

Africa, O Africa

By

Louise Robinson Chapman

Edited By

Chuck and Doris Gailey

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Books

AFRICA, O AFRICA

by Louise Robinson Chapman

Edited by Chuck and Doris Gailey

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by Stéphane Tibi

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by Ramón Sierra and Juan Vásquez Pla

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Preface

The Church sent missionaries to Africa to kindle a flame of love. Today, that flame has not only ignited, but it is also spreading like a prairie fire across that great continent. The church's growth has been phenomenal—already there are more Nazarenes in Africa than in USA/Canada! Lamin Sanneh [LAH-min SAH-nah] at Yale University indicates that Africa may soon become the most Christian continent on planet earth.

This is a book about the beginning of the Church of the Nazarene in Africa. Nearly 100 years ago, despite great odds, a young woman from the northwestern USA became a missionary to Swaziland. As Nazarene author Helen Temple said, “From a young, weak, fearful, and ignorant new Christian, God fashioned a prayer warrior in the truest terms. One who dared to attempt exploits for God far beyond the faith of ordinary Christians.”

Be prepared to be both excited and challenged by the story of Louise Robinson Chapman. The amazing tapestry of her life can teach us all how to live as Christian in the Third Millennium.

Enjoy the journey!

Chuck and Doris Gailey,
Editors

Louise Robinson Chapman

Biography 1892—1993

Louise Robinson Chapman served as a Nazarene missionary and global president of the Nazarene Missions International (then Nazarene World Mission Society).

Louise Robinson was born in 1892 in Washington State, USA, and was a graduate of Northwest Nazarene College (now University) in Nampa, Idaho.

While in college, Louise accepted God's call to mission service. Ordained as a minister in 1920, she was appointed a missionary to Africa that same year and served in Swaziland and the Transvaal in southern Africa for 22 years. In the early days of mission work, she served as evangelist, matron of a girls school, builder, head of a mission station, district superintendent, teacher, and nurse.

In 1942 upon her return from Africa, Louise Robinson wed Dr. J. B. Chapman, general superintendent of the Church of the Nazarene. They were married five years upon his death in 1947.



In 1948, Louise Chapman was elected global NMI president and served in this capacity for 16 years. These years of leadership were marked by prevailing prayer, financial victories, and an increased vision for the missions task of the Church of the Nazarene.

Louise Chapman received an honorary doctorate from Northwest Nazarene College in 1963.

Upon her retirement, Dr. Chapman moved to Casa Robles Nazarene Missionary Retirement Center in Temple City, California. She continued to travel and speak, even working her way back from a paralyzing illness. Her ministry in prayer expanded in later years, and she continued missions work by challenging Nazarenes to give to World Mission Broadcast, the international broadcast ministry of the denomination.

Louise Robinson Chapman died 12 April 1993 at the age of 100.

Editors' bio: Chuck and Doris Gailey were missionaries to Swaziland for more than a decade. Chuck is Emeritus Professor of Missiology at Nazarene Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Missouri, USA, and Doris taught at MidAmerica Nazarene University in Olathe, Kansas, USA. The Gaileys have four adult children.

Introduction

Africa, O Africa! I cannot remember the time when Africa first put her hand upon me. It seems I have always been a part of her and she a part of me. As a young girl, I saw her in my dreams. Her people called to me. Through 20 years of missionary life that grip never loosened. Africa's people left a deep imprint upon my life. Experience has built many memories—memories of happy association with fellow missionaries and memories of long friendships with sons and daughters of Africa. The print of Africa's hand is upon me and shall be to the end of my days.

I am dedicating this book to Fairy Chism, who was my college roommate and dearest friend. We lived and preached together in America until I went to Africa in 1920. When Fairy came to Africa in 1928, we lived and worked together until I left Africa in 1940.

I recall many serious and many amusing



Louise Chapman with
Fairy Chism in Swaziland.

incidents in Fairy's life. When she came to Africa, she was determined to learn the Zulu.¹ I convinced her that if she would faithfully study the language, the customs, and the people, that by the time she knew enough about the people to be able to bring God's message to them, she would be able to speak. God did give her the language in this way, and she became very proficient.²

On Fairy's first attempt to preach in Zulu, she used the text, "The day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night" (1 Thessalonians 5:2). But the word for "coming down" is very much like the one for "coughing," and the word for "thief" is very similar to the one for "wild beast." Fairy confused these words and in her sermon repeated over and over: "The day of the Lord is coughing like a wild beast in the night." A coughing wild beast in the night is a dreadful picture to a Swazi child. The sight of those children listening to their missionary telling them of what is coming is with me yet.

I have tried to describe things in this book as I saw them and knew them in Africa. I hold my co-laborers and the present missionaries in high esteem and ascribe to them credit for the great work they have done. Some of them have seen phases of the work that I did not see, and

¹ The national language of Swaziland is siSwati. However, at the time this book was originally penned, siSwati was not yet a written language, so missionaries studied the neighboring Zulu language, which is very similar and easily understood.

² The editors were privileged to hear Fairy Chism preach in the language when she returned to Swaziland after being absent for 20 years. She was indeed proficient; in fact, revival came and the service lasted for hours beyond the scheduled time.

if they should write a book it would differ in many respects from mine, and yet all would be true. Facts must depend for voice upon those who see and know them. This is my excuse and apology.

—LOUISE ROBINSON CHAPMAN



Current political map of Africa

Chapter 1

My Conversion

I was born in a one-room log cabin in a pioneer community in Clarke County, Washington, USA. Our cabin was soon exchanged for a new house made of hand-split shingles and hewed timbers. Here our family lived during my early childhood, with no Sunday School or church in the whole area.

When I was about to finish high school, my father bought a new farm. There was a little church in this neighborhood, and I went on Sunday morning to hear the young people sing. Being a little late, I had to take the one empty seat up front. That morning I heard, for the first time, testimonies from hearts filled with the joy of God. Mother Coatney had been passing through deep sorrow. She did not testify with words, but she smiled and kept looking up as though she could see someone above her. I had never seen such a look of rest and peace. I wondered what she had to smile about. A voice in my heart whispered, "If you had what she has, you could smile too." I felt sinful and distressed, and might have

accepted Jesus that day, but something seemed to tell me that if I followed Christ, I would have a few things to make right with people. I had never heard of restitution, but it seemed reasonable and right that one who wanted to make peace with God should also make peace with people. When I thought of how humiliating this would be, I became very angry with myself and with everyone else. I was burdened with sin and afraid of God.

A few weeks later I went back to the church. As soon as the sermon was ended, I left my friends and went to the altar alone. I did not know how to pray, but Christ met me there almost as soon as I knelt down. I knew something had taken place within my heart. I was no longer afraid of God. Rest, peace, and assurance filled my soul.



A young Louise Robinson Chapman

After that, I went out into the pasture each day to pray. My heart was overflowing with joy and victory. I prayed for myself and praised God for His blessings on my life.

Rev. Earnest Matthews came for services and preached on grace before meals and family prayer. God said to me, "I want you to return thanks at your father's table and establish a family altar in your home."

I was frightened. I was sure I could not do it, and I did not think it reasonable that God should ask me for such difficult service so early in my Christian walk. There was a bitter struggle, but I saw that if I was to keep the joy of salvation, I must obey God. So one night, with my head under the altar at the meeting, I decided that with God's help, I would perform even this hard task; and I promised that I would begin the very next morning.

Before breakfast the next morning, members of the family became cross, and it seemed a most inopportune time to begin, but I felt the supporting arm of God about me and found strength to thank God for

His provision for our needs before the whole family. At family prayer, I read one verse, "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me." I stammered a few short sentences and burst into tears. I felt I had failed and could

**I saw that if I was
to keep the joy of
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obey God.**

not do this hard thing. But God held me to it, and it was easier after that. After this experience, I prayed for myself and for my people. That year both of my parents and others of the family were saved.

Chapter 2

To College

All my life I had wanted to be a teacher. I had pushed on in school even though I had to work for room, board, and books. Now when I was about ready to begin my life's work, I felt that God wanted me to go to college and prepare to work for Him. I loved my home, my people, and my friends, and was satisfied with the plans I had made for my life, but always I was confronted with these words of Jesus: "Do you love me more than these?" (John 21:15).

During my college years, I had many unusual experiences. If the primary teacher did not come, I took her place. If the cook was ill, I prepared the meals. Sometimes it was the waiter or the scrubwoman whose work fell to me. When necessary, I taught the Bible classes for Professor Marshall and the Theory of Medicine for Dr. Mangum. When someone was ill, I tried to be a nurse; when a pastor was unable to get to his appointment, I acted as supply. One

time the evangelist was unable to keep her appointment at a church, so they sent me to see if I could help out.

I was matron of the girls' dormitory one year. Another year I was manager of the dining hall. Dr. Wiley once said he was going away for a day and leave me as president so that I could say I had been everything from scrubwoman to college president. I did not understand it then, but when I got to Africa, I saw why God led me in those paths.

I always had to fight poverty. I wore the same Scotch plaid dress for years. Pencils and postage stamps became subjects of prayer. One time, in my junior year of college, I decided I would have to leave school for a season to get money for clothes and books. I went home from school early so that I would have time to tell God all about my decision before I started to prepare the evening meal. As soon as I got on my knees, the Lord said to me, "What is it you need?"

I quickly named off books, tuition, and a dozen articles of clothing. As I talked with the Lord, I found I could not truthfully say I needed any single thing that very afternoon, so I went back to school ashamed of my hastiness.

