



Hannah's Heartbeat

volume 18, number 1

touching hearts, instilling hope

WEST AFRICA:

Crisis, Community and Culture Change

The Ebola epidemic fixed the attention of the world on West Africa in 2014. As fragile, already insufficient health-care systems began collapsing under the weight of the crisis, it became apparent this was just the start of increasing health challenges for the region. For example, managing treatment and prevention for Ebola made managing malaria prevention nearly impossible. This is no small matter in West Africa, where the number of malaria deaths (about 20,000 out of 6.6 million cases) in 2013 was nearly triple the number of Ebola deaths during the 2014 outbreak. In fact, malaria deaths alone in 2013 exceeded the total number of Ebola cases (about 19,000) through Dec. 19 of the 2014 outbreak.

On top of the health crises, poverty rates across West Africa are overwhelming. Violence against women is common. And approximately one in every three children grows up without receiving an education. It seems easy to conclude

that there's no way to intervene in this vast area of the world and offer hope to its overburdened people.

But nothing could be further from the truth. HOPE is alive and well across West Africa, and Project Hannah's radio programs and prayer ministry are just two of the ways that God's Kingdom is expanding, woman by woman. As a Malian pastor says of the *Women of Hope* program, "It's really meeting the needs that we have here right now. The difficulties that we have in our country and around us right now, this program is meeting exactly those problems and difficulties." He continued, "In many countries, you can buy books and find [help], especially in health issues. Here we don't have those things available as much."

But even if books were available, literacy rates across West Africa are very low. And neither commercial nor governmental infrastructure allow for written material to be distributed easily. That's why what the pastor said next is

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so crucial: “There are not very many women who are able to buy books and read them to get that kind of advice, so radio is meeting a real need for us, especially here. Women [here] listen to the radio very much. There are a lot of women who will listen to [a program designed for women] and actually get the help that they need.”

Radio made it possible to quickly reach out to those threatened by Ebola simply by placing informational spots in French-language *Women of Hope* programs already being aired across West Africa. And prayer made it possible for the global faith community to reach out by lifting the myriad situations up to God.

Similarly, the community of Project Hannah prayer groups plays a central role in sustaining hope for the women who

meet together across West Africa. They appear to have nothing: no education, no status in society, no means of providing income. But they have each other. As they gather, they carry one another’s burdens, much as they carry their babies on their backs. The prayer gatherings and the words over the radio waves are not just crisis intervention but the catalyst for culture change. The very fabric of societies changes to reflect the glory of God as he changes the hearts of women who then raise their children to follow him.

So let each of us carry the spiritual and physical needs of the women of West Africa before God’s throne of grace with confidence, fixing our eyes on the One who perfects both their faith and ours rather than focusing on the many circumstances we could not overcome without the Lord.

THE MIDDLE EAST:

Hope Amid Conflict

In a historic development, the Arabic version of Project Hannah’s flagship program *Women of Hope* is being aired in prime time on a popular FM station in the heart of the Middle East.

Starting in November 2014, a widely heard station in Lebanon began broadcasting *Laki Raja*, which is the Arabic name of *Women of Hope*, at no charge. The broadcasts reach listeners in that country as well as in Syria and Palestine.

“This is a new initiative in TWR’s history,” reported TWR’s Arabic Ministry director, whose name is withheld for security reasons. “With many Syrian and Iraqi refugees in Lebanon, this comes as an amazing opportunity to share the Gospel with the women who have lost their homes, husbands, and sometimes children, too, and who are in desperate need of hearing a message of hope!”

There couldn’t be a better time to launch the program in Lebanon, according to Marli Spieker, the founder and global director of Project Hannah. “All our collective prayers and the hard work are paying off in God’s perfect timing!” Spieker said. “We bow before our God in awe of his faithfulness and grace as he takes our feeble efforts and uses Project Hannah and those of you who have devoted your time, resources and passion to convey his grace and salvation to women in that vast and troubled region.”

Response has been encouraging from listeners of the new broadcasts in Lebanon, as well as from audiences of TWR’s existing Arabic programming on the Internet and over

broadcast transmitters located outside the region. On the first day of the new broadcasts, the Arabic Ministry director said, people began using phone calls, WhatsApp text messages and Facebook to interact about the program.

“And more than 90 percent of the followers and correspondents are non-Christian people, both men and women!” he wrote by email. “Praise God! Women are listening to the episode on Facebook and are sharing their comments. Some write private emails to ask theological questions about God and Jesus and to share their sad stories and struggles. The harvest is plentiful!!”

