

FIVE MINUTES FOR MISSIONS—JANUARY 2006

A SPIRIT-LED CAREER CHANGE

Many of you already know Wendy Ryan who works for the Baptist World Alliance, a ministry partner of Columbia Baptist. This bold-in-the-Spirit woman was born and brought up in Trinidad and Tobago. She accepted Christ as a small child and made that decision public at age twelve. Ms. Ryan was raised in a Pentecostal Church, attended Anglican schools, and joined a small, Southern Baptist-affiliated church in Trinidad. All three influences are still in her bloodstream. “I love the Pentecostal emphasis on the Spirit; love all things liturgical, and love the Baptist passion for God’s Word and evangelism.”

After graduating from high school in Trinidad, Wendy worked for several years in radio broadcasting, then came to the United States to began classes at Eastern College. In 1977, she graduated with a double major in Communications and English Literature.

In America, she has worked as Director of Public Relations for Eastern College and Seminary and for American Baptist Churches in the US. In 1988, Denton Lotz invited Ms. Ryan to come to Washington to work as Director of the Division of Communications for the BWA. During her career, she has traveled around the world reporting on Baptist ministries.

There were three turning points in Wendy’s life. The first was while she was a teenager in high school and joined Youth for Christ, an organization that focused her spiritually. The second turning point was when she came to the United States. Here, she began to understand how much the Holy Spirit wanted to fill her life and how much God loved her.

The third turning point began about two years ago. Ms. Ryan sensed that God was calling her to a different ministry more closely involved with people. She hungers to see people come to Jesus and to be encouraged and is especially concerned about women. Wendy prayed, telling God that she would do whatever He wanted and go wherever He sent her. She felt led to tell the BWA early last year that she would not put her name up for reelection as a Director when her current term was up.

In February 2005, Ms. Ryan went to Cape Town, South Africa, with no hint of how God was going to change her life that month. But, when she toured the work of Living Hope Community Center, a HIV/AIDS ministry, God spoke powerfully to her heart, saying, “You are to come back to South Africa and serve in this special work.”

Wendy will help the Center with its media needs, explaining how God is helping people cope with the HIV/AIDS virus and how the Center teaches a Christian lifestyle, the main answer to this pandemic. She has a two-year agreement with the Living Hope Team, but will stay in South Africa as long as the Lord wants her there.

When Wendy surrendered to the Lord, saying, “Yes, I will do this,” she did not know that the Woman’s Missionary Union of Virginia would partner with her in this project. With their help, Ms. Ryan has a good part of the money that she needs to live in South Africa, but she must raise all of her start-up expenses: a car, computer, travel-fare, insurances, housing, and household goods. Her condo here needs to be rented so she can meet expenses in the US. Wendy says, “Pray I will remember that God, Who called, will equip, empower, and provide.”

Let us pray: Lord you are called Yahweh-Jireh: The Lord will provide! As your children, we ask that you send the perfect renter for Wendy's condominium. Please provide all the start-up equipment that she needs. Grant her the necessary visa approvals. Give her wisdom as she lives in a new culture as a single Black woman. Give her safety as she drives on the left side of the road. Help her to be wise and discerning as she writes about HIV and AIDS. Finally, Lord, infuse her with spiritual, emotional, and physical strength. May You truly be "her Light . . . her Joy . . . and the Strength of her life." May she know the reality of God Who provides for our every need. In Jesus' name; Amen.