While in college I learned how to prevail with God. I learned how to win souls. I learned how to pray down revivals. One time a small group of students prayed seven nights in succession. In the morning of the eighth day, God came mightily upon us. The chapel service started in the morning and ran all day. Classes were dismissed, and a great revival came upon the whole school and church.

Students wept and exhorted, and great conviction fell upon the unsaved. We prayed all night in the dormitories

and in the homes of the people. Dozens found God, and many were sanctified wholly. There was extemporaneous preaching in the classrooms, in the chapel, in the regular services of the church, and sometimes the altar was opened a second and even a third time in one service. Years afterward, out in Africa in the face of terrible odds, in this very way, we prayed down revivals and pushed through to glorious victory. I was able to stand alone when necessary and battle through seeming impossibilities because I had been along that way before and knew that revivals come from God and that He will answer prayer if we wait for Him.

I settled my call to Africa and received the gift of the Holy Spirit during my college days. I had experienced a wonderful conversion and for a time did not feel the need of any further work of grace in my heart. I tried to accept this great gift of the Holy Spirit but always felt unsatisfied. I often wondered if there was any such great cleansing as that which we heard preached. I frequently went to the altar to pray for seekers, when in reality I was praying for myself.

Three things troubled me. I still wanted to follow the plans I had made for my life; I was afraid God wanted me to preach, and I was afraid that God was going to send me to Africa as a missionary.

If I had been sure God was calling me, I would have cast aside my plans. I didn't like to see or hear women preach. I thought it was dangerous enough for a man to be a holiness preacher, to say nothing of a woman. I thought it would be certain starvation. But worst of all was Africa. I had little conception of what it meant to be

a missionary. I did not know how anyone should go about getting to a mission field. Above all of this, I was not sure God was calling me, so I was confused and thought I might be deceived.

One morning on my way to school, I came into the midst of a very large flock of restless, bleating sheep. When I was right in the center of the flock, I forgot they were sheep and it seemed like I was hearing the cries of lost men and women, dying without God. It seemed that the Lord told me to look toward the east. I saw all the lands of the Orient, where people thronged the streets. It seemed that I heard the pitiful wails of the millions without God. The bleating of the sheep became the cries of the multitudes of the Orient who were dying while waiting and longing for a Savior.

The Lord told me to look to the south. Here I saw the men and women of India in the Ganges River and in the temples. I saw the masses thronging up and down the streets and lanes like lost sheep driven by the storm and without guide or shepherd.

I looked toward Latin America with her needy millions. I saw the hands lifted to God, the eyes pleading for rest, and could hear the cries from the lips of those who sought for God all up and down those broad lands to the south.

Then God turned me about, and we looked toward the great continent of Africa—more than 150 million³ African people who stagger on in the dark without the light of Christ to guide them. Every frightened eye looked wildly

³ According to the United Nation Economic Commission for Africa, the population of the African continent was 1.2 billion in 2016.

up to God. Every hand reached out in a desperate effort to grasp something to save them.

Then God showed me my own fair land. I saw people in every walk of life. Even my friends and neighbors were there. This caused me to marvel

more than anything I had seen before. They all looked up and cried to God for help. I saw the beautifully dressed women, the drunks in the gutter, the moral man that I had known who seemed to have no desire for God, and the neighbor next door. All were looking up with longing eyes, reaching with grasping fingers for something that would sustain them. Every

**I had not realized
that all people,
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soul rest.**

mouth was calling for that rest that only God can give. Now the bleating of the sheep were the cries of my people, my friends, and my countrymen.

With broken heart, I tried to explain to Christ, who had shed His blood that all the world might be saved, that I had not realized that all people, no matter how they acted, were hungry and crying to Him for soul rest. He looked at me with a sad, tired face, when I asked if He could not go away and rest awhile. I asked Christ if He must always, night and day, listen to these pitiful cries. He answered in a sad voice, "Child, I never rest."

I fell at His feet weeping and asked Him to tell me how I could help. I looked again at the scene, and I saw, here and

there upon the earth, people praying. I saw a man on a hilltop, a woman in a secret closet, and others shut away, groaning under the burden of prayer. Then I felt the heavens shaken and saw the arm of God begin to move. Channels were opened, and men were set free from their chains of darkness.

After this experience, I could not rest. I was hungry and dissatisfied and was always hearing the cries of the lost. One noon hour, after weeks of wrestling with God, I went into a classroom and locked the door. I told the Lord I had come to settle my call and that I did not intend to go out that door until it was forever settled. I began with my life's plans. I promised God I would work no more on them unless I had direct orders from God to do so. Preach? I would try. I decided that it would be no more painful to starve to death as a despised woman preacher than to perish of famine in my soul. I was so hungry for more of God that life itself meant little to me if I could not be satisfied.

Then Africa loomed up. It was not enough to preach in America. I must preach in Africa. I saw myself way out in the jungle. I was dressed in a hideous black dress that began at my ankles and reached to my fingers and my ears. My hair was pulled back straight and pinned in an old-fashioned way. Since there were no doctors there, all my teeth but two or three were gone. I sat on an old soapbox by the side of a grass hut while a few impoverished children played at my feet. I started in fear and then I heard myself saying out loud, "Lord God Almighty, You have a little old woman on Your hands from this very moment, now, and throughout eternity."

I had scarcely finished the sentence when something like a great iron weight slipped off me and went splashing down into space beneath. I jumped to my feet, feeling as light as a feather. The room seemed to be on fire with the presence of God. Fear and hunger had gone. I was free and satisfied. My heart was aflame with the love of God. I loved His will for me. I felt willing and wanted to start immediately for Africa. Not only had I settled my call, but I had been baptized with the Holy Spirit.

So wonderful was the work done in my heart that day that not once through the years has it ever been suggested that God did not call me and send me across the sea. Not once did I ever doubt that God really did baptize me with His Spirit and completely cleanse and satisfy my soul. Many times in Swaziland I defeated discouragement and failure by remembering that the great God of heaven sent me there to represent Him and that He would make me succeed.

**I felt willing and
wanted to start
immediately for
Africa.**

Often when I looked at men sunken into the deepest depth of sin and demon possession, I encouraged myself in the Lord because I knew that God changed me, and it is nothing with Him whether they be little or great sinners.

Chapter 3

Missionary to Africa

One Sunday morning late in 1919, Nampa (Idaho, USA) First Church of the Nazarene was told that I would be recommended for appointment as a missionary to Africa at the upcoming General Board meeting in Kansas City. In a few minutes, over 50 people promised to pay US\$1.00 each month for five years to provide my salary for that time. Friends on the Idaho-Oregon District⁴ supplied money for passage and other expenses. Then they sent me to Kansas City to meet the Missionary Board, and I was appointed to go that year as soon as passports and permits could be secured.

At last, I said good-bye to my friends and loved ones. I knew little about traveling, but I started out alone on the day coach with a big box lunch, two heavy cases, my typewriter, a heavy coat, and other small parcels as hand luggage.

⁴ The Idaho-Oregon District is now known as the Intermountain District.

I didn't know a redcap⁵ when I met him and had never ridden in a taxi. When no one met me at the station in New York City, I took my many pieces of luggage and tried to make my way on the subway to the one address that had been given me. The journey took me completely across the city. I was very tired after my sleepless nights on the train while crossing the continent. The Lord saw me there and sent kind people to help His bewildered child.

I arrived in Africa on Thanksgiving Day. The little Sabie [SAH-bee] train raced along at its usual rate of 10 miles per hour. At noon I was a bit lonesome. I remembered that at home they were eating Thanksgiving dinner together and felt very much alone in a very strange land—and hungry.

We stopped at a little station, and the people ran out to a grass shed. I followed and got a cup of tea as black as coffee, and half a cookie. This was my Thanksgiving dinner, and my introduction to South African tea. I comforted myself with the thought that in the evening my long journey would be over, we would arrive at the Sabie mission, and Mrs. Shirley would have a big Thanksgiving dinner waiting for us. When we arrived at the Shirley home I was astonished that Mrs. Shirley said nothing about the holiday. She had been away from the States so long that she had forgotten it was Thanksgiving Day.

The mission station was still in the process of construction. The sand was full of fleas. A visiting missionary who slept in the same room with me that night got up to catch fleas that were troubling her sleeping children. She bagged

⁵ A redcap is a baggage porter (as at a railroad station).

67 in one catch, but I did not enter the chase. I was too far gone and knew it would be of no avail.

The very first morning in Africa I began to study the Zulu language. Mrs. Shirley always conducted the Sunday morning service. She said I was to get up every week before she began to preach and say everything I could say in Zulu. She said it might not do the congregation much good, but it would be wonderfully good for me, and it was. Long months I practiced on the strange clicks, pressing my tongue against my teeth and quickly withdrawing it to make it click, and curling my tongue and

popping it from the roof of my rebellious mouth. Every Sunday morning I tried to testify or exhort. During the week I went out to visit the nearby neighbors. They would sit down in the shade of their grass huts and help me with my vocabulary. I could smile when I could not talk, so I made friends. My first convert was the wife of a witch

doctor—one of the women who did so much to help me with the language. One day when all the missionaries were away from the mission, I tried to preach my first sermon in Zulu, and this woman came to the altar and was wonderfully converted.

I practiced for six months every day on one word before the people agreed I had it right. Attempting to be fluent in another language takes all sense of superiority out of a person.

