

Hannah's Heartbeat

touching hearts, instilling hope

BEHIND THE WALL

Xingjuan* didn't know what was wrong. She was dizzy and couldn't get out of bed. It had been nearly a week since her son came home from school and saw her lying there, unable to move her head, and he'd started crying. With her husband out of town, her mother brought meals to the family.

"Grandmother is praying for your recovery," her son told her one day. The words were a small measure of comfort to Xingjuan, but she did not want to accept the Jesus in whom her mother-in-law believed. None of her side of the family believed in Him, and she did not want them to talk about her behind her back. A few months went by, but a visit to the doctor did not reveal a cause of her illness. Yet, when her husband invited her to accept Jesus, she chose not to do so.

Then, with nowhere else to turn, Xingjuan reconsidered. "If the doctors cannot cure me, who can?" she wondered. She committed her life to Christ, and began to recover from her illness. "From then on, I knew that my Lord is the true God, and He saved me from death," she wrote to Project Hannah. "He cured me."

She began to regularly attend church meetings, and her attitude toward her husband and son improved. "I know how to love others," she added. She listens to Project Hannah's *Women of Hope* program in Mandarin and told PH: "I feel a sense of closeness whenever I hear your voice."

But as a new believer, Xingjuan is struggling with her new faith. "I don't understand the Bible; please help me," she pleaded. "In the past, when I prayed, I was filled by the Holy Spirit and had many things to say to my Lord. But lately, I feel that there is a wall in between us. How can I take this wall away?"

Like Xingjuan, many women in China—and across the globe—are trapped behind walls that prevent them from knowing Christ. For some, it's a lack of opportunity and materials to help them grow in their faith. Others are steeped in cultural traditions or religious beliefs that oppose Christianity. And for women in certain countries of the world, living in locations where traditional missionaries and Christianity are intensely unwelcome, it's nearly impossible for them to break down barriers of unbelief or persecution.

That's why Project Hannah's radio programming plays such an important role. For women in these so-called "closed" countries, *Women of Hope* may be the only way they hear of Jesus—the only One who can truly break down walls and bring others to Himself.

SPOTLIGHT ON CHINA

Currently, a large majority of believers in China are women. They struggle with maintaining a balance between ministry, work and family, especially those with unbelieving husbands who do not support them. Others suffer from a lack of education and confidence and feel inadequate to fulfill God's call. Many women must also deal with emotional challenges caused by singleness, strained marital relationships or difficulties with children.

But God is blessing Project Hannah's outreach in China through its Mandarin *Women of Hope* broadcasts. During 2006 and 2007, letters arrived from as many as 14 provinces. Chinese women also are accessing the program through TWR's Chinese Web site. PH's broadcasts nurture women in how to rear their children and how to maintain healthy lifestyles that would benefit their families. Most of all, the broadcasts introduce them to the Savior who alone can save their souls.

*name has been changed



Hope Rises Underground

Patrick Johnstone notes in *Operation World* that the border between North and South Korea is one of the world's most impenetrable. Little is known about the underground church in North Korea, except that it has survived great persecution. But Trans World Radio's Korean programs, including Project Hannah's *Women of Hope*, are playing a vital role in the country.

TWR also has distributed a few thousand radios in North Korea to date, aiding listeners in sustaining their faith. This letter from one North Korean listener reveals just how risky the situation is in the country. "Because it is so dangerous to keep the radios in the house or any other proper place, we kept the radios outside under the ground or in a thicket," wrote the listener. "The dampness damaged the radios. We have no place to go to for repair, and it is extremely dangerous to show the radios publicly. Many people who had their radios damaged are asking for new ones. We are listening to all programs from TWR-Korea from beginning to end every day."

Praise the Lord that despite such challenges, His Word is proclaimed to women and men in North Korea, and they are responding in the face of potential persecution. "I listen to the programs every day," wrote another listener. "They really help me serve church members and believers. All the programs are good to me and are helping me to experience more the grace of God." Please pray for God's protection and wisdom for North Korean listeners and the production team.



