



## REPORT TO FELLOWSHIP COUNCIL JANUARY 2008

God has used the churches and ministries of the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches in marvelous ways during the past year to plant new churches, send missionaries, and minister to hurting and needy people. As a result, lives were changed by the power of the Gospel. Women of Grace USA is privileged to be a part of the FGBC family and co-workers with you, and we appreciate the opportunity to report on this ministry.

### WHY A WOMEN'S MINISTRY?

Why is a women's ministry beneficial to the local church? Today's women, who are constantly bombarded with humanistic philosophies, need safe places where they will learn to walk with Christ and find answers in His Word, and where they will be equipped to share their faith and challenged to make ministry and service a way of life. Women of Grace USA endeavors to help the local church to not only meet women's needs but also fulfill its overall mission by serving as a resource to help women's ministries and a way to network with women in other Grace Brethren churches.

*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 the core values of **God's Word, Prayer, Mission, Mentoring, Leadership Development, and Community.** By integrating these values throughout a women's ministry, women will be equipped to use their gifts and mobilized to serve and minister in their local church, neighborhood, and their world.

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

**Women's Ministry Teams.** In cooperation with Grace Brethren International Missions, a team to Prague, Czech Republic in March 2007 ministered at a women's conference, presented a seminar on Women in Business at the Economic University, and celebrated a three-fold communion with believers in Prague. In June 2008, a team of educators will participate in a cultural/language teaching exchange with English-as-a-foreign-language teachers in Paris.

The ***Honor Her Scholarship*** helps Grace College women who are considering a missions/ministry career to participate on short-term missions teams. The three 2007 recipients were a part of the GO Grace team to the Philippines.

**Prayer and Giving.** Women are encouraged to pray for missionary requests provided in *Women's Spectrum* and the WCI Prayer Hotline, and for missionaries and ministries supported by their own churches. In the fiscal year 2006-2007, women gave close to \$35,000.00 to ministries such as

- GBIM's Missionary Residence renovation (over \$11,000);
- Native New Life Church, Albuquerque, NM;
- Bibles for Czech Republic;

- Sponsoring SMM;
- Women of Grace USA;
- and many more projects for new church plants and other ministries.

### **Ministry Highlight: Martinsburg, PA**

Martinsburg, PA, is one place where Women of Grace is making a difference in the community and in the church. A warm welcome, a furnished play area and nutritional treats for children, and a lending library of books on marriage and parenting are a part of their ministry to the more than 270 family units who receive WIC (Women, Infants, Children) assistance through the Home Nursing Agency in the church facility each month. Other ministries under the umbrella of Women of Grace include MOPS, Moms In Touch, weekly Bible studies, First Place weight loss program, and various encouragement ministries. Coordinator Betty Horner reports, "Many doors of opportunity have opened up and we are trying to keep up with what God appears to be leading us to do...God is working in a special way as we become 'radically in love with Christ and engaged in reaching the lost'."

## **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND MENTORING**

**Women's Leadership Summit 2007.** "This gives me new energy and focus," commented one of the 40+ women from Ohio, Pennsylvania and Virginia who spent an October weekend in Reading, Pennsylvania, discussing the joys and challenges of ministering to women. Participants heard speaker Donna Seyfert address the practical aspects of how to seek wisdom, the cost of leadership, finding a balance, and building ministry potential. Chery Boehm guided roundtable conversations for evaluation and idea sharing, and Dr. Christy Morr of Grace Seminary led a discussion on spiritual formation principles that affect the ability to build healthy relationships. The 2008 Women's Leadership Summit is planned for October 24-26 in Reading.

**Women's Day at Equip07.** Feedback was positive about the Wednesday seminars, as well as to the classes offered in the Women's Track. Over 80 women attended the Women's Day seminars. Topics included *Hope for Moms with Broken Hearts*, *What's Happening in Women's Ministries*, *Getting To Know Our Missionaries*, *Discipling Women to Serve*, and *Why Girls Need Theology: How knowing God affects their future*.

**Additional opportunities.** Seminars and presentations were led by members of the WGUSA Leadership Team at district women's events in Northern Atlantic, Mid-Atlantic, West Penn and Northeastern Ohio during the Fall months.