The *Laki Raja* Facebook page was unveiled in 2012 and since a promotional campaign last summer has seen a surge to more than 25,000 likes.



Article reprinted from twr.org. Read more at twr.org about how God is using radio to reach people in difficult circumstances.



Only God's Grace Will Do

The women we serve have taught me many precious lessons. Listening to their stories, I often feel I am standing on "holy ground." Their pain is immensely greater than mine. Their presence, impregnated with God's sustaining power and hope, inspires me to keep faithful to God's calling in my life: to never give up, to stand the test, to embrace courage, to dare to believe in the impossible, to endure the unendurable — that's when only God's grace will do.

When God speaks the pungent language of suffering in our lives, these women have much to teach us. Once Hope wins in their lives, I've watched them getting ready for "coronation day." They lift up their heads as they endure the trials and crash through the quitting points waiting for their reward — the crown of life. God is honoring their faith and drawing them to himself. He is blessing them to rise above, to overcome the age-old prejudices and evils ingrained in the fabric of their cultures. And he is

empowering them to raise up their children in God's ways.

Through my tears of joy, I can see the rainbow of God's hope crowning them someday with the crown of life but even now fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy, "You will also be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God" (Isaiah 62:3). These royal diadems are shining for God in their huts and villages, in concert halls and churches, in radio stations and prison cells. So even though the world sees their predicament as an unending hopelessness, we at Project Hannah see it as an endless hope!

Excerpt from Chapter 10 of *When Hope Wins*, a book by Project Hannah founder Marli Spieker featuring 10 real-life stories of God's grace changing lives (hardcover, 176 pages). Learn more at projecthannah.org/whenhopewins. (Canadian residents: For book availability, please contact the office of TWR Canada by calling 1-888-672-6510.)

PRAYER & PRAISE

- Praise God for the completion of the *Healing Voice* program series. *Healing Voice* will reach women who are, or could be, affected by fistula, providing these women with practical information as well as messages of God's love for them. English scripts were completed by the end of 2014, and audio production is now done in two Ethiopian languages. Pray that the process of putting programs on handheld devices

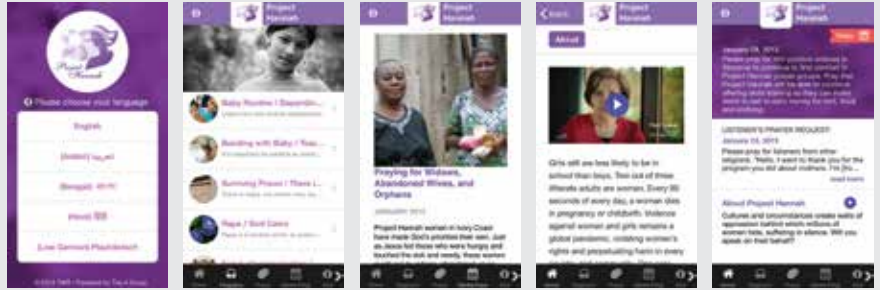
and then distributing them will go smoothly. And pray for those who will listen, that they may find hope for this life and for eternity.

- Pray for a good transition as a new team begins producing the Farsi-language *Women of Hope* program. Praise God for these broadcasts which have transformed lives in the Middle East.



DOWNLOAD THE

Redesigned Project Hannah App



Project Hannah's redesigned app offers new prayer resources along with the continued availability of *Women of Hope* audio programs. There is now a push notification option that can be selected so users are sent each day's request as a reminder. Along with this helpful prompt, the informative awareness article accompanying each month's prayer calendar focus is now only a finger tap away! The new app makes it easy to introduce friends and family to Project Hannah right from your mobile device and is available for Android devices as well as Apple's iPhone, iPad, and iPod Touch. Audio programs are available in English, Arabic, Spanish, Hindi, Portuguese, and Creole, with more languages to be added soon.

Join Project Hannah's ministry today as we offer hope to hurting women worldwide. Gain access to prayer resources anytime, anywhere, and unite with the more than 40,000 people in more than 70 languages lifting up these requests to the Lord every day. Download the app from iTunes or Google Play.

Visit projecthannah.org/app to learn more.



MISSION STATEMENT



Project Hannah's purpose is:

- to raise awareness of and empathy for the plight of women worldwide.
- to pray for women who are being abused emotionally, physically or spiritually.
- to broadcast the gospel of Jesus Christ to women around the world, encouraging them to:
 - experience God's love, freedom and power as they face life's daily challenges.
 - embrace their God-given destiny and glorious inheritance in Christ Jesus, whatever their cultural, social or economic situation.
 - pass on to their children a legacy of faith, wisdom and godly character.

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