

Founders' Days of Prayer 2021

Day 1

Women in trauma

Baloté Amalo

Her father sang songs while doing his farm chores. After hearing them over the years, Baloté Amalo, as a young woman, came to believe in Christ as her Saviour. She was born in southern Ethiopia in 1917. She attended a local church there and also literacy classes.

Baloté was among 21 young Christian women chosen to be a part of an initial two-month learning programme for young Wolaitta women in 1946. After the training, the women began teaching what they had learned back in their home districts. A couple years later, Baloté helped to organise the Wolaitta Christian Women's Association. The vision was to provide teaching and fellowship for women, using crafts to bring them together and provide a way to earn some money. Annual Bible conferences at the SIM centre at Soddo and throughout the Wolaitta districts usually included a missionary challenge, and as a result, many women volunteered to spread the gospel beyond Wolaitta.

Baloté and her husband, Amoché, with their son, Dästa, traveled to Yala, Gafa by donkey in 1954. There they worked in literacy and taught handcrafts to women. Within a year, new believers built a house of prayer. Sadly, during a trip to report on their work at the annual Bible conference in Soddo, bandits murdered Amoché.

Should Baloté continue following her missionary calling, or return home to Wolaitta? She made her decision, remembering it was God who had called her. She continued her work there for seven more years. She and Dästa traveled throughout the area, sometimes for two months at a time, teaching Bible, literacy and crafts. They had no home but depended on the hospitality of others during their travels.

When she returned to Wolaitta in 1962, she assisted in coordinating the women's ministry within the Wolaitta Kale Heywet Church. Her faithful years of service were recognised by the Wolaitta Church Council.

Information for this story came from Supplement 8.1 by Dr. E. Paul Balisky in *By Prayer to the Nations: A Short History of SIM*.

Prayers

The LORD is known by his justice . . . the needy will not always be forgotten, nor the hope of the afflicted ever perish. Psalm 9:16a, 18

We praise you, our Father, that just as you saw Hagar in her distress in the desert, you see the agony of afflicted women today. You see the desperation as some women leave all they've known and owned to flee for safety in another country. You see the terror of those who cannot escape. You perceive the fading hope of a mother raising her children in a refugee camp. You are never oblivious to the pain of women who experience physical and emotional abuse daily. Your eyes do not miss the women trafficked for a few pieces of silver. Father, have mercy!

We pray for your kingdom's righteous reign to come and your will to be done in _____ (a country for which you're burdened) to the end that women are cared for as treasured creations who bear your image.

We pray you will make your presence known to _____ (name women you know) and meet their physical, emotional, mental and spiritual needs in a way that honours your name.

Father, sensitise us to ways that we may treat the contributions of women lightly and direct us in how to look not only to our own interests, but to the interests of the women around us. In humility, help us to consider others better than ourselves.

Day 2

Young Girls

Elizabeth Bowen Thompson

Elizabeth Bowen Thompson gave her life to evangelising Syrian women and in so doing, founded *The Society for the Social and Religious Improvement of Syrian Females* in 1860. After several mergers and new names, the mission was known as the Lebanon Evangelical Mission and eventually became a part of the Middle East Christian Outreach (MECO) and then SIM.

Elizabeth was in her later thirties when she married Dr. James Bowen Thompson, a Scottish missionary who had founded the British Syria Hospital in Damascus. She went with him back to Syria where she began a work with women, teaching them skills and caring for their needs. After James died of a fever, Elizabeth returned to London. There she engaged in full-time mission work with widows and orphans of British soldiers killed in the Indian Revolution. She soon founded The Bible Women Mission Society whose mission was to elevate women living in the slums by equipping them with Bibles and sending them back home to share the gospel.

When Elizabeth went to Beirut in 1860 intending to do relief work, she saw the need for education among women and girls and began an entirely new work in the war-ravaged area of Lebanon. Her first school began with evening classes held in a hotel room. Her work progressed successfully in spite of great difficulties. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit was evident, and Elizabeth never wavered from her determination to make known the Word of God.

When Elizabeth Bowen Thompson died nine years later, she left behind 23 well-established schools in nine centres. The Training College in Beirut had significant influence on the development of female education in the region for more than a century. It has been said that the key to her success was firm consistency and a “single eye” to sharing the gospel.

Prayers

Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” Matthew 19:14

Lord Jesus, thank you for the way you modeled value and care for children. As people who bear your name, we, too, want to demonstrate the worth of each child, uniquely fashioned for your purposes. We grieve the mistreatment and exploitation of children.

We grieve when young girls do not have access to healthcare and education. We wish now for what Isaiah foretold: All your children will be taught by the Lord and great will be their peace.

We boldly pray in your name, Jesus, that child trafficking will be stopped, children undergoing the trauma of war, famine, strife in the home, and abuse would experience healing through your blood-bought redemption.

Make your name known to children all over the world. We pray that _____ (name children for whom you are concerned) will experience your Father's love, peace and joy.

Guard us from ever causing a child who believes in you to stumble. Give us insight in how to nurture and bless children so that they flourish as your disciples, always remembering that we must become like little children to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Day 3

Women in Mission

Mary Haas

Not many can look back and credit a softball game for their years in mission service. Mary Haas grew up wanting to be a missionary, but various obstacles stood in her way. Eventually, as a candidate with SIM, she went through the usual physical exam to determine her ability to survive in the tropics. The doctor concluded her lungs were not strong enough. Later that same day, the candidates played a rigorous softball game against Council members. Mary played well, being her usual self—loud and full of pep. The Council quickly concluded that there was nothing wrong with her lungs and she could go to Africa.

Mary spent 43 years in Nigeria, working as a medical dispenser, delivering babies, and ministering to pastors, women's groups, and children. She supervised the construction of 40 buildings and pioneered Bible classes in government schools. She survived several near-death experiences, confronting a leopard as well as narrowly escaping being trampled by elephants.

When she needed a truck for her work, she found them scarce due to the war. While back in the US, she boldly contacted business magnate, Henry Ford, founder of the Ford Motor Company. He answered the phone when she called and helped her obtain a new Ford truck, which she shipped to Nigeria. Another time when back in the US, Mary went to the taping of a TV show, *Queen for a Day*. She was chosen one of four finalists among 200 women in the audience. Her request was for a mimeograph machine and a 1,000-watt generator. The applause metre for Mary hit the highest point possible, and she was crowned queen for that day. The two items served her work in Africa for many years.

Mary Haas was a woman of deep faith, determination and tenacity. She served God in hard situations, using her courage and wit. Only God knows the number of those in his kingdom because of a softball game many years ago!

Information for this story was taken from *Queen with a Pure White Crown* by Ruth Jacobson, and *Queen for Many Days* by Cheryl Ely, published in *Intercom*, 1999.

Prayers

The angel said to the women . . . go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' . . . "So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Matthew 28:5-8 (portions)

Father, you graced devoted women to be the first *good news* proclaimers of your Son's resurrection. We thank you that since that day, you have called millions of women to make your gospel known in families, neighbourhoods, and far-off communities around the world. Thank you for the many women in mission, who have been or are today, active in making disciples among communities where you are least known.

We pray that your name will be hallowed wherever they serve, as by your Holy Spirit, in word and deed, they prove your existence and reveal your character.

We pray for _____ (name missional women) to have strength to persevere, joy through trials, wisdom and understanding, and a profound sense of your presence and unfailing love.

We ask that you help every woman in SIM to consistently abide in you. Give them the joy of much fruitfulness as they make disciples who will make disciples, until you are made known in every community who lives and dies without your good news.