

# WANDA

by

Carol Anne Eby

Edited by

Andrew Bennett

2020

Nazarene Missions International

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WANDA

*by Carol Anne Eby*  
*Edited by Andrew Bennett*

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Carol Anne Eby  
Edited by  
Andrew Bennett



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As supplement to this text are excerpts from Sidney Knox’s journal, which appeared in the book, *The Call of New Guinea*. They are highlighted in a light gray background, and in many cases help to clarify or “fill in the blanks” in Wanda’s story.

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# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Andrew (“Andy”) Bennett was raised in Nazarene parsonages in Washington, Montana, Wyoming, and Colorado, and asked Jesus into his heart at an early age. As a child he felt a call to serve as a medical missionary, but that call faded as he grew older. He studied music at Northwest Nazarene College (now University). There, he met Judy Hunt who had been raised in a Nazarene family in Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada, and they married in 1975.

Andy served briefly on a church staff, but returned to college for pre-medical studies, then went on to the University of Washington, where he received his MD degree in 1984. After practicing Family Medicine for 15 years, God “re-awakened” His call for Andy to serve as a medical missionary. Andy and Judy arrived in Papua New Guinea in 2003, where they served at Nazarene Hospital for 14 years, eyewitnesses to the profound influence of Wanda Knox in PNG. Understanding the history of the work there, and having firsthand experience of its growth makes Andy the right person to update Wanda, a story well worth the re-telling. Andy and Judy have served with Nazarene Global Missions promoting medical missions in the church. Both are active in their local NMI, and delight to encourage young people who feel called to missions.

# FOREWORD

When I arrived in Papua New Guinea in 2003, I knew little about the history of Nazarene work there. What I knew, was the fact that the work had been planted by Sidney and Wanda Knox. I had started reading as many of the NMI (or NFMS or NWMS, depending on the year they were written) missions books about New Guinea. Among these books: *Wanda*, from 1991, and *The Call of New Guinea*, from 1958.

I'm pretty sure that all rookie missionaries have doubts. Yes, some seem more confident than others, but I think they all have many of the questions I had. "Is this really what God is calling me to do?" "What am I doing there?" "Why is the Church of the Nazarene here?" "Is the work here really part of His plan?"

With those questions simmering on the back burner, and threatening to boil over with the slightest provocation, I read this from Sidney's book:

January 1 [1956] ... At precisely two minutes past noon this day, the sweetest experience I think I have ever had was mine to enjoy; that is, aside from the time the Lord saved my soul and later sanctified me and called me to His service. The tears of joy came

so spontaneously I simply could not contain myself. Never has there been a sweeter experience and dealing of the Holy Spirit than at that moment. Any doubt we may have reserved was at once removed, and the way appeared so clear. God wants us at Kudjip....

That got my attention! I can't tell you even the date, let alone the time to the nearest minute when I was saved, sanctified, or called to mission service. Sidney's account moved me deeply. As I read of his tears, tears came to my own eyes. The Lord assured my heart that our work there was indeed a part of His very special plans. He had sent Sid and Wanda specifically to plant the work at Kudjip, where I was at that time living and working. He assured me that my work was part of that plan.

As we lived at Kudjip, we would frequently meet older people who had known "Nokis na Wanda [NOH-kis-na WAHN-dah]." For speakers of the tribal languages in the Highlands, blended consonant sounds like "x" or "ks" are very difficult, so a vowel is inserted to make it "kis," for instance. Thus, "Nokis" is the closest they can come to pronouncing Sidney "Knox." "Na" is the Melanesian Pidgin word for "and." In the traditional naming system, each person has one name. They would use their father's or their husband's name as a sort of surname, so to use their names in the Western form would imply either that they were siblings who had married, or that Wanda was married to Sidney's father. So "Nokis na Wanda" is how they refer to the Knoxes, meaning "Knox and Wanda."



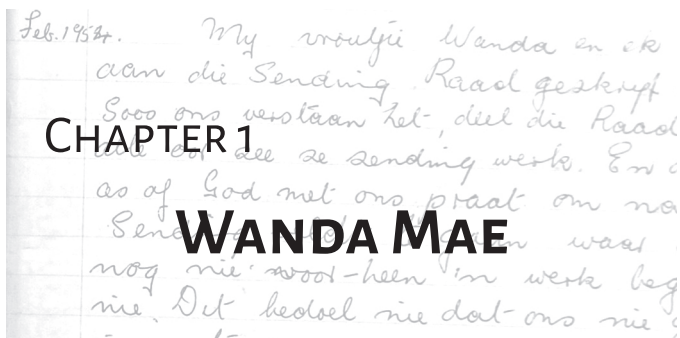
People would brag with great pride that they knew them. Often a skit about the Knoxes is used to open important meetings. Usually, the Knoxes are portrayed by a young man in a suit, and a young woman in a long dress with an old-fashioned hat perched on her head. They would both be carrying Bibles. They would be surrounded by “angels,” girls with faces painted white, and shrouded in white bed-sheets. Often Jesus is portrayed by a young man who would look a lot like an angel, except for a golden crown on his head. Sometimes the skit would represent the arrival of the Knoxes, pantomimed preaching, and a group of local people falling to their knees in repentance. Sometimes it would include the Knoxes being welcomed to heaven with a “well done, good and faithful servants.”

The influence of this obedient young couple on the highlands of PNG is incalculable. Unless you pay close attention to the dates, you may not realize that it was only about two and a half years between the Knoxes’ arrival in New Guinea and their departure because of Sid’s illness. But in that brief time, the church was established in several key communities. Young believers who would go on to lead the church there were led to Christ and disciplined. The seeds of the great work that God continues to do in that dark place were planted and watered. Wanda, of course, returned several years later and was part of the care of the growing young church.

The following pages contain a retelling of Wanda’s story, as originally told nearly 30 years ago by Carol Anne Eby, veteran PNG missionary, supplemented by Sidney’s own

account of the early days of their work from 1955-58. As you read, please focus, not on what great people the Knoxes were or on what exceptional abilities they had, but on how faithful and obedient they were to God's call. Think about your own life, and imagine what God can do through your faithfulness if you will obey Him.

Andrew Bennett



## CHAPTER 1

# WANDA MAE

Wanda Mae Fulton was born March 21, 1931, in Oklahoma City. Her mother was 17 years old. A daily religious radio program that featured a Christian singer named Wanda inspired Mrs. Fulton's choice of her daughter's name, and she added the Mae after Wanda's grandmother, who was to become a significant influence in Wanda's life.

Wanda's family moved from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA to Pauls Valley, Oklahoma, USA two months before her third birthday. There was no Nazarene church there at the time, so the family attended the First Baptist Church. When Wanda was six years old, Rev. M. L Turbyfill [TUHR-bee-fil] came to Pauls Valley, purchased an old house, and started a Nazarene church. Wanda sang her first solo there, beginning a lifelong love for music.

Wanda's mother recalls that Wanda was saved and sanctified so early in life. It almost seemed to her that Wanda was born a Christian. Wanda recalled that important event very clearly. "In 1939, I gave my heart to Jesus – and somehow

knew deep inside that *nothing* else in the world was worth living for. I was eight at the time, and this knowledge colored my thinking and my actions from that day on. The church in Pauls Valley, Oklahoma, and Rev. M. L. Turbyfill cared for *me*, a child. My heroes were not TV stars but godly men and women who consistently put Christ first – with *joy*. I guess it was their joy that spoke to me most.”

Loving Jesus and the church did indeed consume Wanda’s life from then on. She not only attended every meeting at the Nazarene church but also was a part of the Christian Endeavor, Baptist Union, and the Presbyterian youth groups during weekdays, and Youth for Christ on Saturday nights. During the summer, she would attend one Vacation Bible School after another. All the churches loved her.

When Wanda was 12, the family moved back to Oklahoma City. At this time, Wanda became a charter member of the Shields Church of the Nazarene. Again, she became totally involved in the life of the church. She played the piano. She and her mom both sang in the services—solos, because they both sang alto. There were “singings”<sup>1</sup> at the different churches in those days, and Wanda never missed any. Every Sunday seemed to be open house at the Fultons. Dad Fulton would help with the cooking too; if not an evangelist or missionary, it would be teenage friends. One was never enough. It had to be a group of at least half a dozen, and the more, the merrier, even to 25 or 30, a pattern Wanda would follow the rest of her life.

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<sup>1</sup> “Singings” were common in the day. Churches would gather and sing hymns, hear musical specials from various congregations, and enjoy worship through music.