**Attempting to
be fluent in
another language
takes all sense of
superiority out of
a person.**

I have seen grown men weep over the language. I studied Zulu daily for 15 years and felt that I was just beginning to appreciate its beauty. The Zulu language is richer than English in words to describe daily living. For instance, there are a dozen or more words to designate periods of time from midnight to sunup. There is the big night (midnight), the very beginning of day, the first change of light, time of the morning star, the first appearance of dawn when the horns of the cattle can be discerned, the crowing of the cock, at the descent of the fowls, very early in the morning, early morning before the sunrise, at the dawning, at still dawning, at the coming of the sun, and others.

I was put in charge of the medical and educational work. My drugstore was a soapbox. One of my college professors, Dr. Mangum, once said that one could be quite a good doctor and use only five or six drugs. I had that many—sulphur for itch; quinine, aspirin, and Epsom salts for malaria; iodine, boric acid powder, and permanganate for disinfectants; a pair of forceps for toothache, and—that was about all. I always was afraid I would kill somebody or let someone die needlessly. But many were cured in those days, mainly by means of desperate prayer.

My day school was composed of a few dozen children ranging in age from infants to full-grown boys and girls. I first tried to arrange them on benches but soon found out this would be about as difficult as teaching them to read. Every time I looked there were more bright eyes and little squirming forms under the seats than on them. So I moved the benches out and sat my pupils on the floor. They all

yelled at the top of their voices as they studied. When I asked why, they said, "This is the way it is done in this country. Everybody does it this way. How would you know who was or was not studying if they did not study aloud?"

I taught adults in the night school too. Men from the gold mines wanted to learn to read. We taught them to read the Bible and write their names, then we read Scriptures and prayed with them. Many converts were won in the mines with this method.

I spent four years at the Sabie mission in the Transvaal, South Africa.⁶

SWAZILAND

Most of our Nazarene work in Africa was in Swaziland. I was anxious to see this field and our workers there. At the first quarterly meeting time, I went to Barberton on the train. Rev. Joseph Penn, Sr., met me there with horses. New missionaries to Swaziland usually came to this town and rode on horseback over the mountains, while their trunks and boxes followed, often after many months, by donkey or ox teams on a longer route.

It was raining when I reached Barberton. Early in the morning, we began to climb the Barberton Mountain. Higher and higher we went over rolling stones and narrow ledges. As soon as we reached the top, we started down the other side. My saddle, which was not too new or strong, continually threatened to slip over the horse's head. At the bottom of

⁶ The Transvaal was a province of South Africa from 1910 until the end of apartheid in 1994, when a new constitution subdivided it.

the mountain, we forded a fast-rising river, hurried across a little valley, and started up another range of hills. We climbed "The Devil's Stairway," a rocky climb over large boulders, and on up into the third range where at the top we came to the approach of "The Devil's Bridge." We crept along the little path that wound around the edge of the mountain and listened to the howling of the wind in the valley beneath. It sounded worse than it was. The narrow natural bridge, but a few feet in width, had a deep canyon on either side. Once across, we galloped our horses whenever we found a few feet of level ground, and so we arrived at Pigg's Peak mission before dark. I did not mind the long day's ride in the storm, for I was reared in the West and had ridden horses since I was a child. It was very different for missionaries reared in the city who had never ridden horseback or for parents with young children who were afraid of horses.

Swaziland has been called "the Switzerland of Africa" because of its many beautiful and rugged mountain peaks. It was here at the Endzingeni [end-zin-GE-nee] mission that Rev. Harmon Schmelzenbach [SHMEL-zen-bah] began our first Nazarene work in Africa.

In Swaziland, marriage is sometimes an arrangement between two families. The girl was not always consulted. The man may be old and may already have one or more wives. In the early days, the girl was forced to go to the new husband, even against her will. Unwilling brides often fought, kicked, and bit their elder brothers who were taking them to their new home. A few escaped and ran away. Others disappeared across the border, alone and friendless. Some took their own lives.

One evening a few years after Rev. and Mrs. Schmelzenbach began their work in Swaziland, Mrs. Schmelzenbach was at home alone when a girl about 14 years old burst through the kitchen door crying, "Hide me, wife of the missionary, hide me!"

It was Ngobodhlane [goh-bohd-LAH-nee], one of the first converts. She had been given in infancy to an old headman who already had six wives. While her brother was taking her to her new home, she had slipped away from him and run over the hill to the Schmelzenbachs. The girl was scarcely hidden in the storeroom when an angry voice demanded at the door "I want Ngobodhlane."

This began a long battle that finally ended in the girl coming to live with the missionaries. It was the beginning of a home for needy girls. Other girls fled to the mission. Some of them were covered with blood. Some had great welts where whips had been used. Others were bruised and swollen from being dragged and choked. As the number of girls increased, Miss [Minnie] Martin lived with them.

My first recollection of Bro. Schmelzenbach is of a troubled man pacing up and down, talking about the problems that had come upon us because of these girls. He said if we could not provide better care and shelter for them, we might as well send them back to their parents.

In 1924 I went to Swaziland to the annual Mission Council and camp meeting. Dr. George Sharpe of Scotland was our missionary superintendent. While Dr. Sharpe and Bro. Schmelzenbach were talking over the problems of the work and deciding where each missionary could do his best,

I went to look over the mission station again. I knelt before a door, a small round hole in the brick wall between the single workers' kitchen and the girls' living quarters. I saw a small L-shaped room. The dark ant-heap floors, the brown mud walls with little windows near the ceiling, the gloom of the drizzling rain all made a dismal picture. Sitting on the floor, her back to the wall, was a young woman with great gashes in her back and arms, and her clothes smeared with blood. Around her were the hoes, boxes, and food of the 32 girls who made their home in this one little room. I walked around to the back of the building, and there, in a hole that extended perhaps six feet into the side of a red clay bank, I saw four young women cooking in a big black pot over a smoky open fire. This hole was the only kitchen they had. There was no dining room and no sanitary arrangements of any kind. I thanked God with all my heart that I did not have to work at this place under such horrible conditions.

Just then I was called by the stationing committee. Rev. Schmelzenbach told me they had been considering all the needs of the work; that there was one department of special need at this time; that they had prayerfully sought the will of God and had decided that of all the available workers, I was the one most fitted to do this work. Then they told me that they wanted to station me at Endzingeni to mother these 32 girls. Had a bomb exploded I could not have been any more shocked. Immediately into my mind came all the impossibilities connected with this work. I had heard them discussed many times. We were located in an area reserved for the Swazi people. We had little security. It would not be advisable to

build permanent buildings. If we fell into disfavor with the government, we might be forced to move away. Even if we had a place to build, we did not have money with which to build. At that time missionaries lived in huts and old corrugated iron buildings. There was no possibility of the general church supplying money for a girls' home. Worst of all, there was no building material at that

place. Lumber was costly and roads almost impassable. Corrugated iron was too expensive and too hot. The clay of the region would not burn for bricks, building sand for cement work was lacking, and stone would have to be hauled from a distance.

**“If you don't like
it, change it. Your
Father is rich.”**

—Dr. George Sharpe

I tried hard to convince the members of the committee that they were mistaken. I told them that I had never been able to work in dirt and confusion, and that I could see no way to make the place any different. I ended by saying, “The whole setup to me is most impossible. I just don't like it at all.”

Dr. Sharpe waited until I had finished and then looked me in the eye and said, with force, “If you don't like it, daughter, *change* it.”

I asked how this change was to be made, and from where I would get my help. He answered, “Your Father is rich.”

I had gone in before these men free and hopeful and came out in less than five minutes having inherited a family of 32 girls. I felt burdened and depressed.

But I could not forget those words: “If you don't like it, *change it. Your Father is rich.*”

Before I finished moving to Endzingeni, I decided I would do my best to change any changeable thing. I had scarcely settled in my new home when God sent one of the greatest revivals I have ever seen in all my life. There was no evangelist, little preaching, few altar calls, and no program. We stayed day and night in the building without dismissal. People went and came as they desired. The whole building was an altar. People lay for hours in one spot on the grass-covered floor, each one doing his own praying. At the close of the meeting, not one was left hungry-hearted. Afterward, we found that, as is always the case when God mightily visits His people, many of our difficulties had disappeared, and the remaining ones did not look so insurmountable.

We decided to change the girls' living quarters. We dug a hole by the side of our house to expose the red clay with which we began to make bricks. The girls carried water from the creek in five-gallon oil tins on their heads, and poured it in the hole. Others with their bare feet stamped the clay into the right consistency. I stood with some of the girls on a shelf-like place on one side of the hole, with the brick forms before us. Girls lifted the mud with their hands and put it by the side of the forms. We splashed it into the forms with force enough to fill all the corners, break the bubbles, and cover ourselves from head to foot in layers of mud. Other girls brought the empty forms, immersed them in a puddle of water by our side, sprinkled them with sand inside and out, and slipped them into place before us. We slid the filled forms to one side where others grabbed

them and ran to lay them in long rows in the sun to dry. We made thousands of bricks.

Some of the schoolboys came to help us build. We tore down two sides of the girls' room, widened the place, and made it much longer. We divided the inside into seven rooms and left a little hallway down the middle. We made three rooms about 8 feet by 10 feet on one side, and four smaller rooms on the other side. There was a small door at the outer end of the hall. The other end opened into my room. We roofed our house with sheets of old corrugated iron and struggled to fill in the many holes in the sheets. White clay from the river decorated the top of the walls and black tar the bottom. The floors were of ant heap beaten hard with stones. When the building was completed, we were proud of our home.