**SMM.** One of the most exciting aspects of WGUSA is the privilege of encouraging and supporting the SMM program for girls. Repeating what I wrote last year, we believe it is important to invest in girls because:

1. Our society teaches 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 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."*

Viki Rife, Director of Girls' Ministries, reports on SMM:

This has been a year of prayerful evaluation of the direction God would have us go with SMM. We were thrilled to bring onto the Cabinet two additional women who have excellent qualifications and a passion to match the rest of the Cabinet. The Cabinet consists of Nicole Miller, Katiera Pfeister, Jamie Bisesi, Amy Miller, Kirsten James and Viki Rife. Dr. Christy Morr of Grace Seminary serves as an advisor.

In addition to curriculum development (we are currently field testing new curriculum for grades 4, 5 and 9) we have spent much of the year seeking to identify the needs of our churches for a ministry to train girls. We are discovering that it is definitely a felt need, not only in our churches but in other denominations as well.

The junior and senior high ministry, called Girls of Faith to differentiate it from the elementary SMM ministry, is designed to help girls identify the lies the world is trying to get them to believe, and see the truth of who God is and what He offers. This curriculum is designed to be adapted to any cultural setting, and can be used in a group or for one-on-one mentoring. Girls of Faith now has its own newsletter, Connect Her.

The greatest challenges are in the area of leader training. We are in the process of developing a five-year plan to identify potential leaders and help prepare them to connect the girls with Christ. We also have initiated dialog with the Grace Brethren Boys ministry to find ways we can work together to meet the needs of local churches.

For more information on SMM go to <http://nationalsmm.org/> or contact [nationalsmm@kconline.com](mailto:nationalsmm@kconline.com).

## RESOURCES

The annual magazine for all Grace Brethren women, *Women's Spectrum*, offers practical biblical encouragement and inspiration, and promotes community, cross-generational relationships, global vision and the application of biblical theology to daily life. Contents include articles by and about Grace Brethren women around the world who are influencing their friends and neighbors for Christ, plus news about opportunities for personal, financial and prayer involvement in missions. Women who are new to Grace Brethren churches benefit from insights into the ministries of the FGBC. **Truth Makes a Difference** is the 2007-2008 theme of the magazine; **Transformed by Grace** will be the 2008-2009 focus.

The WGUSA website, <http://www.wgusa.org/>, attracts users from around the world, including Grace Brethren mission fields. *Women's InfoLine*, our semi-annual newsletter, is mailed to over 800 Grace Brethren women and is posted on our website.

## CHALLENGES

### Finances

As with every other ministry, finances are an area of challenge for WGUSA. We cannot adequately express our deep appreciation to the Grace Brethren Investment Foundation, whose generous contributions to Women of Grace USA have made it possible for us to move forward in ways that otherwise would never have been possible. We thank God for their investment in this ministry. We continue to evaluate our financial resources, and are praying for wisdom in seeking additional sources of funding that will enable us to develop more resources, and to compensate essential staff and leaders rather than operating as a volunteer organization.

Although SMM functions under the umbrella of WGUSA, it relies entirely on designated offerings from women and girls, and occasional contributions, for its financial support. We pray that God will raise up individuals who recognize the importance of this ministry and will contribute to its operation.

### **Seeking new board members**

In 2007, new bylaws were adopted which include these key points:

- A board of directors form of governance and new organizational structure
- Individual membership in WGUSA based on a minimum \$10 per year contribution to WGUSA, and affiliation with a Grace Brethren church
- 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 Women of Grace groups

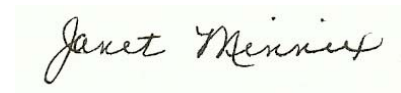
We are now seeking qualified women of vision to serve on the new board, women who love Jesus, are passionate about equipping and mobilizing women for ministry, and are committed to the mission and values of WGUSA. Specifically we are looking for women with experience and a heart for the following areas: Development and Public Relations (to assist us in seeking additional sources of funding), Mission, Mentoring, and Leadership Development.

As pastors and leaders from around the FGBC, you have contact with qualified women in your districts and regions whom we may not know. We welcome your recommendations.

### **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 background.

Janet Minnix, President  
Women of Grace USA