Wanda's ever-widening circle of friendships included close ones developed in high school. Wanda studied very hard and always made good grades. In addition to her devotion to studies, Wanda found time to be in the Girls Glee Club<sup>2</sup>, Bible History Club, Spanish Club, and Debate Club. How she loved to debate! That honest questioning and earnest demand for answers would delight future college students as she challenged professors, perhaps frustrated or even exasperated mission directors, and church leaders, but throughout her life, she thirsted for truth.

Music filled Wanda's life. Loving to sing, she was a member of the a cappella choir in high school and was always involved in festivals and music contests. She played the alto saxophone and was first chair in Capitol Hill's band. She performed at all the football games. While in high school, Wanda was asked to become the female member of the Forest Woodward Quartet. They sang on the radio each morning before school and traveled to many towns in Oklahoma on weekends for concerts. Because Wanda was the only unmarried one, a girlfriend always went along as her companion. Any money left after expenses was divided. Her portion was to be her spending money. She always knew of someone who needed it more than she did, or of some special project or offering that was coming up. One of her friends declared that Wanda was the most unselfish person she had ever known.

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<sup>2</sup> Glee Clubs were organized small groups who performed short songs, known as "glees"—often in trios or quartets.

According to Wanda's reflections in her diary, she noted that her teenage years were good years. There were beautiful memories of a wonderful home and good, solid parents. She had fun at school with friends to talk to and share deep things; understanding teachers, and satisfying church services with growth in love of God's Word and of Him. She recalls men such as Rev. Louis McMahan, Rev. Willie Voight, Rev. Richard McBrien, and Rev Joe Stevens, who, to an idealistic, searching teen, conveyed a sense of "total commitment" with joy. She remembers the beautiful little lady who always testified on Wednesday night with, "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name" (Ps. 103:1), and the man who seemed to always end with, "It's a-gettin' gooder and gooder all the time!" Sometimes the teens laughed, but they couldn't miss the radiance on the faces, or the kind words of encouragement that Wanda always felt were for her.

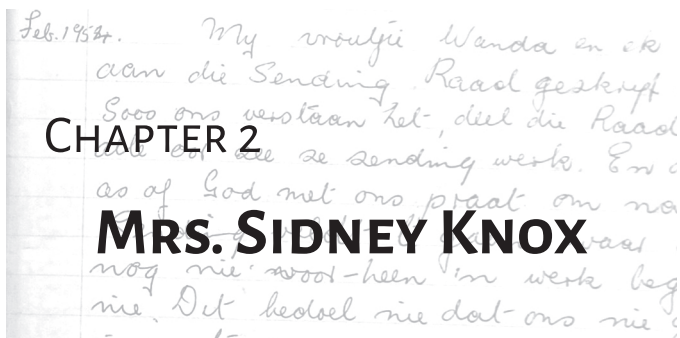
Following Jesus and telling others of His love was a passion in Wanda's life. Yet, during her teenage years, she could not claim a mission call. Missionaries came and went, showed their slides, and touched her heart. Missionaries such as Everette Howard and Louise Robinson Chapman stirred her soul, but a sense of missionary calling – no. Reminiscing, Wanda said, "My friends received one ... nearly every missionary service sometimes. They would struggle, sometimes even lose out for a time, not wanting to go to the mission field. I remember praying, 'Father, I don't understand. Why don't You call me? I'll go – then they won't have to struggle!' But He never did."

In later years as Wanda watched teens struggle in a status-seeking, pressured age, she would say, “I didn’t feel pressured as it seems so many youths do now – pressured to be the best at studies, or music, or sports, at making money, or making friends – winning teen talents or quizzes, and popularity contests. No—I had time to reflect and to think and pray and take long walks and meditate and just be *myself*. No, I wasn’t outstanding in anything. I just enjoyed it all—and in the process seemed to learn or discover that enjoyment of *Him* made *everything* sweeter.”

In May 1949, Wanda graduated from high school with honors. In the fall, she was off to Bethany Nazarene College [now Southern Nazarene University] in Bethany, Oklahoma, USA, where she was to meet a young man named Sidney Knox and find a new name.







THE COLLEGE DINING HALL hummed with the usual chatter of hungry students waiting for their lunch. Sidney Knox, a tall, serious-looking junior lost in his thoughts, was suddenly brought back to the present by a bright, animated voice saying, “Mr. Knox, I really enjoyed your talk in missions class today.” With a bright smile and a toss of the head, Wanda went on her way, but Sidney would never be the same. Heart pounding and lunch failing to digest very well, he raced to his room, sat down at the desk, and wrote Louise, his sister, these astounding words: “I met my future wife today. She doesn’t know it, but she is.” Thus, began Sid’s campaign to bring Wanda Mae Fulton to the altar to change her name, and he diligently pursued the cause with the same determination he used in every other task he faced. It wasn’t long until Wanda accepted that first date, and soon they were spending a lot of time together.

Sid and Wanda soon felt it was God’s plan for them to become more than “good friends.” Of course, Sid had

felt God's leading from the first moment of their meeting, but Wanda needed a bit more convincing. Wanda, in love and radiantly happy, felt one burden: Sid had a call to the mission field. She didn't. Would this be a hindrance? Concerned, the young couple talked to Dr. Remiss [REE-mis] Rehfeldt [RAY-felt], the World Mission director at that time, and found that a wife could go on a husband's clear call – if she were willing. Wanda was willing!

May 27, 1951, was the most significant day of Sidney Knox's life to that moment, with the exception of the day he gave his heart to the Lord. That morning he received his college diploma, and that afternoon he met Wanda Mae at the altar to begin an adventure that would lead them to the "ends of the earth."

But for the next four years, they went only as far as Texas. They began their ministry at a home mission church in Slaton [SLAY-tuhn] and then after two years moved to Big Springs. Geron [GER-uhn] Murray arrived on July 18, 1953, to bless the home. While pastoring in Big Springs, the family attended the district Nazarene Foreign Missionary Society (NFMS; later, it went through several name changes, and is now known as Nazarene Missions International) convention in Mineral Wells, Texas. Dr. Mary Scott<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The late Mary Scott served as a Nazarene missionary to China and Japan for 12 years. She and a number of other Christian missionaries were imprisoned in China during World War II, prior to the country's takeover by the Communist party. In 1950, Mary Scott became executive secretary of Nazarene Missions International (NMI; now the global NMI director), where she served for 25 years. In 1966, her alma mater Olivet Nazarene University conferred an honorary Doctor of Letters degree on Mary Scott.

was the speaker and presented the challenge of New Guinea [GI-nee], a new field to be sponsored by NFMS. The offering for New Guinea was to be taken on October 15, NFMS day. Wanda reflects, “As Mary Scott spoke, my heart was stirred, challenged – and then heaviness set in. A heaviness that grew and grew – until before the evening, I knew I was being called to New Guinea. ‘Why, Lord? Why now? I have loved You for years. I’ve been open to a call. Now I’m married. My husband feels a call to India. I must go with him. Why give me this heavy burden for New Guinea?’”

Wanda left the convention with a heavy, heavy heart.

**From Sidney’s journal:**

May 1954—My, what a Missionary Convention this has been! ...Miss Scott set most everyone afire with a vivid account of the N.F.M.S. fortieth anniversary project—a special offering for the opening of work on the island of New Guinea. I recall reading an article in the *Reader’s Digest* a few years ago about New Guinea. Sounds like a rugged place to be sure. It sounds rugged, but it also sounds wonderful. I jokingly asked Miss Scott if she thought they would consider us. Her reply, “Why don’t you try and see!” Oh, me, I fear that assignment is a bit out of my category.

May 1954 (*latter part*)—I do not wish to get ahead of the Spirit, but God has been seemingly leading in the direction of at least making application for the New Guinea assignment. Don’t know just how this will affect Wanda’s feelings. I would want to be sure of myself before mentioning it to her.

During the next two weeks, she prayed and wept much but couldn't shake the burden. She said nothing to Sid, but one morning he came into breakfast, looking a little "heavy" himself. Looking dejectedly at Wanda, he said, "I really hate to tell you this, or ask you to go to such a primitive country, but I feel God is asking me to apply for New Guinea."

In the South Pacific, the island of New Guinea hovers just above Australia like an ancient prehistoric bird settling down on its nest. The western side of the island is politically part of Indonesia and was formerly known as "Irian Jaya" [EER-ee-ahn JAH-yah], but is now the province of Papua [PAH-pyoio-ah].<sup>4</sup> The eastern half is now the country of Papua [PAH-pwah] New Guinea.<sup>5</sup>

#### **From Sidney's journal:**

*June 1, 1954*—I wonder when I shall ever learn that God does not do things "on the halves." Wanda has told me of a very precious experience she has had. From the assembly, she went to Oklahoma City to visit her folks, and on the bus while en route, God definitely laid a call to New Guinea upon her heart. This means much to her to be sure. She has always had a desire to do missionary duty but, up to now, did not feel a definite call. We have written the Department of Foreign Missions about our feelings in this matter. If they do not feel we are suited for New Guinea, we still will go where the board feels we may best serve.