We invited the Schmelzenbachs to come and see our dream home before we moved in. Bro. Schmelzenbach stood in the little hallway and wept as he praised God for the beautiful home. We all felt that night as if the New Jerusalem had come down to earth at Endzingeni. We moved in, five girls to a room.

New girls came nearly every week. One girl jumped into a raging torrent and crossed safely because God was with her. Another girl offered a pitiful, frightened prayer on the bank of a crocodile-infested stream and safely made it across. Many girls slept outdoors night after night as they made their way to the home God had provided for troubled Swazi girls.

Those were wonderful days in our little mud home. Many a girl found God in those seven rooms. Revivals

were precipitated, demons cast out, and bodies healed. God literally lived with us. He had helped us build, and after that, we built the dispensary, school building, sheds, and outlying churches.

Chapter 4

Working with God in Swaziland

We had about 200 hungry mouths to feed at Endzingeni. There were the babies, homeless and orphan children, the workers, the old grandmas, and the women who had been chased away from home by shamans, all looking for food from our fields.

The crop was good one year—the corn and other foods were about ready to eat, and the trees were full of fruit. We were thankful for our almost 200 acres of beautiful gardens. One hot December afternoon, I looked up suddenly to find the heavens black with storm clouds. A great, green cloud was swiftly coming our way. I could hear strange, clattering sounds in the heavens and knew that meant hail! A real storm this time. I had seen hail beat beautiful fields of grain to the ground and the rain wash even the stalks away. I had seen these storms break huge limbs off trees, smash all the windowpanes in our buildings.

Fear clutched my heart. I looked at our beautiful fields that we must reap if we were to keep our large family together. I sat down quickly on the porch, weak from fear. Just then from the little mud-walled home in which I lived with my big family of girls came a sudden volume of mighty, desperate prayer. My fright gave way to confidence. I knew God could not turn a deaf ear to such pleading. Alice Khumalo, the matron for the girls, had seen the storm before I saw it. She marshaled the girls to pray down help from the only One who is able to deliver in such a crisis.

God did not fail those girls. A sharp wind sprang up from the opposite direction in a minute and drove the storm past our fields. It stripped every leaf from the trees, pulverized the grass, tore huge limbs from nearby trees, but not an ear of corn was damaged in our fields.

For four years I had the wonderful privilege of working with the great missionary Harmon Schmelzenbach, and from him learned many very valuable lessons. I was given charge of the day school and helped with the district work. When Bro. Schmelzenbach died I was given charge of the station and the surrounding district. I love farming. It was not an unpleasant task to care for a big station and supervise a farm of over 200 acres. The “family” raised almost all our own food, for we could not afford to hire help or buy food.

I rode thousands of miles on my old red mule, Coffee, over hills and velds⁷ supervising the rural schools and holding church meetings and revivals. I loved this work. I learned

⁷ A veld is a grassland, especially in southern Africa, usually with scattered shrubs or trees.

to love the night skies with their shining Southern Cross. I lived in the homes of the people, ate their food, slept many a night on the floor with my saddle for a pillow, forded the rivers at midnight, got caught in terrible storms, walked in the burning sands, and in later years got stuck in rivers or in the mud with my Chevrolet. But I loved it all.

God gave the Church of the Nazarene hundreds of African saints—humble, God-fearing, holy-living Christians.

I once asked an old witch doctor, “What do you think of the pastor we sent to your neighborhood? Is he a Christian? Have you seen anything objectionable in his life or his home?”

The old witch doctor was walking by the side of my mule. He was arrayed in skins, cow tails, teeth, pouches and horn containing his medicines. He looked up at me, his smile gone, and said, “Child of God! That man!” He lifted his hand and pointed to the little grass and mud home of our preacher—a home that was brighter, more sanitary and convenient than the surrounding houses. A few fruit and shade trees could be seen growing inside a pretty hedge; everything was clean and in order around it. The old man stopped, his bony finger still pointing to the preacher’s little home, and said, “Daughter of the King, that is our lamp. That is the light of the Swazi nation.”

Our pastors are the most important part of the church in Africa. The workers, their words, their actions, their lives, their homes, their spouses, and children are watched day and night by scores of non-Christians, as well as by the Christian flock.

Alice Vabaye [ve-BIE-ye]

Alice Vabaye's sister was given to the village chief for 10 head of cattle. As a special favor, Alice was also included in the exchange in place of an additional 4 or 5 head of cattle.

While the chief was old and had many wives, Alice was young and independent. When Alice discovered she was

**“They say the
missionary’s God
is a hiding place.
Perhaps I can hide
in Him.”**

—Alice Vabaye

included in the exchange, she ran away. She ran until she was exhausted, then hid in a pile of stones. The men and dogs pursuing her failed to find her. As Alice made her way toward the border with South Africa, she heard a missionary teaching a class about Jesus. Hidden in the tall grass, Alice thought, “They say the missionary’s God is a hiding place.

Perhaps I can hide in Him.” She immediately went to Rev. Schmelzenbach and gave her heart to God.

For many years Alice Vabaye could not visit her home or leave the mission. In that time, she learned to pray and was a great blessing to us all. For many years Alice cooked for the single missionaries at Endzingeni and won her parents to the Lord. In 1940, after 17 years at the mission, Alice, with the help of friends, secured enough cattle to redeem herself from her unsaved brother. Alice was a strong preacher. She mothered the many children of the station, was chief adviser of the girls in the home, helped in revivals, and served as assistant pastor. But her greatest talent was her ability to pray and get answers from God.

I shall never forget how God spoke to my heart one midnight as I was working with the sick and listened to Alice praying. In a manner that could not be denied, Alice called out one by one the names of the unsaved who lived in the neighborhood, begging God to do everything He could to save them. That prayer, one of the mightiest prayers I have ever heard, was one of the greatest and sweetest experiences of my life in Africa. My heart was stirred, for I knew God would answer her cries. I felt as if I had never truly prayed myself.

For weeks that lone intercessor spent hours every night in prayer. Sometimes she cried out in a loud voice. At other times, I saw through the window her cot untouched, and Alice stretched on the grass mat on the floor, her open Bible before a little tallow candle. Her eyes were swollen from weeping, and often her words turned into groans as she went down into the valley of suffering, seeking the lost. I asked her one day if she was not afraid her physical strength would fail from loss of sleep. She looked at me with a glow of unearthly light on her face and said, "Daughter of the King, if you only knew: before me is Christ, behind me it is light. I reach to the right hand or to the left, I find the strength of God. I will stop when God gives me what I ask."

Three months passed. One early morning an unsaved man came and called Alice, saying that for three months God had been dealing with his soul. On the cement steps he gave his heart to God. The revival began. Scores of unsaved were born into the kingdom of God.

Editors' Note: Alice Vabaye Khumalo [ve-BIE-ye koo-MAH-loh] later became a missionary in her own right. She obeyed God's call to go to the Pedi [PAY-dee] nation in Africa. The editors had the privilege of interviewing her near the end of her life. In her home near Endzingeni, Alice told us, with great gusto, how she had learned the different customs and language of the Pedi people. Suddenly, she bolted to her bedroom and came back holding a well-worn Bible in the Pedi language. She shared with us the great victories that were won as the Pedi came to know Christ. It was a joy to converse with someone who obviously was an intimate friend of God. There was a glow about the woman who had become a missionary just like her mentor, Louise Robinson Chapman!

Lillian Bhembe [BEM-bee]

The Spirit continued to work among us. During a big revival, someone came to tell me that Lillian Bhembe was dying. I went to her and found her lying on the floor curled in a ball. She had not tasted food in several days, and I could see by her face that she was praying. Though not physically perishing, she was dying to the world. Slowly and deliberately, Lillian continued to seek the Lord, and God did a work in her heart that made her a shining light from that day on.

One Sunday, Lillian stood in the center of a little mud church. Every inch of the floor was covered with earnest listeners. The windows were filled with faces. God anointed His handmaiden; Lillian looked like a being from another world. Her face shone with the glory of God. A young girl

stood up, lifted her hand, and said, "I choose the Lord." Another repeated those sweet words. There was a hushed stillness over our hearts. We felt that Jesus himself had come into our midst.

Editors' Note: Lillian Bhembe was a strong leader in the church until the day of her death. She was a giant of the faith who walked in the footsteps of Jesus and of her mentor, Louise Robinson Chapman.

Magagula [mah-gah-GOO-lah]

"I'm rich, friends, I'm rich!" a smiling woman cried as she testified to salvation. She lifted her arms and swung herself gracefully around the crowd of listeners who sat on the floor. She did not look rich. She was shoeless, and her only covering was a single cheap garment that hung loosely from her shoulders. Her home, we knew, was a grass hut with a mud floor, her bed a mat on the ground, and her food was scarce and coarse. Yet, she said she was rich. Her listeners believed her testimony, for they smiled and nodded and said, "Yes, Mother, yes."

Everyone knew what Magagula had been like before. She had been demon-possessed. Many a night while her children cried for food, she had lain in a drunken stupor. She had been quarrelsome and unpleasant. Now the demons had fled. She was no longer a slave to tobacco and beer. Her children were learning in school and in Sunday School. Her husband who beat her when she first gave her heart to the Lord now respected and loved her. She

diligently tithed her peanuts and corn.⁸ Her delight was to tell her friends how the Lord had come and made all things new. Indeed she was rich!