Under the Black Veil

Project Hannah Founder Marli Spieker and her husband, Edmund, were Trans World Radio missionaries in Asia when God impressed upon her heart the needs of women worldwide.

My heart went out to the woman under the black veil on that hot and humid day.

I find myself praying for her over and over. Not only for her, but for the hundreds of thousands of other women who are living in the same predicament.

The women in my mind are the ones I have seen in Indonesia, Myanmar, Malaysia, China, Korea and Japan. These precious women are born into cultures that oppress them from birth. In China, India, the Middle East and North Africa, baby boys are celebrated while most baby girls are killed. For centuries, women have been a disposable commodity.

That woman under the black veil reminded me of thousands of women who are segregated in their own homes and used as "property." They are barred from the workplace, from schools, from the modern world, and most certainly from the liberating gospel of Jesus Christ. My heart cries out: "God, how can we help them?"

I keep thinking of the women under the black veil. I cannot see their features or their eyes—but God sees them all as He saw the crippled woman at the synagogue (Luke 13:10-13). As I travailed in my prayers for these suffering sisters of mine, I was reminded that I can keep praying, and use the effective tool God has given us.

Radio can take the liberating message of the gospel through the black veil of segregation, ignorance and false religions, spreading the light of God's love and hope to countless unloved and forgotten women who live in spiritual, cultural and emotional darkness. The Bible tells us about the joy the crippled woman at the synagogue had after Jesus healed her and told her: "Woman, you are set free!" I can almost hear that same joy in a global chorus of women who, after hearing Jesus' words today, are saved by grace, set free and singing praises to the one true and living God. And that includes even those women under the black veil.

Excerpted from "Women Under the Black Veil" by Marli Spieker, Trans World Radio magazine, Vol. 19, No. 1, February 1998.

In the decade since this article appeared, thousands in more than 90 countries have joined Marli in prayer for women trapped behind veils of poverty, illiteracy and oppression. PH thanks you for your faithfulness in uplifting women to the Father, and welcoming them into His symphony of hope as they discover Christ's eternal salvation.

PH leadership and teams worldwide wish to thank you for your prayer and financial support through the years. We too, pray for you.

Prayer & PRAISE

- Praise the Lord for Project Hannah's 10 years of fruitful ministry of encouragement and hope to women worldwide through its global prayer movement, mercy ministries and the *Women of Hope* radio program airing in 42 languages.
- Praise the Lord that the Holy Spirit is lifting women from despair and fear, using PH's ministries to offer them joy and eternal salvation. His grace and anointing is upon PH's teams of producers, intercessors and follow-up workers in countries across the continents.
- Please pray for PH leaders to have godly wisdom as they strategize next steps and as they teach, pray and personally minister to women. Uplift several teams working in new language developments in Africa, South America, Europe and Asia.
- Please pray for Marli Spieker, PH founder, as she embarks on an intense travel schedule in 2008, beginning with the launching of Project Hannah's ministry in South Africa.

Listeners Respond

"I listen to *Women of Hope* every morning and learn new things. The voices of the speakers are sweet and their words full of meaning. I first learned about God listening to the programs. Now I'm part of a prayer group, and I'm so blessed to pray for women all around the world. The way you care for women attracted me to the program." (Albania)

A Door is Opening

While the major religion of Afghanistan claims to give men and women equality, the tragic reality is that for centuries, Afghani women have been denied their rights and position in society, either by official decree or by their own families. In the not-so-distant past, they were forbidden to work, leave the house without a male escort or even seek medical help from a male doctor. They were required to cover themselves from head to toe, even their eyes.

Centuries-old marriage traditions mean that 60 percent of Afghani girls are forced into marriage before they reach their 16th birthday, and few husbands allow their wives to go to school. According to United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), millions of Afghani women and children continue to face major health and nutrition problems, with maternal and infant mortality rates among the worst in the world. One in four children does not survive beyond age 5.