<sup>4</sup> This is the pronunciation used when referring to the Indonesian section of the island.

<sup>5</sup> "New Guinea" is the name of an island north of Australia. "Papua New Guinea," on the eastern half of the island, is a country that achieved independence in 1975. "Papua" and "Western Papua" are provinces of Indonesia located on the western half of the island.

Laughing, crying, and rejoicing, they fell into each other's arms; as Wanda said, "God always works on both ends (and in the middle, too, if He needs to)!" they applied for missionary work again. The board already had their application marked "Preference: India." Now it was "Preference: New Guinea."

They were asked to meet the Department of World Missions in January 1955. What excitement! The missionaries who had been serving a while shared experiences that encouraged the Knoxes; the new missionaries, like themselves, were apprehensive but knew they were obeying God to come this way. Meeting the board was eased by Sid's banter with Dr. Bob Mangum [MAING-uhm]. When they met with the general superintendents, Wanda remembered Dr. Samuel Young's astute question, "Do you plan to be



The Knox family, 1955

one-term missionaries?” Wanda later said, “I’m so glad he asked that. It came in handy some years later!” indeed, it was to be only a few years until this conversation was to be remembered, and Wanda was to use it as a powerful, persuasive tool to continue her missionary career beyond one term.

The announcement of the new missionaries’ names finally came. As Wanda expressed it, “Oh my, oh my! Few times in life are so emotion-packed. We knew the whole course of our life was now headed in a new direction. Congratulations, condolences; some of the older missionaries would have enjoyed going with us.”

The little family rushed back to Big Springs to begin preparations for leaving. October was the target date, and much had to be done. On September 26, 1955, Wanda experienced her first plane ride. They flew to San Francisco; left there on October 5; spent a week in Hawaii with friends; then, flew to Australia to spend three or four days in Sydney and two days in Brisbane.

#### **From Sydney’s journal:**

*October 8*—We are scheduled to arrive in Sydney, Australia, late this afternoon. I’m sorry we are getting there so late, since we know absolutely no one, and have no idea how far we will be from the city and a hotel. I trust I can make my Texas drawl understood!

*October 11*—Well, did we ever underestimate the Department of Foreign Missions and our Australian Nazarenes! We noticed some people who kept waving in our direction as we made our way to the customs office. I knew definitely they couldn’t be waving at us, so just ignored them and went on in.

Imagine our surprise about an hour later when we were confronted by the wavers—a great group of Nazarenes from the various Sydney churches. It seems Dr. Rehfeldt had informed them of our expected arrival. How wonderful! In fact, I cannot express our real feelings.

Finally, On October 14, they arrived in Port Moresby [MORZ–bee], administration headquarters of the Territory of Papua, part of what was later to become the nation of Papua New Guinea.

Wanda discovered early that missionaries' children are great ambassadors to win friends in other cultures. In later years, Wanda was to tell Geron how patient and good he was in those early days. After falling down the stairs in Hawaii and frightening his parents, he won everyone's heart in Port Moresby. They all loved this little two-and-a-half-year-old American boy with his short pants, bow tie, and quick smile. The heat bothered Geron a great deal, and he woke up one morning singing "It Will Be Worth It All When We See Jesus." Sid and Wanda got a laugh out of that and spoke of it many times. "Out of the mouth of babes" (Matt. 21:16) – Wanda would remind the children many times how true those words were.

While staying at the Papuan Hotel, they met Geoff Basket, a tanned, congenial Aussie. Geoff was house-sitting for an Australian physician working in Port Moresby, who was away on holiday. When he heard that the Knoxes needed a home to stay in, he offered his assistance. It wasn't

worth packing and repacking for such a short distance, so Geoff 's first memories of Wanda were of her standing in the back of the utility truck, holding a number of dresses by their hangers, and laughing with Sidney as they drove through the streets of Port Moresby like people advertising a secondhand sale!

Remembering those days, Geoff recalls, "I have always enjoyed the fellowship God gave me with the Knoxes. Having them stay with me in Moresby was great fun!" While there, they helped Geoff celebrate his 40th birthday with chocolate cake. Wanda learned that was a "kid's" cake, and real birthday cake was fruitcake. They presented a Bible to Geoff with their names inscribed on it for his gift.

**From Sidney's journal:**

*October 19*—Here I sit in Lae [LAY] on the New Guinea side. Perhaps this needs explaining. The Australian part of New Guinea is divided almost in half. One half is called Papua and is under direct jurisdiction of Australia. The other half, which is known as New Guinea, is actually a United Nations trusteeship administered by Australia. The one administrative office in Port Moresby handles official matters for the whole of the two territories, but there are different laws regarding each to some extent. I had to register as a clergyman in both, and likewise, the church had to be registered in both since we do not know as yet which side we will locate on. Minj [MINJ], Mount Hagen [HAH-guhn], and Wabag [WAH-bag] [and Kudjip (KOO-jip) —ed.] in the Highlands are in New Guinea;



while Mendi [MEN-dee] and Tari [TAH-ree] both are in Papua. One must go through the formality of customs traveling from Papua into New Guinea or vice versa.

*October 22*—Only tonight have I really settled down to consider my first objective here—and it staggers me. I'm told that the total combined area of both Papua and New Guinea comprises some 183,540 square miles (475,366 square kilometers). As I figure it, that is 117,465,600 acres (47,536,642 hectares); and out of that, I'm to choose 5 (acres; 2 hectares) of them (the original mission lease under government regulations). This somewhat reminds me of trying to find the needle in a haystack. Surely in such an undertaking, God must be interested. No doubt most of these acres (hectares) are inhabited by never-dying souls. How utterly and completely must we be led of His Spirit in our decisions and moves! Unless something really seems to strike a chord, we will not make an "on the spot" decision but weigh the total picture together and see if we can find a place where we feel it would please God for us to establish our work.

*October 25*—Talked with a patrol officer at Banz [BANZ]. He suggested we might be interested in investigating an area of land now owned by the government across the Wahgi [WAH-gee] valley from Banz known as Kudjip. Seems there is a large population and no European missions located in that region. Don't know why, but somehow that seemed to strike a chord in my heart, but it is quite likely that investigation at Moresby will reveal the government is in no mood to lease any part of the ground. They surely had some purpose in acquiring it from

the locals and quite likely still have their ideas in mind.<sup>6</sup> Will check this as a remote possibility at least. The Minj area seems quite likable too. Don't feel too strongly about the Mount Hagen region since it has been settled since the first white man arrived in 1933 and has missionary activity quite well established around that area.

*November 3*—I wrote a detailed report to Dr. Rehfeldt today regarding my investigations into the Highlands. I have now completed investigation regarding the Goroka [goh-ROH-kah], Minj, Banz, Mount Hagen, Mendi, Tari, and Wabag areas. These are the principal centers of the Highlands. By centers, we mean airstrips. At present only three—Minj, Banz, and Wabag—will take the DC-3 cargo ships which we will actually need to handle our equipment. The Kudjip area is some twelve miles (19 kilometers) removed from the Minj airstrip. Have made extensive investigation with the Lands Department here at headquarters. They have indicated they would be agreeable to the mission lease, and possibly a larger area later, on the government reserve at Kudjip. Before application can be made, however, I will have to survey the area and mark the exact spot I want. Looks like fun ahead!

*November 15*—...One last check with Administration officials. They are a grand lot, to be sure. The main criticism that the government has of mission bodies founding in the Territory is that of lack of support. They have a right to take a dim view of those groups who desire to establish themselves without

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<sup>6</sup> The government had taken this land from the locals, because it had become a frequent battleground in fights between the Kuma [KOO-mah] and Sigang tribes, and they wanted to try to establish a buffer zone between the two. However, Sidney did not know this at the time.

proper backing to establish an organization that will contribute to the upbuilding of the Territory as a whole. In this respect, we have been most cordially received. The fact that we have a prefabricated home and steel building to erect immediately has drawn much favorable consideration. The other equipment has likewise contributed to this feeling. They know we, as a mission, are here to stay. They are interested in such. How thankful we are for a group of loyal supporters, who so generously gave of their substance to help purchase equipment that would help us considerably in our endeavors, both in making our task easier and helping us receive necessary consideration in such matters as acquiring land! They shall truly share alike in the eternal rewards of the endeavors here.

