, then focus on the right messages and how to convey those messages to other women. Summit 2007 will be held in the Eastern region, Lord willing, so women from churches in the East will be able to attend.

**SMM.** Perhaps the most exciting aspect of WGUSA this year has been to watch, encourage and support the revitalization of the SMM program for girls. God has put in place a cabinet of 4 women who are passionate about reaching girls and who have the vision and commitment to do what it takes to make Titus 2:3-5 a reality in Grace Brethren churches.

We believe it is important to invest in girls because:

1. Our society is teaching girls that they can do anything a man can do and should fight gender discrimination. As a result, girls are more and more confused about their role in the church. We need to help women understand God's plan for them as women, to decrease the conflicts that will develop from such perspectives.
2. Women (moms, teachers, etc.) are the prime influencers of the next generation during the crucial time when their spiritual interest and awareness are developing (a child is developing a concept of who God is by age 2; by age 9 the moral foundations are in place; by age 13 a person has pretty much decided what they will believe)
3. Women are clearly instructed in Titus to teach younger women some very important values. We believe that those values should be instilled when they are young.

**"It's easier to build a girl than to repair a woman."**

What we are doing about it:

1. Writing new curriculum for upper elementary grades that will be flexible and can be used in any cultural setting. The main thrust at this level is to provide a basic overview of the Bible and a foundation for character development. Training includes teambuilding experiences to help them learn to work together as the body of Christ.
2. Adding a junior high and senior high curriculum called *Girls of Faith*. The curriculum is designed to help them identify the lies the world is trying to get them to believe, and helping them see the truth of who God is and what He offers. This curriculum, too, is designed to be adapted to any cultural setting, and can be used in a group or for one-on-one mentoring.
3. Field testing curriculum for grades 5 and 9 this year, and writing materials for grades 4 and 10.
4. Developing a model for ongoing leader training through regional coaches and periodic "small group" gatherings of area leaders to provide encouragement and accountability. The goal will be to help leaders understand the mentoring process and use their own relationship with God to present Him clearly and authentically to their girls. The training will also help leaders apply in their own lives the core values of WGUSA, which SMM has also adopted: God's Word, Prayer, Mission, Mentoring, Leadership Development and Community. We will prepare leaders to identify the needs of the girls they work with and adapt the curriculum to meet those needs. We also want to offer resources and consultants to help leaders deal effectively with the challenges of dealing with the issues girls face in our troubled society.

For more information on the SMM program, go to <http://www.wgusa.org/discipleship.html> or send an email to [nationalsmm@kconline.com](mailto:nationalsmm@kconline.com).

## **CHALLENGES**

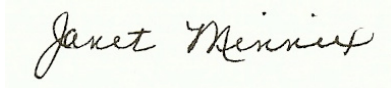
This is an exciting time for Women of Grace USA. God continues to bless as we walk through major changes and open doors. Every opportunity brings challenges, and we appreciate your prayers that we will have God's wisdom and provision for every step. As with every other ministry, finances are an area of challenge for WGUSA. We are deeply

grateful to the Grace Brethren Investment Foundation, whose generous gifts to Women of Grace have enabled us to move forward in ways that would never have been otherwise possible. We continue to evaluate our financial resources, believing that future and continued growth will require that a future Director and other essential staff receive compensation, rather than serving totally on a volunteer basis. A second area of challenge is discovering qualified women to fill the positions on the new Leadership Board. And finally, we need wisdom to know when and how to expand our resources. Our goal is not to duplicate the excellent materials for women's ministries that already exist and which we are happy to recommend, but to consider possibilities such as publishing our biannual newsletter and the magazine more often. Our web site, [www.wgusa.org](http://www.wgusa.org), has been redesigned with a long range goal of being a resource and interactive place where women can exchange ideas and helps. And we are looking at developing a packet of resources to help church planters' wives and other women in new churches who desire to start a ministry for women.

### **THANK YOU**

On behalf of the Leadership Team of Women of Grace USA and the cabinet of SMM, I want to thank each member of Fellowship Council for your encouragement and support of these ministries. It is a privilege to partner with you in Kingdom work. Our special thanks goes to Tom Avey for your tireless work of keeping the FGBC connected, growing, and celebrating what God is doing.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Janet Minnix". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored, slightly textured background.

Janet Minnix, President  
Women of Grace USA