No Difference

A few months after I arrived in Africa, I was testifying to a man I met, telling him of the wonderful heart experience I had when I was sanctified.

“The work will not be so definite in your converts here,” he said. “God has so little background to work on in these people that you cannot expect to see the same results.”

I did not answer, but I knew that I had not been brought up in a religious environment and yet God sanctified me. I made up my mind that the very first convert who showed evidence of being ready to receive the fullness of God’s blessing would find out whether that man was right.

Willie Young

Several months later, little Willie Young came to my night school in Sabie. He was a lad of 10 or 11 years. His father was gone; his mother was ill. Willie cared for the needs of his mother and two brothers as best he could. One night the mother died. The next morning, Willie came to tell me that he and the other children were now alone. God spoke to me and told me to try to fill the mother’s place with these children. I took Willie into my home. He soon gave evidence by a changed life and a clear testimony that he had been born from above.

⁸ It is not uncommon for people in some cultures to tithe crops or livestock, because they do not have currency.

After some time, I noticed that Willie was weak and thin. I finally found out that for months he had been fasting and praying to be sanctified. I also learned that he was troubled over needing to make restitution. I assured him that this was a very ordinary procedure for many. I gave Willie a piece of paper and told him to write down all that was bothering him. For several days he lay in the grass in the sun, and finally came back with a long list of things about which God had been talking to him. Most of the items were things he had stolen in his efforts to supply the needs of his family. Willie became thinner and paler every day, but God helped him to press on until he had cleared everything away. He should have been sanctified then, but he was afraid the darkness would come back, so he would not step out in faith.

I prayed for hours with Willie. Missionaries and other Christians prayed with him. But all seemed useless. He would not believe. I began to fast and pray too.

One Sunday afternoon, God reminded me of what I had determined long ago when a man told me God could not sanctify an African as He had sanctified me. Here was a soul ready for the promised cleansing. Would I put God to the test? Hope sprang up in my heart. I was determined to do my part.

That evening I called the Christians in for a prayer meeting. I talked to them of God's unchanging faithfulness. I told them God had spoken to me, and that I had come prepared to wait there until God granted me my request. I asked if there was another who had a definite request that he wished to put before God, and if he would wait there before

God until the request was granted. Willie put up his hand. I asked if he would wait there until the sun came up in the morning, if necessary. He said he would. I asked if he would wait until the sun went down the next evening. He said he would. Then, I asked if he would wait until the sun came up the morning after that, if necessary. With much trembling, Willie promised to wait until God came, and said that in the meantime he would do all he could to meet the conditions. He knelt in the middle of the altar, and I at the end. We had gone too far now to turn back and we began to pray in earnest.

It was not more than three minutes until I knew God was there to sanctify Willie. I rose to my feet, saying, "Do Your best for me, Lord. They said You could not do it. It will make all the difference in the world in the way I shall preach from now on, Lord."

Willie was now praying in faith, with his little hands stretched up to God. The work was done. He jumped up, then sat back on a bench where he lifted his hands and sat for a very long time, quietly laughing. His childish face was aglow with heavenly light. Just as God had sanctified me, He had sanctified Willie too.

For years Willie gave almost every cent he made back to God. He would not even buy clothes to keep himself properly covered. He was a great soul-winner. When the other missionaries were on furlough and I was alone on the mission, Willie was like my right arm. He was an efficient teacher, an unctuous preacher, and helped keep all the engines and machinery in repair. In later years Willie became a

prosperous businessman and built several churches in Africa with his own money. Willie was the first African I saw sanctified, but thank God, he was not the last one. I have seen scores of Africans receive the promised blessing and live transformed lives.

Editors' Note: Willie Humphrey Young was a powerful ambassador for Christ in Swaziland. We well remember him driving his Plymouth Valiant throughout the nation, speaking in churches and urging people to be good stewards and to give to missions. He was an inspirational speaker on tithing and witnessed to the importance of prayer. He and his family were a testimony to the grace of God and to the legacy of Louise Robinson Chapman.

Jake's Mother

Jake's mother lived alone in a little hut in Sabie Nook. She was disabled and had not taken a step in 11 years. She had spent all she had on local doctors but found no relief. One day, I was out visiting in the homes of the people and found Jake's mother. I was much moved by her sad story of pain, hunger, loneliness, and sorrow. As I looked at her kind face now deeply lined by suffering, these words came again and again to my mind: "Then will the lame leap like a deer" (Isaiah 35:6). That night as I prayed, I felt definitely that God wanted to save and heal my newfound friend.

The next day I took a bottle of anointing oil and rode again up to the Nook. On the way, the enemy tried to tell

me that she would not be healed. When I tried to bolster up my faith, the devil said, “One who puts on his armor should not boast like one who takes it off.” I stopped to pray and encourage myself in the Lord, then went on to my task. The poor woman said she chose Christ as her Savior. I anointed her and prayed for her physical healing.

That noon I left Sabie by train for a week’s meeting in Swaziland. I prayed for this woman much that week, and when I returned, I went to see her. As I rode up the valley and came to the place where I would follow the trail up the hill, I saw someone come from her hut and start down the trail to meet me. As we neared each other, I saw that the one coming had a limp in her walk, and I wondered who she was. Then the truth dawned upon me—it was Jake’s mother.

She said that after I left her, she thought to herself, *Now, if the Lord has healed me, I will get up and walk.* She got up and had been walking about her home all the week. She was preparing to take a long journey to see her people whom she had not seen in many years.

Chapter 5

Discipling New Christians

The Christian life was so new to most of the people then that we missionaries often had to visit the churches and explain biblical teachings. One of the items was tithing. At that time the people did not have much cash, and they needed to learn how to tithe their harvest and animals. We went from zone to zone with sacks, tin cans, dishes, and cups to demonstrate the way in which to take a tithe of their produce. New Christians learned quickly when we showed them with object lessons.

The churches designated one Sunday for people to bring their tithes of corn. On another Sunday, people brought their tithes of pumpkins, fruit, and other produce. On another Sunday, they brought tithes of beans, peanuts, and the like. There was also a day to tithe their fowl and animals.

One day at Endzingeni we had all the tithes brought on the same day. It was an impressive sight: three oxen, three goats, 21 chickens, over 20 sacks of corn, many sacks of

peanuts and beans, dishes of every kind of foodstuffs, large bunches of bananas, rolls of grass mats, bundles of grass brooms and ropes. Old women who had nothing to tithe gathered huge bundles of firewood from the bush and brought them on their heads. Tithes like these were sold, and the money was used to help support the pastor of the local church and pay the church budgets.

On one Sunday we read our scripture lesson from Malachi. Several told how God had blessed and increased them after they tithed. We stressed God's promise of blessing to all who would bring the tithe into the storehouse. We demonstrated how to measure corn and beans into sacks, separating a tithe.

Then a woman stood up in the rear of the building and said, "I want to tell you, good teachers, my story. My preacher told me about paying God one part out of every 10 parts. I had only one hen. She laid 10 eggs and hatched out nine chicks. Now I had my red hen and nine chicks—10 in all. When the day came to bring in our tithes, I took one of those chicks and gave it to my preacher. When I came home, I found an animal had killed all eight of the remaining chicks. How do you explain that?"

The preachers and I tried to comfort her and answer as best we could. But the people asked so many questions that they took up our remaining time in the service. We were troubled, and it seemed everyone was forgetting our lesson. It seemed clear that those Christians would go home and tell their people about the dead chickens of the woman who had paid her tithe. Our trip had been worse

than in vain. But just as we stood up to be dismissed, the woman spoke again.

She said, "There is a bit more I want to tell you. Yes, I had a red hen. She hatched out nine chicks. They grew fast and big. Only one of them did not grow as big as the others. It was a little sick. When I looked at my chickens, I picked out the biggest and best and said to my heart that I should take that one for the Lord. But I had two hearts. One was a big heart, and one was a little heart. The little heart said I had better take the little chicken. It said, 'One is a tenth, big or little. If you keep the big chicken, you will have many big chickens to give God next year. The preacher will only eat your chicken. Meat is meat. The only difference would be that there is not so much meat.

"When tithe day came, my little heart overcame my big heart. I took the little chicken. When I got home, the others were dead. Those of our people who are not Christians always give the biggest and best ox to the spirits. We give them the best of all we have. The great God-Spirit gave me more rest and joy in this little time since I chose Him than I ever had before. I know it is a shame for me to offer the great God presents that I would be afraid to offer to the spirits. After this, I will give God the best part of what I have." The day was saved. By her little story, this woman had taught the congregation more than we could have taught them in a whole week.

Swazi revivals were usually short but intense. They began on Thursday and ran over Sunday. They were preceded by much prayer and fasting, and Christians came from surrounding churches to help in the meetings. The first two

days were given to the Christians to get them revived and blessed. The last two days were given to efforts to win the unsaved. There was never enough room for the crowds that came; I have seen 300 people packed together on the floor all night.

I remember one night when we had several hundred more people than could possibly be seated on the floor, even in closest Swazi fashion. We rang the bell for the service. When they began to come in, I told them all to stand. I had the people crowd in as close as they could until all were inside the door. Then I called out, "Be seated!" Everyone sat quickly, knowing that not all would get a seat. A howl of laughter filled the room. The services were crowned with success, with Christians encouraged and many unsaved finding Christ.