*December 7*—Tonight we are in Minj...The acting district officer told us he would drive out Kudjip way tomorrow and we could ride with him. This is great since it would otherwise mean a twelve-mile (19 kilometer) hike over the roughest of terrain.

*December 8*—This has been a most interesting experience. We boarded the government "Land Rover" early this morning. The acting district officer was going to inspect a road or something about ten miles (16 kilometers) further from Kudjip and offered us a lift there. He said we could scout around for about two or three hours and he would pick us up on the way back. What an experience! He is a fine fellow and did want to be of assistance to us. Knowing the local people would be quite curious as to our business, he brought along the official government interpreter, and "loaned" him to us to use in talking with the national people. There was only one hitch. He forgot we didn't speak a word of

pidgin<sup>7</sup> [PI-jin] and the interpreter could interpret into the local dialect only after getting the talk in pidgin. We just spent about three happy hours nodding our heads and smiling sweetly! The boys at Minj packed us a lunch, and we went to the kunai [KOO-na-hee] grass government rest house to eat it.<sup>8</sup>

Imagine our feeling when a very much decorated Tul-tul [TOOL-tool] (a tribal leader appointed by the government to act as the government spokesman to his people), in all his splendor, came inside the house, found a spot close by where we were eating and proceeded to lie down flat and watch our every move. He had both a long knife and an ax tucked in a bark belt. I had no idea of giving him any trouble.

This Tul-tul is now one of our most faithful attenders at services and has been with us from the beginning. We have had many laughs about this first encounter. Some of the little boys who came that day have never missed a Sunday in Sunday school and are now enrolled in our school.

*December 9*—I plan to go to Port Moresby in a few days to make some sort of definite decision on our location if we can find the mind of the Lord in the matter. Both of us are fasting and praying much over the matter.

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<sup>7</sup> Pidgin is the trade language of most of the island.

<sup>8</sup> This expression, “kunai grass government rest house” refers to a traditional highlands house. Walls are made of woven strips of bamboo, and the roof is thatched with kunai grass, a native plant that is now becoming rare. Floors are typically dirt. These structures are still common today, but metal roofing is more common than the rarer grasses. In the days of the Knoxes, each tribal area was required to maintain a house for the government patrol officer and his constables to stay in during their visits.

*December 17*—I had to make a quick trip back to Moresby to confer with the director of lands. The department is quite willing to grant us a mission lease on the spot we were considering at Kudjip provided the district commissioner and the district officer are agreeable. We have at least a verbal agreement from them. We will apply for this spot. It is the best we feel we have found thus far, and if it is not God's will for us, we pray He will block the application.

In December, the Knoxes flew to Lae and again took up hotel living. Their first Christmas in New Guinea was spent in the hotel. Geron substituted swimming in the pool for playing in the snow, and cold soda pop for hot chocolate, but a tiny artificial tree was presented as a gift from the hotel manager, and there were lots of cards and letters from home. Sid gave Wanda a Chinese cedar chest, and since the ship had arrived with their goods, Geron wanted to get his rocking horse off the ship immediately.

#### **From Sidney's journal**

*January 1*—This has been the day of days in my life. We have felt we selected the most promising location we could find, yet some doubts still lingered whether we were too hasty in our decision. At precisely two minutes past noon this day, the sweetest experience I think I have ever had was mine to enjoy; that is, aside from the time the Lord saved my soul and later sanctified me and called me to His service. The tears of joy came so spontaneously I simply could not contain myself. Never has there been a sweeter experience and dealing of the Holy Spirit

than at that moment. Any doubt we may have reserved was at once removed, and the way appeared so clear. God wants us at Kudjip. How blessed is our Lord, and how wonderful are His dealings! Surely with the volume of prayer that ascends daily from the church around the world, it is paying off.

After days of praying, fasting, and investigating, Sid knew Kudjip was the place where God was leading, and the Knoxes moved closer to their permanent home by going to Goroka in the Eastern Highlands. During those ten days in Goroka, Wanda remembers “the coolness of the Highlands, morning and afternoon teas (maybe that’s why I still have to watch my weight!), and always satisfying, beautiful fellowship with my husband. How richly we were able to share spiritual things – he was an inspiration and teacher to me. And he was fun.”

**From Sidney’s journal:**

*January 10*—How can you put into words the affairs of this day? There are far too many things to think of and mention. We begin the tedious job of transporting our equipment the twelve miles (19 kilometers) from the Minj airstrip to the rest house. The first task was to build a makeshift door for the bare opening and to nail up planks across the open places used for windows. This is very needful to let the air in and keep inquiring heads out. If ever the all-seeing eye was watching us—it is now. In fact, I wonder how many pairs of eyes are trained on me right now. Can you really blame them? Just what are their thoughts? This might be well worth knowing; but on the other hand, perhaps

it's best I don't know. Much of our equipment—what bit of furniture we brought and foodstuffs—we will bring out in the jeep and trailer. Due to the extremely rough terrain and the poor condition of the bridges over the streams, I will have most, if not all, the house “walked in” by local carriers. They walk the twelve miles (19 kilometers) into Minj, load up, and walk back—which is a very full day's work—for two shillings (22 cents).<sup>9</sup> Common labor, I am told, goes at a shilling a day or 11 cents each man. I'm tired beyond measure tonight. I don't even think I will have another thought but just turn in.

Sid built the bush church and the prefab house simultaneously. He used as much help (all untrained) as he could get but carried the bulk of the construction himself. Wanda remembered that it was fun to help nail floors, and she did all of the inside painting herself. Geoff Baskett arrived shortly after the erection of the new home and remembered that one of his jobs was to clean the paint off some of the windows with a razor blade.

**From Sydney's journal:**

*January 11*—Well, we are beginning to get our bearings a wee bit. Installed the kerosene stove today and the beautiful refrigerator given us by the teenage missionary societies on the Washington Pacific District. How wonderful to have ice again! Haven't had iced tea in a good many moons.

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<sup>9</sup> The shilling was a coin worth one twentieth of a Pound Sterling, or twelve pence. In Sidney's notes, he references the worth of two shillings at that time was US \$0.22.

Both Sid and Wanda spent a lot of time talking to the folk through an interpreter or in Pidgin. A school was started, and both Sid and Wanda taught. Dorms were built, and Wanda and Sid shared the new experience of being dorm “Mom and Pop.” The boys (not girls at first) – undisciplined, fearful of spirits, unsure of these strangers in their midst, full of mischief but yearning for love – found a place in the Knoxes’ hearts. As Wanda said, “We all learned a lot!”

**From Sidney’s journal:**

*February 26*—...From the second Sunday since we arrived, Wanda has had flannel-graph<sup>10</sup> stories out in the yard. These have been very well attended from the first with attendance increasing each Sunday. Old, as well as young, seem to enjoy them.

*February 29*—We have started an additional preaching service in the afternoon on Sunday now. This is at a place called Kurumul [KUHR–uh–muhl], about five miles (8 kilometers) between here and Minj. It is another government rest station, and passing by, we noticed a great number of people always gathered around. We tried, as an experiment, going over and just starting playing and singing. From curiosity, as many as upwards to 150 would come. This is a poor way to do business, as the weather is constantly interfering, but then it is all we can do right now. If prospects look good, I may approach the district officer for permission to build a chapel there.

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<sup>10</sup> Flannelgraph is a storytelling system that uses a board covered with flannel fabric, usually resting on an easel. Pictures, backed with flannel, are placed on the board as the story-telling progresses.



Preaching posts were established: Kudjip in the morning and Kurumul in the afternoon. Later Pokorump [POH-guh-ruhmp] was squeezed into the schedule. On Geoff's visit, he went with them to the preaching posts. They took pity on him and gave him chocolate bars to eat while they fasted during the day's journeying to the services. The three spent a lot of time singing together. Sidney had a rich voice. Wanda sang alto, and Geoff tried his best with tenor. One of Wanda's fond memories came from a service at Kurumul while she and Sid were singing a duet accompanied by Sid's accordion. One of their fashion-clad parishioners, frustrated with the button-up-the-back style of her latest used clothing, stood up and raised her dress to the appropriate level for her baby to receive his lunch. Modestly clad in her New Guinea strings, she didn't seem to interrupt anyone's attention except the very amused special singers.

**From Sidney's journal:**

*March 15*—Not too much startling news to report these days. Just a lot of work. The weather has come with a vengeance. Torrents of rain cascade down on us each afternoon at about three o'clock. Work is coming along nicely on the new church building. We should be in it in another month at least. The roof is on the house now and only painting, trimming, and floor laying yet to be done.