In recent years, however, the position of women in Afghanistan has improved. Many have returned to the work force, and girls are beginning to be allowed an education. But challenges still remain, and inequality is especially prevalent in the rural areas of the country. About 90 percent of women are illiterate after decades of being banned from schools, and job opportunities for them are limited. The practice of selling young girls is on the rise, sadly revealing the depth of poverty in some parts of the country.



The women of Afghanistan are in need of real hope. In light of this, Project Hannah desires to broadcast its *Women of Hope* program in the Dari and Pashto languages, encouraging women to know the true and living God and His purpose for their lives. In addition, broadcasts cover topics about children, health and family, with information these women desperately need but might not otherwise have the opportunity to learn.

After years of prayer, God is opening doors for Project Hannah to begin ministry in Afghanistan. Finding production teams has been difficult, due to the small number of Afghani believers, and the level of persecution Christians face in the country. Production partnerships have also been established. Please continue to pray that this outreach will become a reality soon.

"My husband and grandson were killed in an automobile accident. I didn't want to continue living. It seemed like I had lost everything. Just at that time you were talking about the faithfulness of God, and you read Hebrews 13:5: 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' That promise of God lifted me up; I learned to trust in Him. I ask for your prayers

because I also have a daughter with two children who was abandoned by her husband." (Ecuador)

"Listening to *Women of Hope* promotes growth in every dimension of my life, answers my spiritual questions and helps to teach my children the things of God." (Angola)

A Decade of Lifting the Veil

by Marli Spieker,
Project Hannah founder and awareness advocate



In John 20:21, Jesus said: “As the Father sent me, I also send you.” And so Christ gently bids us “to preach good news, bind up the brokenhearted, proclaim freedom, and bestow a crown of beauty for ashes, gladness for mourning, and praise for a spirit of despair” (Isaiah 61). Over the years, I’ve learned that when we obey, His sending is always guaranteed by his enabling. Project Hannah (PH) is proof of that, and the article “Under the Black Veil” (see pg. 2) reveals my heart’s response to His sending voice that hot day in Singapore. I remember the overwhelming sense of urgency to reach out to the world’s women living “under the veil”—a daunting task!

Ten years later, the sense of urgency and calling has not left. Around the world, I have seen all kinds of “veils” continuing to shroud women’s minds and hearts. Even prosperity, education and culture can become “veils” for Satan’s destructive purposes. Through media, the violent, the ugly and the immoral make an impact on us all, especially young people. In the West, an atheistic, materialistic, postmodern worldview often leads to abortion, drug use, suicide and euthanasia. Without faith and hope in God, and families embodying godly principles, the tsunami of lawlessness will continue, the swelling evil resulting in tragic death—physical and spiritual.

For such a time as this, Christ has called PH’s ministry to “lift the veil,” and He enables His people to stand firm in prayer and to broadcast the good news of His forgiveness and hope. At Jesus’ death, the temple veil ripped from top to bottom, opening the way for us to come to the Father. That act of God declared: “Death is dead!” And life—life to the fullest—is His gift to humanity. That’s the triumphant message PH globally broadcasts to desperately needy women.

Our debt of gratitude for PH’s 10 years of divine guidance and enablement keeps us attentive to the small voice behind us saying: “This is the way—walk ye in it!” Oswald Chambers’ words ring true: “We do not work because of the need before us. We work because of the voice behind us.” *Women of Hope* radio programs and the global prayer movement speak life and shine light into the veiled darkness. I have met women in “closed” countries, where Christians and their children are killed, their houses and churches burned, their livelihoods destroyed. “My Isa (Jesus) suffered so much more for us,” they said. “The least I can do is suffer for Him.” Their resilience profoundly humbled and inspired me.

As we trust and obey, Jesus reaches down to these precious women behind the veil. Indeed, the loving voice behind us is more compelling than the awful need before us. PH will continue travailing in prayer, delivering hope and compassion and following His lead to a hurting world. The eternal reward of stepping onto heaven’s shores with arms full of souls to place at Jesus’ feet is worth the cost of total surrender.

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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