I believe that one of the secrets to God's blessing upon the African church has been its prayer huts: huts set aside for people who want a place to pray undisturbed. For the 20 years I was in Africa, we had one or more prayer huts on most of the Nazarene missions.

Some years, there were set periods once a week in which each person at Endzigeni could be alone in the prayer hut. At other times, the girls had the daytime and the boys the night. At still other times, all who wanted to participate were given an hour so that, for weeks at a time, day and night, someone was always praying in the prayer hut. One did not leave until the next one came. Many of the victories we have had in the church and on the district have been won in the prayer hut. The missionaries also had their

prayer hut where they could steal away from their cares and labors to spend some time alone with God. It is impossible to overestimate the blessing these prayer huts have been to our church in Africa. They are the powerhouses that have broken the bands of wickedness and changed darkness into light. Prayer has always been the key to victory.

I remember a time during the darkest days of the Depression in which money was very scarce, and the pastors faced such a period of adjustment _____ as they had never known before.

There had been crop failures, and many were hungry. It seemed to the pastors that they must leave their God-appointed tasks and take up secular work to supply _____

**Prayer has always
been the key to
victory.**

their many needs. Because of these trials, it was easy for a spirit of misunderstanding to creep in between the workers, and between workers and missionaries. Try as we might, every new discussion seemed only to widen the gulf. We went to every new meeting with fear and trembling, and came away knowing that we had made no progress toward the solution of our problems.

Finally, after much prayer and waiting on God, I sent word to all the workers of the Pigg's Peak area that we were going to the church at Helehele [hay-lee-HAY-lee] to have three days of prayer and fasting before the Lord. All workers were invited. They could come or stay at home. They could bring food if they wished, but no cooking was to be done on the grounds for anyone.

On that Thursday evening, about 50 workers, Fairy Chism, Irene Jester, and I gathered in the little stone church at Helehele and began to wait on God.

There was little progress for the first several hours. Then Preacher Simon crawled over to Evangelist Solomon⁹ and suggested that the missionaries send their possessions over the brook Jabbok so they might be unencumbered in their wrestling.¹⁰ So the missionaries stood up one by one and began confessing the hurts and offenses that had been troubling them: criticism; hard feelings; careless words that had taken root in their hearts; a lack of the love and confidence they had once felt for fellow workers. A recess was called; and all over the church and its grounds, the missionaries gathered in small groups and talked freely, explaining and asking forgiveness. We all joined together in getting everything across the brook.

Finally, with smiling faces and with hearts at rest, we went back to God in prayer. He met with us in a wonderful manner. The gulf disappeared. The financial burdens shriveled to a size we could carry. The tall mountains of hardship and fear wore low until the rugged path was such as a brave soldier could follow. We prayed for our part of the work, for the district, for the whole church, and for special projects. We prayed for the children of all the workers by name. We

⁹ Rev. Solomon Ndzimandze [zee-MAHN-zee] was the father of Juliet Ndzimandze, a great Nazarene evangelist who preached throughout Africa, Europe, and the USA. Juliet's story is told in the book *Daughter of Africa* (NPH, 1998).

¹⁰ The terminology refers to the biblical story of Jacob wrestling with God as described in Genesis 32:22–32.

had a healing service and prayed for the bodies of the sick among us.

Some of the testimonies were outstanding. One preacher had been sure he would die of hunger. Ashamed to bring his food to the station, he had hidden a handful of food out in the veld, intending to go and eat it just before he starved to death. But in the course of the prayer meeting, he had become so interested that he had not once felt hungry or thirsty.

Another man, weak in body, had decided to stay home Thursday night and come up to the meeting on Friday morning. His wife cooked a big chicken with plenty of sweet potatoes and other food to fortify him for at least one day. But very early in the morning, he arose from a troubled sleep saying, "The soldiers are in battle. Why do I hide at home like a coward?" Much to his wife's dismay, he sneaked off and left the meat and potatoes untouched in the pot. He walked more than 15 miles and stayed to pray and shout until the last minute of the battle.

It was past midnight on Sunday when we finished all we had to do. Even then the people did not go to sleep. They laughed and talked while the women prepared the food. At daybreak, they ate a hearty meal. Then all joined hands, sang a battle song, and asked, "Why didn't we do this long ago?"

I recall another revival at Enzulase [en-zoo-LAH-se]. The preaching was anointed of God, and we spent a whole night in fasting and prayer. But when we reached our last service, the church had not been blessed nor the unsaved moved. We knew God had been leading us in the battle, and I was sure

He was trying to do something for us in that last service. I told the church we would begin our meeting all over again. We would have another night of prayer and preaching and would wait until God blessed His people.

This was such an unusual procedure that some of the people were stirred and began to talk. Finally, a timid young girl stood up and said that God had been convicting her because she knew why the church was not blessed, but had said nothing. As she began to talk, others joined in, and we learned there was a quarrel in which most of the church members had been involved. Some had even accused others of practicing witchcraft.

Hours of talking followed—a real *indaba* [in-DAH-bah].¹¹ In the end, the people asked forgiveness of each other and reconciled. Most of the church members went to the altar and came up with smiling faces. Soon the atmosphere had completely changed. God blessed us richly, and several unsaved persons stood, lifted up their hands and cried, “I choose the Lord.” We were glad we had not struck once and stopped (2 Kings 13:18-19).

¹¹ *Indaba* is a wide-ranging word that can mean a discussion, a story, or an important matter.

Chapter 6

Experiences in Africa

I went one afternoon to visit a friend who was in the last stages of tuberculosis. He lay on a mat inside the grass enclosure that surrounded his hut, and I sat on a low soapbox by his head. Soon after I arrived, I looked through an opening in the fence to see two burly men coming toward us. I recognized one as a diviner of our neighborhood—a friendly man who used a pouch full of bones and teeth to sniff out the sorcerers that troubled the people. The other man, I learned, was an honored and famous witch doctor named Mafuta [mah-FOO-tah]. The sick man's neighbors believed he was suffering under a witch's spell; and though they had tried many remedies to combat the witchcraft, the man's condition continued to worsen. The neighbors had called Mafuta on his behalf.

Upon drawing closer to the hut, Mafuta plunged through the opening in the fence like an enraged animal. He wore long feathers on his head, a beautiful leopard skin

around his waist, and white cow tails around his neck, arms, and knees. Horns, pouches, and little gourds full of medicine hung all over his body. With a blood-curdling cry, he leaped into the air, spun around in circles, and waved a long black horse tail above his head. The girls who had come with me almost tore down the fence in their hasty retreat. They ran for home with their hands over their heads, screaming, “*Maye, Babo, Maye, Babo* [MIE-ye BAH-boh MIE-ye BAH-boh]!”¹²

Presently Mafuta ceased his gyrations, stood still before me, smiled, and said kindly, “We see you, Daughter of the King.” Because I had not reacted to his appearance with fright, there was a note of respect in his voice.

Often a missionary’s knowledge of simple medical treatments appears like magic to the rural person who has had

**We see you,
Daughter of
the King.**

—Mafuta (witch doctor)

no contact with modern medicine. One day at the mission, some Christians came to me and said, “There is trouble down at Chief Vilakati’s [vil-ah-KAH-tee]. Something terrible has happened to his favorite wife—her face is broken. They say the spooks did it. They’ve called the witch doctors; but if no one can fix her, the witch doctors will sniff out a sorcerer, and someone may have to die. We think it will be Joseph’s mother, for she is the next beloved among the chief’s wives.” Joseph was one of our

¹² *Maye, Babo* is a phrase used as an utterance that conveys surprise or dismay. It is comparable to exclamations such as “Oh my!” or “Alas.”

Christians, and his mother was also very friendly to the Christians. The possibility that she could be driven away as a witch was indeed a serious matter.

As the chief's wife told it, she had been hoeing in the garden, and, being a little tired, she leaned on her hoe to rest. She heard a rustle in the nearby bushes, and suddenly, a spook jumped out, slapped her on the cheek and broke her face.

We understood this to mean that as the woman stopped to rest, a breeze rustled the bushes. She yawned in the cooling breeze, her jaw had slipped out of place and become dislocated. Knowing no way to replace the jaw, the poor woman was left disfigured and in pain. She was not only physically defaced; but as a victim of an attack by spirits, she was bound to lose her place as the chief's favorite wife.

I sent word to the chief that if he would bring his wife to the mission, I would try to help her. He sent the following reply through the messengers: "Does that woman think she knows more than our witch doctors? Even they can't cure a face that the spooks have slapped." He did not bring his wife.

A few days later, the Christians returned and urged me to go down to Chief Vilakati's to see if I could do something. So I saddled my mule, Coffee, took my little medicine case and medical book, and went down to the chief's house. I was not sure I could replace the jaw—I had never done anything of the kind and had never seen a doctor do it. However, I had read about the procedure in my medical book, and it did not seem like too difficult a task.

When I approached the chief's home, I found the women of the household huddled in fear. All work about the place had ceased. The chief and the men of the homestead were out with the witch doctor preparing for the ritual of sniffing out the witch. They believed that unless they found the witch, more trouble would follow—sickness, crop failure, and even deaths of family members.