Last Sunday was a most interesting Sunday. We were interrupted so much by the weather that I decided to hold services in our front room for two Sundays until the roof was completed. I'm sure the anticipation of coming inside the "big house" was

the reason, but about 175 packed out the space of 20 x 22 feet (6 x 6.7 meters). An additional 50 or more stood on the veranda, hopelessly blocking any stray bit of air that might have found its way in and around. Wanda and I had a good laugh over the abundance of leaves scattered over the floor after service. Symbols of clothes left behind!

*April 16*—Tonight I'm writing this in the living room of our new home. It hardly seems possible that we could be settled in already. I do not have the plumbing installed as yet, for two reasons. I figured we could live awhile without it since we have thus far, and secondly—I haven't the faintest idea how to install plumbing.

Seems almost impossible to believe that, working by ourselves, we could erect a two-bedroom home completely in just ten work weeks. Many days we could not work beyond 2:30 or 3:00 p.m.<sup>11</sup>

Already, we are planning some visits into the bush to get a closer look at our people, and how they live. We hope to learn a few more of their customs and practices.

Permission has been granted by the government to construct our chapel at our preaching point at Kurumal. This will be a valuable addition to our services there. The people nor we can get a feeling of permanence as it is now.

Sidney and Wanda often left the compound to go walking into the bush, carrying a suitcase of medicine, steel axes for tribal leaders, and Bible stories to share with those they

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<sup>11</sup> This may have been due to the afternoon rains. Temperatures in the Highlands are rarely too hot to work in, especially for the local population.

met. Wanda remembers, “I can never express the depth of feelings that came from time to time: delight at the beauty; yearning for the people; fear of wild pigs, and single log bridges; and, of the intense darkness that seemed many times to hold more than darkness. There was joy in the first communication success, deep joy in women’s classes of sharing, deeper joy in small indications of the Spirit’s speaking and working.”

**From Sydney’s journal:**

*July 1*—What a Sunday this has been! If one should have a yen for dignity and order, this definitely wouldn’t be his place. I finally built some seats in the church to have a semblance of order about the seating arrangement, but it still doesn’t work all the time. Some mothers with children refuse to sit any higher than the floor! When one walks in, he must stagger blindly among an odd assortment of women, babies, small children, pigs, dogs, and even birds. It isn’t unusual for a pig to squeal, a dog to howl, or a bird to chirp at the most inopportune times. The crying of babies is so much a part of the service we couldn’t classify it as unusual in the least.

*July 29*—It is almost an impossibility to get local people to accept death as natural, except in cases where the person is elderly. If a young person should die, there is usually trouble in the camp. The belief in sorcery is widespread. When an individual dies that the people think shouldn’t have died, the people immediately set about to discover the one responsible. There are no set rules for this as far as I can discover. It is more or less the whims of the people. They may go back to former feuds with people connected closely with the one who has died. Usually,

all, or at least the immediate, members of the family decide who is responsible and punitive measures are taken. In the past, this, many times led to another death or deaths, but naturally, the government is curtailing this. Now it more or less amounts to some sort of payment being given to the relatives or clan of the one supposedly killed by sorcery. Even sickness cannot be accepted as a natural experience. Sorcery is believed to play a part in all illnesses.<sup>12</sup>

*October 4*—The anniversary of our leaving the States. This has been a year filled with many interesting experiences. We look back over the events of the past year and realize how graciously the hand of God has been upon us. Naturally much is to be done yet, but a beginning has been made. How different our feelings this day from those a year ago!

*January 30*—Oh, me, how can we put into words the feelings of our hearts this day? The reason? At mail call today we had a letter from the Department of Foreign Missions. In it was the glad tidings of the appointment of another couple to New Guinea. They are Rev. and Mrs. Max Conder and their three children, who have previously spent a term in Haiti. She is a registered nurse. What a great addition to our staff here they will make!<sup>13</sup> Also,

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<sup>12</sup> Despite Sidney's apparent optimism, these beliefs and practices continue to exist.

<sup>13</sup> The Condors did indeed come, arriving in October 1957. Max, a preacher and church planter, and Mary Alice, an RN (registered nurse) with additional training to prepare for isolated practice. Mary Alice can honestly be credited as the founder of the medical ministry that ultimately led to the establishment of the Nazarene Hospital. Sadly, their time in PNG was brief—about four years. Their time of service was, like Sidney's, cut short by medical issues. However, by the time they left, both Margaret Bromley and Helen Bolerjack had arrived to carry on and further develop the medical work.

we received 169 Christmas cards, most with personal notes; and even 11 Christmas boxes! Boat mail arrived! We were far past midnight getting everything read. If many mail calls were like this one, we would be hopelessly spoiled.

*March 13*—What a welcomed sight this morning to see Dr. Powers<sup>14</sup> step off the plane! [He] looks wonderful, but I know he is tired. The schedule our leaders undertake would kill off the average man in weeks. We had hoped to fly back to Goroka this afternoon, where I had made previous arrangements to be flown on into Minj, but weather closed in, and the plane had to stay overnight. Hope our plane into Minj is still waiting in the morning.

*March 20*—We have just passed through one of the most full and interesting weeks that we no doubt will experience for a long time to come. After being by ourselves for about fifteen months, how wonderful it was to have someone to talk with around the table and in the home! We really didn't know just how badly we had missed real Christian fellowship.

In addition to our times of fellowship, we have laid plans for the further advancement of the work here. We were able to visit one nearby clan—that of Tul-tul Molx [MOHLCKS].<sup>15</sup> All the other clans reside high up in the mountains. It had rained much, and the trails were nearly impassable.

We shall long remember this time both for what it has meant to us personally and to the enterprise here as a whole.

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<sup>14</sup> The late Dr. Hardy C. Powers was an American pastor, district superintendent, and general superintendent in the Church of the Nazarene.

<sup>15</sup> As referred to earlier, tul-tul is a tribal leader, and this tribe's leader was Tul-tul Molx.

The people have been anticipating Dr. Powers' visit for a long while, and they were not disappointed. He preached to capacity crowds both here at Kudjip and Kurumal. I must admit I had a few sinking feelings about trying for the first time interpreting out of English into pidgin, but we seemed to make it O.K. A local man translated from my pidgin into the tribal language.

*March 31*—We opened up our third preaching place at Wara [WAHR-ah] Kawi [KOW-ee], about five miles (8 kilometers) from our station on the road to Mount Hagen.<sup>16</sup> This will necessitate taking another hitch in our belt on Sunday since we cannot eat until all three services are completed. Night services are impossible right now. I feel it will be worth it, though. We feel this is a God-given opportunity and do not want to neglect it.

*July 1*—As we bring this part of our journal to a close, we are encouraged to report progress, not only in the intellectual advancement of the boys, but also in the spiritual progress. The boys are living clean lives, and many profess to belong to Jesus. At all meals, they offer grace themselves and lead in prayer, both in devotions we have together and in the classroom.

After my class the other morning, I was sitting in the classroom, and about five or six of the very bright ones remained with me, and we talked together. I asked them what they desired to be when they grew up and finished school. One replied he wished to be a doctor (and under the government's splendid program of granting aid to national technicians, this is a distinct possibility). Three said they wished to be teachers, and one particularly bright little fellow said he wanted to be a preacher like

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<sup>16</sup> This is what to become known as the Pokorump church. It is near Kawi, and it is often difficult to tell where one village ends and the next begins. Much later, a church was planted in Kawi village proper.

me. Who knows? We do not, but God does, and even now we are desperately praying He may place His hand on some to be His chosen leaders among their own people. Only for this purpose can we ever justify an educational program. Others can educate for this life, but our task here, both with the schoolboys and for all others as well, is to educate for eternity. To this end, we gladly dedicate our lives. Truly the call of New Guinea is great today.

**Editor's Note:**

Unfortunately, because none of these boys' names are recorded, we don't know if their hopes were realized. Some of them likely became leaders of their tribes, pastors of churches, and leaders of their communities. Over the years, the school produced pastors, teachers, and doctors, and has been an immeasurable benefit to PNG.

There were good times, and there were difficult and frustrating times, like the time Sid lost the top joint of his finger. But he even joked about that, saying he had saved quite a bit of money as a result. When anyone in a church asked how much he was willing to contribute to a collection, he held up ten fingers, but only had to pay \$9.95 due to the lost joint on that finger!

In September of 1957, another wonderful event blessed the Knoxes' home; Jane Marie Knox arrived, truly Wanda's "gift from God," for only a few months later, Sid became very ill. Janie completed the family of four. Many times, Wanda would go home from school at recess time to feed

the baby and find that Sidney had been there first. He would be carrying her around the station, talking to her as he did his work. He loved his blond, curly-haired, blue-eyed girl. Sid was always a family man. He had dreamed of having his own children, and now he had a special four-year-old boy and new baby girl. What more could he desire?

Janie was four months old when Sidney became extremely ill. After tests on the coast and in Goroka, he had an operation, which revealed that his body was full of cancer. In God's timing, the Max Conders had arrived the morning after Sidney was struck with extreme pain, and in the months following they taught Sid's classes and carried on the medical and church work until the Knoxes' departure in June of 1958.

Sid's family met Wanda and Sid and the children in California, and the family took Geron and Janie to Lubbock, Texas, USA, by car. Also, meeting them in California was a large crowd of California Nazarenes, who sang "To God be the glory – great things He hath done." Sid was overwhelmed and exclaimed, "Praise the Lord for the privilege of being a missionary in the Church of the Nazarene!"

After Sid had tests in California, the family flew to Lubbock in a small chartered plane. The days that followed were very precious in some ways, very hard in others. Sid was in and out of the hospital, having another operation. They rented an apartment, and Wanda learned to give his shots. In September Sid sent Wanda downtown to buy a special teddy bear to celebrate Janie's first birthday. Bright eyes sparkled at his baby girl through the wan mask of



illness, and Janie even at that young age seemed to know something was not quite right. She stayed by Sid a lot, and when the family would go for a car ride, she would stand in the front and reach back to hold his hand or his finger while he lay on the back seat. He loved it, and Wanda would tell him she wouldn't let anyone else hold his hand!



Return Welcome-June 1958

Prayers were bombarding heaven, and many thought that Sid would be healed. Wanda thought so too. In later years she said, "I look back only at this with regret, for I believe he knew. Several times he tried to talk to me about his 'going.' I'd hear none of it – felt that was not showing faith. Now, I wish we could have shared deeply his feelings instead of him protecting mine. How rich it could have been for he was so ready to go if that's what God wanted."

The last day of Sidney's life was on a Sunday. All the family was there, and at some point, in the morning, he

had them read the 15th chapter of John. Then he prayed. In the words of Wanda, “Such a prayer of trust and commitment – of rest in Him, even as his heart seemed to break for the people of New Guinea, and me and his children and his family – his voice grew stronger and stronger; I could not keep my eyes closed, for I just knew he was about to get up!” That day he ate better, he had only one shot, and he was fully alert. Shortly after midnight on Monday, October 14, exactly three years from the day they’d landed in New Guinea, Wanda was sitting beside the bed, holding his hand, when he began to talk what seemed nonsense to Wanda. Her heart fell. She looked at him but could not understand anything he was saying. She thought he was delirious, but as she looked at him, he read her face and said, “Don’t you understand what I’m saying?”

“No, Sid, I don’t.”

He replied, “Well, doesn’t it make sense to you?”

“No, Sid.”

He looked at her for a moment and then said, “Well, it does to me.” Then he said, “Release me.” Thinking that was strange language but obeying, Wanda let go of his hands, and Sidney changed worlds.

Geron was 5, Janie 1, Wanda 27. Then began one of the deepest struggles Wanda’s soul ever knew. Few knew what she was facing. Most thought she was taking Sid’s passing extra hard, but it wasn’t just his going. Wanda and Sid had discussed death before. They lived in potential danger all of the time: there was the possibility of a plane crash, an accident in the bush, or malaria, but the struggle came

because God didn't answer the thousands of prayers that had come before Him. Did God hear? Could God hear? Did God care? Was there even a God? Could this young woman who had served God since the age of 8 now really believe? The struggle lasted several months, but even during the struggle, Wanda felt a call or pull back to New Guinea. She met the board, and they said to wait. Wanda did deputation work; she walked the floor at night, but there was no answer. Finally, she declared to God that she had to have some kind of answer. Maybe she would have to become an agnostic, for she couldn't pretend to believe something she didn't believe; and New Guinea must be out, for how could she go back and proclaim to others what she was not sure of herself. Again silence. But the next afternoon, He spoke. "I could take you to the place – I wasn't even thinking about Him – when all of a sudden, He was there. My eye did not see, but my spirit saw. He didn't give me an answer to why He allowed Sid's death. People had been giving me all sorts of answers, but they didn't answer my heart's cry. But when He came, my spirit was subdued – I couldn't even ask any questions. But He said (and the spirit's ears heard), 'I'm here – I'm in control. Trust Me. Don't trust Me for what I do, or for what I don't do; just *trust me*.'" Writing those words in her diary 24 years later, Wanda explained that that trust had been enough for her in the hard times and the easy. God had truly been her Comfort, her Teacher, her Guide, her Helper, her Confidence, her Joy.

The years, since God had opened to Wanda's eight-year-old insight that nothing is really worthwhile except

following Him, had proven to her that everything had been made greater and sweeter and more fun. Wanda affirmed, “my work, my family, my friends, my hobbies – it all has gained pleasure and meaning through the priority of Him. I know what the scripture means: ‘Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you’ (Matthew 6:33).” Wanda was soon to discover that God’s will was to lead her to a challenging new assignment that in most people’s eyes seemed impossible, but Wanda’s trust was firm and secure.

Feb. 1954. My vroujie Wanda en ek  
aan die Sending Raad geskryf  
Soos ons verstaan het, deel die Raad  
die sending werke. En  
as of God met ons praat om na  
Sen... was  
nog nie woor-heen in werke beg  
nie. Dit bedoel nie dat ons nie

## CHAPTER 3

# MISS WANDA

The passengers in the crowded cabin of the Qantas [KWAHN-tuhs] jet began waking up after a long night across the Pacific. The young woman in the front seat, however, looked wide-awake as she busily penned a letter, occasionally glancing at the sleeping cherubs beside her: chubby, active, seven-year-old Geron and three-year-old Janie with the Shirley Temple curls.

Somewhere above the Pacific on a Qantas jet October 27, 1960.

*I know this is a bit unusual, but I'd like to write myself a letter today - to read now and then during the next ...whatever time God allows us. The sun is just coming up, and as high as we are, it makes a beautiful sight.*

What beauties God has allowed us in this world to enjoy. In a few minutes, we'll be landing in Fiji - then on to Sydney. It hardly seems possible that we are again this close to our land of New Guinea. I've been letting my emotions have full sway for the past few days and hours. I had really dreaded San Francisco; but instead of the depression I had expected to feel, I felt more of a release, as if a new inner assurance came that I was doing the right thing. ...As we walked down the same ramp that Sid and I had walked up two years ago - again, instead of the feeling of pain I expected, I felt only joy. Along the way ... I'm remembering our laughter together, our thrill, our fears, as we came out for the first time. Sid really seems quite close to me. I'm praying that God will keep this feeling of fulfillment within me, and that He will help me lean more

and more upon Him; that I might be able to fulfill the purpose He has for us in New Guinea. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord." Our cry? Give us souls. ...Now unto Him, that is able to do exceeding abundantly more than we can either think or ask; to Him, we commit our whole beings and unto Him be honor and glory and praise forevermore. Amen.

Wanda Knox  
GERON AND JANIE

Wanda sighed, laid down the pen, and closed her eyes for a few moments of quiet contemplation. She thought back to that Saturday in January when she met the board to make her plea to return to New Guinea. The meeting had

Wanda, Geron, and Janie boarding  
Qantas Airlines plane for  
New Guinea, October 25, 1960



been difficult. The board members were very concerned about her welfare as a single parent with two small children and began to point out the problems and difficulties that would confront her. They felt that for her own good, she would be better off in America. When the board members had finished their efforts to talk her out of going back under such trying circumstances, Wanda replied, "Sirs, I do not know what you are talking about when you speak of all the problems and difficulties and trials. I only know that God has called me to go back to New Guinea." The meeting ended, but Wanda was kept in suspense until Monday afternoon when the appointment was read in the general meeting that she was to return to New Guinea. In a letter to Wallace and Mona White, missionaries to Papua New Guinea at the time, Wanda rejoiced: "Oh my, I can't even describe my feelings. It had seemed once as if the decision would go the other way. I realized there were problems involved, and much indecision on the part of some. Mrs. Louise Chapman told me of how God opened the way for her to speak of certain things that had been on her heart for some time, and then how He came in an unusual way. So, I feel more than ever that it is of God! And, of course, that means much to me."

The board also voted that Wanda's return be delayed until fall so that a house could be put up for the family.