I asked the women about the afflicted wife, and they silently pointed to the hut. I got down on my hands and knees and entered through the low door. As I waited for my eyes to adjust to the semidarkness of the windowless hut, I saw the woman sitting on the ground with her head and face covered with a cloth. I asked about her trouble, and she tried her best, with the handicap of a painful jaw, to tell me the story of the slap from the spook. I asked her if I could take a look, and she agreed. So I placed a wisp of cotton around each thumb, as the medical book said to do, put my thumbs on her back molars, and pressed down hard while shoving the jaw backward at the same time. Much to my surprise, the jaw slipped right back into place. The wife was jubilant with thanks and praise, and the other women came to marvel at her healing. As the shadow lifted from the chief's homestead, I explained to those who gathered about that if they practiced, they could do the same thing I had done.

My fame as a bone-fixer spread, and I soon found myself faced with impossible cases of dislocation—some of longstanding. Nevertheless, I was able to help some, and I think the whole matter was used for the furtherance of the gospel.

Magodzi [mah-GOHD-zee] Vilakati

We first met many of our good church workers in this way—when they found that the medicine man was unable to cure them of their afflictions, they came to the missionaries for help. And from these first, desperate encounters, relationships of eternal significance were formed.

Norman Magodzi Vilakati was one of these cases. He was a herdboy, and his father would not let the Christians preach to his homestead. One day an angry cow trampled Magodzi, tearing his mouth and face badly.

Magodzi's injuries became terribly infected. When his family could do no more for him, they put a cloth over his face and brought him to the mission. He was in terrible condition with big flies following him in clouds. But with God's help, little Magodzi recovered. Afterward, his parents did not allow him to return home, lest the enemy who had begun his downfall should find him

**And from these
first, desperate
encounters,
relationships
of eternal
significance were
formed.**

and finish him completely. Magodzi Vilakati was a bright boy, and God called him to preach and teach. He went to Natal,¹³ got a teacher's certificate, and became one of our most successful preacher-teachers.

¹³ Natal Province, was a province of South Africa from 1910 until 1994. In 1994, the KwaZulu [kwah-ZOO-loo] bantustan [BAN-too-stan] (a territory set aside for black inhabitants) was reincorporated into the territory of Natal and the province redesignated KwaZulu-Natal [kwah-ZOO-loo nuh-TAHL].

Editors' Note: Magodzi Vilakati eventually became headmaster of Siteki [se-TE-gee] Nazarene High School, where the editors had the privilege of working with him. He was then appointed to represent the nation of Swaziland as councilor at



Myrtle and Norman Magodzi Vilakati

the Swaziland Embassy in Washington, D.C., USA. Eventually, he was placed in charge of the Embassy as chargé d'affaires [shahr-ZHAY duh-fer]. Rev. Sam Smith, the pastor of the Washington, D.C., First Church of the Nazarene at that time, told the editors, “He is the best support we have; he not only comes to church with his entire

family, he brings all the neighborhood children as well!” Magodzi and his wife Myrtle (Sibandze [se-BAHN-zee]) had children who grew up to become leaders in the church: two have been lay pastors and another, Samuel Siphoh [SEE-poh], served as a member of the General Board of the Church of the Nazarene from 2013 to 2017. In an essay titled, “From Herdboy to Diplomat,” Siphoh summarized his parents’ life:

The lives of Norman and Myrtle are just another example of the blessings emanating from the

response of the early missionaries of the Church of the Nazarene to God's call for them to come to [this continent] away from home and comfort of the motherland. It was only the amazing grace of God that a simple herdboyc found himself in later years representing his country in the land where the missionaries who molded his life came from—the United States of America. Up to the time of his death, he spoke very fondly of the work of the early missionaries.¹⁴

Another testimony to the life and work of Louise Robinson Chapman!

Mgwingi [GWING-gee]

Mgwingi also was a herdboyc. One day he saw some lovely, ripe fruit on a high limb and climbed up to get it. The brittle limb broke, and Mgwingi fell on a sharp snag that tore a great hole in his abdomen through which his intestines protruded. He lay for hours under the tree until, at last, his father found him. After a few days of consultation with a medicine man, Mgwingi was given up to die.

Our student Willie found Mgwingi and led him to the Lord. Every day before and after school, Willie walked the seven or eight miles to Mgwingi's home, expecting each time to find the child gone to be with Jesus. One night, the Lord spoke to me about Mgwingi, so I went with Willie to see if I could do anything to help him.

¹⁴ Samuel Siphon Vilakati, "Norman Magodzi Vilakati: From Herdboyc to Diplomat," Unpublished paper.

As I approached the home, I smelled a terrible odor. The family had pulled the boy outside where he lay in the sun. The flies had been doing their worst, and his body was crawling with maggots. I felt that he could not live long, but I asked the father if I might take the child home with me. The father said, "I couldn't refuse to let you take a corpse to bury." We went home and sent boys with an improvised stretcher to bring Mgwingi to the mission.

I cleaned him up the best I could. Dr. Hynd [HIEND] could not leave his patients at the hospital, so a nurse named Miss [Dora Ann] Carpenter came to help. We put Mgwingi on the dining table in the girls' dorm. Brother Schmelzenbach and Willie prayed in the room, and everybody else prayed outside while Miss Carpenter and I worked to disinfect the wound and sew the boy up. After we had done our best, God heard and worked for us.

For several weeks, Willie and I took turns staying with Mgwingi every minute. One night, Mgwingi told me that, when he got well, he was not going back to his home—God had told him he was to be a preacher when he grew up.

Mgwingi had many hindrances and trials; but he stood true to God, and now he lives with his little family in the bushveld.¹⁵ The missionary there said Mgwingi is a very successful pastor and has unusual influence with the unsaved.

Elizabeth Sibandze

Elizabeth Sibandze was given to a heathen man, but she wanted to be a Christian. When she was almost grown,

¹⁵ A variation on the word veld.

she ran away from home and came to the Girls' School at Endzingeni. She chose God and lived a Christian life, but she was powerless and undependable in her Christian service. She sought a clean heart for months. One night in family prayer, Sibandze was sanctified. She chose the Christian name Elizabeth. She later married John, one of our preachers, and they made their home at one of the outlying missions.

There was one church in which the members were discouraged and many had backslidden. The church building was leaning badly to one side and ready to fall down, and the pastor's huts were old and leaky. I knew there were great possibilities in that place, and so I asked John and Elizabeth to go with their little family and try to save the church. After school, I rode 15 miles on muleback in the pouring rain to meet them at their new field of service. It was a gloomy day. We huddled around the little fire in a leaky cook hut and moved about to keep from being drenched by the rain that came in rivulets through the roof. We asked God to keep the church from falling on the men who had to sleep there.

The next morning, as I looked at the leaning church, the dilapidated huts, and the many discouraging things round about, I almost condemned myself for asking a man with a family to come to such a place to live. Elizabeth was in poor health, and the children had colds.

Nevertheless, we began to build. For weeks the people carried stone and sledge for the walls of the church. We dug sand from the riverbanks and carried it to plaster the walls. The people also began to build a home for their pastor. It

was a long, hard job. At times when the people grew discouraged and were about to give up, I would go over and work a few days with them.

One day, as we were plastering the walls of the parsonage with mud, I took the old women and children and we raced against the girls and younger women. We were covered in mud from head to foot by the end of it, but the experience proved to be the tonic they needed. The men who had been ready to quit came back to finish the roofs. In two days, we did more than they in their discouragement would have completed in two weeks.

A year passed. One beautiful afternoon, I again rode the 15 miles on muleback. When I came around the curve in the road, I saw a nice stone church neatly painted with cement and roofed with corrugated iron. Around the yard was a fence of white stones that continued down a flower-lined pathway to the pastor's house. The parsonage was a two-room mud house with a cluster of neat huts in back. Inside the house was furnished with homemade furniture, beds, tables, trunks, and chairs. Everything was spotlessly clean. Pretty pictures hung on the whitewashed walls, and embroidered, unbleached muslin decorated the beds and tables. A simple meal lay on the table for the missionary.

The next morning the church was so full of children that some of the Sunday School classes were taken outside. There was a great crowd for the morning service with many friendly non-Christians attending. The people sang, shouted, and gave a liberal offering. There was much blessing upon the meeting and the seekers at the altar.

After church I looked at the day school register—there had never been so many children in attendance. My heart swelled with gratitude for the wonderful things that had been accomplished in one short year. I called Elizabeth aside and told her how proud I was of her and John. She responded, “Daughter of the King, would you like to know the secret of my part in this success?”

Elizabeth said that one day when she was sick and pressed, she began to feel she could no longer go on. Then she remembered that while she was a student at Endzingeni, God had saved and sanctified her in answer to her heart cries. She was in school when we built the Girls’ Home, prayed down revivals, and got such marvelous answers to prayer. She thought, “God helped me there. Can’t He help me here?” Mighty faith leaped up in her heart. She grabbed her coat like Elisha of old (2 Kings 2:14), folded it up, and beat the difficulties before her, shouting, “Where is the Lord God of Endzingeni?” The waters parted, and she found that God heard her when she prayed alone, just as He had heard her when she prayed in school with many others.

Editors’ Note: John and Elizabeth Dlamini [dlah-MEE-nee] were successful pastors for the rest of their lives. Their daughter, Amy Joyce, became matron (head of the nursing staff) of the Nazarene Hospital, and their son, Sibusiso [see-boo-SEE-soh] Barnabas, became finance minister, then deputy director of the World Bank, and for more than 20 years now has served as the honorable prime minister of the

nation of Swaziland. Louise Robinson Chapman's ministry continues to bless Africa!



The Hon. Barnabas Dlamini, Prime Minister of Swaziland; son of pioneer pastors John and Elizabeth Dlamini.