And now home they were, and this arrival was quite different. The mission staff had now increased to five missionaries: Max and Mary Alice Conder, Wallace and Mona White, and Will Bromley. Five preaching points had been



opened. A dispensary had been built, supervised by Mary Alice Conder, and during the previous year, she had treated more than 2,000 patients with two New Guinea helpers as her only assistants. The Knoxes were welcomed warmly by both the missionaries and locals. The people loved Wanda so. Wherever she would go, they would greet her with shouts and hugs as she stepped out of the jeep. For a while after her return, she had many tender and tearful meetings with those she had come to serve. They wanted to hear about Sid: his sickness, his death, his burial, his going to heaven. She talked to them of his being in heaven now with Jesus, and how he would someday meet her and them there because they would believe and become Christians too. It was glorious to see.

In New Guinea, the school year begins in February, so Geron and Bob and Steve White started to school at Banz public school for Australians. Either Wanda or Wallace and Mona drove them back and forth each day. Little Janie would ride along. A few months after the Knoxes' return on one of the morning school runs, Janie looked up at Mona and said, "My daddy's in heaven, Aunt Mona; did you know that?"

When Mona reported her words, Wanda with great feeling replied, "What a blessing when she says that! God has given me so much. Mercy! What a good life I have, and I'm so happy [that] He has let me come back here."

Mona (thinking back to the tragic loss of Sid) replied, "But I wonder how you can say it—"

Wanda interrupted, "Because of Sid's death? But don't you see? God goes ahead with His plan for my life. At first, I

took it so hard I almost didn't make it for about six months. Then I began to see how God was using it to touch many young hearts to give their all, as Sid did. And He continues to call me now to serve Him here. How good He is to me!"

Wanda began teaching in the mission primary school in February, and Janie played around her classroom door or went off with Uncle Wallace as he worked on the generator or went out in the jeep. Wanda was an excellent teacher--a motivator; she made learning a joy. She had fun at it, enjoying her students. She wanted to put herself into her work and could not enjoy a too-crowded schedule that wouldn't allow her to do her work well. Mona White noted, "She motivated an eagerness to learn not only in the classroom but also in everyday life. Among associates, her happy enthusiasm and obvious enjoyment could spark a new interest in something or other (a subject, a theme, a method) till we were all curious and anxious to give it a try."

Teaching wasn't always easy. Wanda shared with her dear friend, Ginny Griffin, "You know, I'm enjoying school a lot more now. It took me a while to get adjusted back to grade school again. I love the kids and enjoy them no end in Sunday School or Vacation Bible School, but in school--I just don't seem to have the patience. If they want to learn, I have no trouble; but when I have to force them to, I just lose interest. And of course, these kids have no parents behind them. The parents couldn't care less about whether or not they learn." That attitude would change in later years, of course, as parents learned the economic advantage of a good education. In a letter, she exclaimed, "sometimes I despair

(everything they learn is in a foreign language ... and also foreign to their culture), but then at other times, they make me proud. I'll really be proud if they just will all become Christians. We have a school revival coming up the last of this month. Remember to pray for the kids."

One of those answers to prayer was Merilyn [MER-i-lin] Bukas [BOO-kuhs; later Wutsik (WUHT-sik)], who lived on the station as a child. Very bright and eager to learn, Merilyn sold kaukau [KOU-kou] – sweet potatoes – to earn her school fees. Miss Wanda was very special to Merilyn. She taught her of Jesus, which transformed her life; she taught her harmony and helped train a lovely voice; and she modeled joy that was reflected in Merilyn's voice and face as she sang. Merilyn was to go from primary school to Mount Hagen to complete grade eight and then to Madang [muh-DAHNG], where she topped her class in secretarial training. In the intervening years, she has worked at the district office and held sound jobs in Port Moresby, where she now resides and is an active laywoman in the Port Moresby church, and in the Highlands.

### **Editor's Note: Merilyn Wutsik**

One of the young people whom Wanda influenced was Merilyn Bukas (who later changed her name to Merilyn Wutsik). She was born in 1958, shortly before her parents moved to Kudjip station to work for the missionaries. Her dad, Wutsik worked as yard helper and translator (from Pidgin to tribal languages), her mom, Kini [KI-nee] (later changed to Sarah), as "haus meri" [HOUS-ME-ree] or maid.

Merilyn said of her mother, “My mom had a great influence on all of her children both on spiritual matters and customs and traditions. She was a woman filled with the Holy Spirit. She poured her life out selflessly so that all the children including, children from the 2nd and 3rd wife, could come to church and get saved.”

At the age of 15, Merilyn was saved in the Pokorump Church of the Nazarene, the congregation that grew out of the Knoxes’ second preaching point.

When asked about Wanda’s influence, Merilyn replied, “She taught me to sing and worship the Lord. She took us into her home once a week and taught us how to sing hymns and harmonize. This is how I learned the hymns and love singing even now. She taught me to be confident and not afraid to give testimony in church during school chapel. She taught me how to read and like books. She rewarded [us] well when we did well in school and that encouraged me to enjoy school, and do well in school. She was a great teacher-missionary.”

Merilyn completed 8th grade, then under the encouragement of missionaries Wallace and Mona White, attended secretarial college. She returned to Kudjip and worked for five years as Rev. White’s secretary. She mentions many of the missionaries of that period as significant influences.

In 1989, she took a job with an international oil company. From 2001 to 2014 she worked as the assistant to the manager of the Kutubu [koo–TOO–boo] Oil Field.

About 2004, God began to speak to Marilyn about pastoral ministry. In 2010, she enrolled in Nazarene Bible College (not the one on PNG, but the one located at the time in Colorado Springs, Colorado, USA), taking courses online, and supplementing her work with courses from Melanesia Nazarene Bible College in Papua New Guinea. She graduated from NBC in 2014. At that time, she resigned from her job with the oil company and accepted the pastorate of Konastone [KOHN–ah–stohn] Church of the Nazarene, a church recently planted in the home of Baru [BAH–roo] and Christina Dirye [DIR–ye]<sup>17</sup>, both employees of Nazarene Hospital. Konastone quickly became the fastest-growing Nazarene



Marilyn Wutsik

<sup>17</sup> Around 2012, Baru and Christina bought some land and built a house. They built on posts, to create an area under the house that could be used as a meeting area. They conducted services themselves until the church called Marilyn to come as pastor. Under her leadership, the church grew rapidly and they built a very nice, modern building on an important road. She volunteered to step away from this very “successful” church to go pastor her struggling home church.

church in PNG, and soon was the largest in the area. Although she was very successful in the eyes of many people, God had a different plan for her ministry. The Nazarene church in her home village of Kawi was struggling and needed strong leadership and godly preaching. In 2018, she accepted the pastorate of the Kawi church where she remains today.

Both participants and audiences eagerly anticipated choir performances and dramas directed by Wanda. Speaking of one such event, she wrote, “Our play turned out really well this year. We ended up giving it three times. Our first scene was Adam and Eve being tempted by Satan and falling. You should have seen it – the two who were Adam and Eve were all dressed up in leaves, and the crowd nearly came down with the snake – they all really acted well. Anyway, it ended (that scene) with God putting them out of the garden, but giving the promise that though the snake had bitten their heel – ‘Another’ would come to bruise the head of the snake. Then, scene two started with Mary and Joseph and showed Christ to be the fulfillment of that promise. I really enjoyed working on it, and the students did too.”

Wanda’s teaching abilities were also demonstrated in teaching both literacy and literacy teachers. She was a fluent Pidgin speaker and went to work on the vernacular right away. She was good at it. She had taken a language course with SIL (Summer Institute of Linguistics) and was equipped to work on the language, but her constant frustration was the busy schedule that restricted her study. In a letter to the

Wallace Whites, who were on furlough in 1964, she wrote, “I’m hoping I might get to spend some time in the bush this holiday. I said earlier in the letter that I hadn’t been frustrated lately; I’d better qualify that. I stay frustrated over the language. I have been trying so hard, but I’m just not enough [able] to do it without more help and more time to speak it. I’ve been doing all my services in tok ples [TOK PLES; the tribal language] until it’s time to give the story or message, but that’s such a limited scope. I do get pretty discouraged over that sometimes. But I try not to let it defeat me.”

### **Editor’s Note: Languages**

Papua New Guinea is the most linguistically diverse country in the world. Of the approximately 7,000 languages in the world, 840 are spoken in PNG, according to the World Atlas web site<sup>18</sup> A trade language called Tok Pisin [TAHK PI–zuhn], or Melanesian Pidgin is the most widely used, and English is used to some extent in many parts of the country, though many people hesitate to use it.