I never like to say good-bye. But when God told me to leave Africa, I knew I had to. It was hard to leave all the beloved places and things of Endzingeni. As I rode my mule, Coffee, over the hills of beautiful Swaziland, I knew I might be doing so for the last time. The wonderful people with whom I had been living and working for 20 years were

the cause of my distress when I said good-bye—they seemed like my very own family. Africa had become my home.

Hundreds of people came to mourn my leaving. One of the chiefs said to me, “Good-bye, Dulile [doo-LEE-le]¹⁶—from today we shall be orphans.” And as one of the pastors arrived dressed in leopard skins and cow tails with battle axe and spears, the others presented me with a gift—a warrior's costume of my own. They explained its meaning

¹⁶ Dulile was the name that the Swazis gave Louise Robinson Chapman. In the early days, she talked frequently about expensive items, trying to teach thrift. Then she preached a deep experience of grace, obtainable only by a great price. Dulile means deep, expensive, high-priced. Louise Chapman cherished that name to the end of her days.

to me: In the ancient days, once a warrior donned these battle garments, he never took them off until the victory was won. As they gave me the gift, the pastors promised they would never lay down their burden as leaders except in death or victory at the coming of the Lord.

If I had my life to live again, and if God would grant me the great privilege, I would gladly go again to Africa. I know of no place in all the world where one can better serve God and humanity than in the great continent of Africa!

Chapter 7

Great Things He Has Done!

Chuck and Doris Gailey

This story does not end with Louise Robinson Chapman leaving Africa. Not at all! God has blessed the Church in Africa almost beyond imagination. Today, the Church of the Nazarene is established in 40 nations of the continent. The Church has spread from the southernmost tip of the continent throughout West and East Africa. One hundred three languages are used in Nazarene worship services every Sunday. Membership surpassed 700,000 persons in 2017—more than USA/Canada membership! God has done great things!

In 2018, Nazarene schools, clinics, and theological colleges dot the African landscape. Nazarene colleges, universities, and seminaries enroll more than 10,000 students. God has done great things!

The movement begun long ago by pioneer missionaries, including the Schmelzenbachs, Louise Chapman, Fairy Chism, and others, is bearing great fruit in the 21st century.

The current movement is faithful to the founders' emphasis on persistent prayer:

The Church in Africa is a praying church. We believe that we can trust God to do what He is willing to do through us. The first and most important thing we must do is pray. These are the extraordinary prayer requests of themes we would like every Nazarene to pray for the Africa Region:

- Every Nazarene dependent upon God only
- Every Nazarene a Spirit-filled disciple
- Every Nazarene a disciple maker with a real burden for the lost
- Every Nazarene giving authority to God's Word
- Every Nazarene an extraordinary pray-er
- Every Nazarene leader faithful to God, family, and church
- Every Nazarene leader building leaders who build leaders who change the world
- Every Nazarene pastor an effective minister of the Word
- Every Nazarene home a nursery for Holiness Champions
- Every Nazarene local church experiencing a real movement of the Holy Spirit

Africa Region Website
January 2013

Does this not sound like a summary of Louise Robinson Chapman's vision for Africa? The strong, consecrated leadership of those early African missionaries has cast a long and lasting influence in developing great leaders. A fine example is Filimão Chambo [fe-lee-MOW CHAHM-boh]. Dr. Chambo was the director of the Africa Region until, in June 2017, he was elected as the 42nd general superintendent of the Church of the Nazarene. Born in a Nazarene parsonage in the nation of Mozambique, educated in Nazarene schools, and with a Ph.D. from Johannesburg University, Dr. Chambo, as regional director, said, "We are to be a holiness movement empowered by God to lead the people of Africa and beyond to be true disciples of Jesus Christ." He continued, "This is consistent with the regional objectives: 1) Holiness revivalism, 2) Evangelism, 3) Discipleship, and 4) Education." All across the second-largest continent in the world, ministers and laity alike are adhering to this vision!

Many African Nazarenes are also blessing the world at large. E.V. Dlamini from Swaziland was an early member of the global General Board. Lawrence Mncina [um-KEEN-ah] led traveling singing groups to Nazarene churches across Swaziland and later became ambassador to the United States. And on April 24, 2017, E.V. Dlamini's daughter, Njabu [NJAH-boo], presented her credentials to the president of the United States as the new ambassador from Swaziland!

On a recent visit to Africa, the editors found the churches packed and all-night prayer meetings taking place, sometimes even in public parks. Does that not bring to mind Louise Robinson Chapman's life and vision? She

and other early missionaries have left an enduring heritage in this vast continent.

Louise's influence continued long after she left Swaziland. She married General Superintendent J. B. Chapman after his first wife died. She was elected president of what we know today as Nazarene Missions International and traveled the globe, preaching and inspiring others. Missionary John Cunningham testifies that when he was 10 years old, Louise Robinson Chapman touched his life by praying with him at the altar of a revival service. She said to him, "Young man, I believe God wants you to be a missionary in Africa."

John looked up into her face and said, "No, ma'am, I don't think so."

She replied, "Well, you pray about it, and I'll pray with you. God will lead you."¹⁷

John forgot all about the conversation. When he eventually did receive a missionary call, he thought perhaps he and his wife Sandy would go to South America or Asia. But when they received their appointment, it was to Africa! It was only then that he remembered the prayers of the missionary speaker long ago. The Cunninghams have since devoted their lives to missionary service.

When Louise Robinson Chapman retired, she went to live in the Casa Robles Missionary Retirement Center, near Los Angeles, California, USA. The editors met her there in her later years; at 92, her mind was still spry and witty. As she was wheeled into the reception in a wheelchair, she was

¹⁷ Elaine Cunningham, *The Boy Who Lived in a Church*, Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1999.

excited to tell us, “I can still remember what you said when you met the General Board and were appointed as missionaries in 1963.” And in fact, she was able to tell us virtually word-for-word! Louise became so energized by our conversation that, when it came time for us to leave, she jumped up, grabbed the handles, and pushed her own wheelchair down the sidewalk! She was a remarkable lady!

On Louise’s 100th birthday, there was a big celebration. Many dignitaries were there, including a general superintendent and other leaders of the church. There were letters from the president of the United States and the governor of California. Many people gave speeches applauding Dr. Chapman’s contributions to missions, to the church at large, and to the community. The Church in Swaziland sent their own emissary: Rev. Juliet Ndzimandze [zee-MAHN-zee], daughter of Pastor Solomon.¹⁸

When it came time for Rev. Juliet to speak, she began to wave the flag of Swaziland and said, “Mother Chapman, I hail you with a Swazi flag on your 100th birthday!” As she did so, Dr. Chapman began to cry. Great tears filled her eyes and began to spill down the face that had weathered a hundred years.

Rev. Ndzimandze continued with a wonderful summary of Louise’s service in Africa:

Swaziland loves you, our mother! You told the people about salvation. You told them about sanctification. You told them to “pay the whole price” for

¹⁸ See Chapter 5, “Discipling New Christians.”

revival. They did that, revival came down, and it continued for years and spread out to the surrounding churches. I remember when you came to Helehele on horseback and prayed with the workers. You prayed with my mother. I remember even now very clearly. Your face and my mother's face were both shining with glory from heaven. Heaven came down, and revival fires really burned. May your mantle of faith, your mantle of intercession, your mantle of doing battle . . . we pray that your mantle may fall on us!¹⁹



Juliet Ndzimandze waving Swaziland flag over Louise Chapman.

The mantle of Louise Robinson Chapman has indeed fallen on the Church in Africa. Even today, as we write, an email has come from Pastor Thandie Gamedze

¹⁹ Chuck Gailey, *Daughter of Africa*, (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1998).

[THAHN-dee gah-MEDS-ze] in Swaziland, "Praise God! Revivals are in progress 35 people repented yesterday. I'm planning to spend the whole day tomorrow doing home visitation. God planned this revival....the fields are ready for harvest! Please continue to remember us in prayer.

The mantle of prayer, commitment, and obedience has fallen on Africa. Dr. Chambo put it well when he wrote, "We pray for the purifying fire of the Holy Spirit to burn deep into African Nazarene hearts and lives, sanctifying us and emboldening us to continue sharing the message of holiness with our neighbors near and far despite obstacles and difficulties."²⁰

No wonder there was an increase of 29,794 members of the Church of the Nazarene Africa Region in 2017!

Harmon Schmelzenbach, the first Nazarene missionary to Africa, labored for three years before the first two people became Christians. By the time the second edition of this book was published in 1989, there were 49,000 Nazarenes. Today, Nazarenes in Africa number more than 700,000! God has done great things!

Strong commitment, persistent prayer, and radical obedience are still God's way.

Devoted Christians in Africa are living like that.

Am I?

²⁰ "From the Desk of the Regional Director," formerly on the Africa Region website

Act On It

- Ask, “How does my personal prayer life measure up to that of Louise Robinson Chapman? What steps can I take to improve my prayer life?”
- Pray for individuals called to missionary service, that they will have courage to say “yes” to God.
- Pray for your local church, that strong commitment, persistent prayer, and sacrificial service will characterize your congregation.
- Pray for Christians in Africa, some of whom are facing persecution. Pray that they will be strong.
- Give generously to the World Evangelism Fund so that the Church of the Nazarene will be dynamic, missionaries may be sent to other world areas, and global revival will take place.
- “Throw open the windows of your soul,” and ask God how He can use you to change the world.