Most people learn their tribal language (referred to in Tok Pisin as “Tok Ples,” literally the “language of the village” first. In most areas, they learn Tok Pisin shortly after that. Some schools allow the use of either Tok Ples or Tok Pisin for the first two or three years, but after that English is supposed to be used. Yet, for many people, even after completing grade 12, their ability to use it is very limited.

<sup>18</sup> [www.worldatlas.com/articles/the-most-linguistically-diverse-countries-in-the-world.html](http://www.worldatlas.com/articles/the-most-linguistically-diverse-countries-in-the-world.html), accessed June 20, 2019.

In the early days of Nazarene missions in PNG, missionaries were required to learn both Tok Pisin and the Tok Ples of Kudjip (called “Middle Wahgi”), a complex and challenging language to master. Once the hospital was opened at Kudjip, the number of people who spoke a Tok Ples other than Middle Wahgi increased greatly, both as staff at the hospital and patients. Also, as churches were planted beyond the area in which Middle Wahgi was spoken, it made little sense for missionaries to spend the time and effort needed to learn it.

In recent years, as more and more people travel outside their tribal area, the use of English has become more widespread. Now, many of the Bible College students, as well as pastors, speak English. This is also true of all of the nurses, and most of the nurses’ aides at the hospital. Missionaries can now “get by” without learning even Tok Pisin, and many do not. The tragedy of this is that while they are able to communicate with church or hospital leaders, this makes it difficult to communicate clearly with the local people.

Wanda never claimed to be a preacher, but her teaching of God’s Word displayed a deep love and faith. When she stood before a group of school children in chapel services, a class of new Christians in a membership class, or a congregation of worshipers, one could see in their eyes and from their faces that they were hearing, that they were “getting the message,” catching some of the heartthrob of her own feelings, her love for God.



In one of her letters home, Wanda rejoiced, “We are so thrilled at how His word is speaking to our folk. Keep praying for all our Christians, especially – that the joy and strength they are finding will abound more and more, and make people hungry for what they have.” And in another letter concerning camp meeting, “We have been having a good spirit here too – and are especially looking forward to our camp meeting next week. My, I wish you could be here for it too. The people have built beautiful grass ‘longhouses’ to sleep in, with a courtyard in the middle for cooking over the open fire. Our tent has arrived for services, and we have two really good speakers slated – I can hardly wait! I do hope we get in a lot of unsaved, as well as our Christians ‘moving up.’”

Wanda realized that for the church to grow and mature, it would be necessary to have indigenous leadership. She felt this so keenly her concern influenced those closest to her. When the Bible school first opened in 1964, one of those first students was Philip Kwonga [KWONG–uh],<sup>19</sup> whom Wanda had urged to enroll, though it meant losing him as her kitchen help. Philip has faithfully served as a pastor for

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<sup>19</sup> Philip Kwonga (or Konga) was one of the two students who formed the first graduating class of what is now known as Melanesia Nazarene Bible College. He was later in the first group of New Guineans to be ordained.\* He went on to become an effective and respected pastor. He eventually became pastor of the Pokorump church, a position he held for nearly 30 years. His daughter Christina became a nurse and served as the head nurse of the Pediatrics ward during most of my time in PNG. She was an excellent nurse and kept ministry to the forefront of her work. Philip died in 2017. [Reference—Parker, J. Fred. *Mission to the World—A History of Missions in the Church of the Nazarene Through 1985*. Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1988. p. 602.]

over 20 years. In the future, she was to lose two more cook boys to the Bible school: Mek [MEK] and Joel.

Upon completion of the Nazarene Hospital, Kudjip [1967], Wanda found a fulfilling ministry in hospital visitation. She visited the hospital often and made many friends. She endeared herself to the patients by bringing them food or some small gift, and “Miss Wanda” was loved by all. As she passed through the wards, she would stop at each bed to pray for the patient and his or her family. Often, she would pick up a baby and carry it in her arms as she visited in the wards. Carolyn (Parson) Hannay,<sup>20</sup> one of the missionary nurses serving in the hospital, remembers that it was always a fun time when Wanda came to visit. Carolyn remembers, “Even before we saw her, we would hear laughter and see a crowd gathering around someone, then see Wanda or hear her infectious laugh. They all called to her, each wanting her to come and sit on the bed, and listen to stories of family or village. She would listen, laugh, pray, and quietly move on to others. She ministered to all in the ward as she tried to minister to each one, for all eyes were on her as she moved through the open wards.”<sup>21</sup>

Though Wanda had enjoyed all of her teaching assignments, the ultimate satisfaction, and overwhelming joy

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<sup>20</sup> Former missionary Carolyn (Parson) Hannay [HA-nay] and her late husband, Jack, served as Nazarene missionaries in PNG, Haiti, and Dominica. Jack passed away in 2001. In 2011, Carolyn married Bruce Blowers, a retired missionary who had served in PNG.

<sup>21</sup> For an update on the Nazarene Hospital, see Editor’s Note at the end of this chapter.

was experienced in her work with the Bible college. As she began teaching her delight increased more and more. In a letter home, she wrote: “Never have I had such joy and peace and contentment. The Lord has given me a double portion of it and how I praise Him. Every day at the Bible school is a delight.

“Riding the Honda the nine miles (14.5 kilometers) up each morning and down each afternoon has also been a delight. The fellowship with the missionaries (all of them), our prayer services, the fellowship with our national people – somehow everything has taken on new meaning and new freshness. How grateful I am for this extra benefit from my Father. He has given more burden – more ache – and yet more depth of joy. See, you can’t explain these things on paper! Can you read my heart?”



Wanda teaching in the Bible School

Opening God's Word to the Bible school students was a challenge and joyous opportunity for Wanda. One day as they were reading orally from a portion of Scripture, an audible groan broke out in the class. It moved Wanda to say, "Man, when God speaks to hearts through His Word that way, it really does something to me." Another day the class was discussing some points in Luke. Wanda, retelling the incident, said, "The guys were asking all kinds of questions (was I ever thankful for commentaries I'd read!), and we'd gone 20-minutes overtime. Finally, I said, 'We've got to quit – it's well over the time for the next class.' One very promising fellow (I think will make a leading pastor) said, 'Well, if I am really hungry, and I see some good food there on the fire – I just want to finish it!' I could have hugged him."

There were disappointments as well as victories. In one of Ginny's letters, Wanda reported, "We've had a rough term in Bible school this last half of the year. The old enemy is surely fighting. But we've had some real breakthroughs, so we aren't discouraged. The more I teach here, the more I love it, but I know I get a lot more out of it than the students do. God has just poured out blessings on me. In spite of difficulties in several realms, loneliness for Geron and Janie (away at school; my house seems awfully big and empty), and a heavy work schedule – I have never known the way to be any sweeter. Isn't He good!"

One way Satan discouraged Bible school students was the clan influence upon their lives. Individuality is not encouraged. The clan is the important thing, and everyone is supposed to do and say those things that will help the clan

as a whole. Others make it really rough on anyone who deviates from this rule. Wanda recorded an incident in one of her student's lives that showed how the Lord enabled him to stand apart for Christ. Gandi [GAN-dee] had gone home for vacation time, and to celebrate the occasion, all the men were sitting up "storying." All of a sudden, a little after midnight, a rooster crowed close to the house. All of the men (except Gandi) rushed excitedly from the house knowing that the only reason a rooster would crow at that time of night was that a spirit was haunting the house. The men captured the rooster and made preparations to kill it to appease the spirit representing the dead ancestor. Failing to do this, they believed, would bring death to one of them. Gandi tried to witness and talk them out of it but to no avail. The rooster was caught, killed, and cooked. They believed the spirit would eat the spirit of the rooster and leave the meat for an unexpected feast for them. They asked Gandi to pray over the meal, but he refused. They argued with him that if he didn't participate too, then someone might still die, but he still refused. Soon after this, Gandi's mother became very ill. They brought her to the hospital, and the tribe put a lot of pressure upon Gandi, for they felt he was responsible. However, Gandi kept faith and prayed much. The missionaries prayed too, for they knew how Satan used such situations to break down young, newly budding faith. The tribe wanted to bring a *posinman* [POH-sin-mahn]<sup>22</sup> in to work magic upon the ill woman, but again Gandi refused,

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<sup>22</sup> A *posinman* is a sorcerer.

saying, “No, we’ll just keep praying. God can help her.” God honored Gandhi’s simple faith, and his mother did get well and returned to her village. Gandhi returned rejoicing to Bible school. That was not the last test Gandhi had to face, but his faith remained strong.

### **Editor’s Note: Gandhi**

Young Gandhi Dama [DAH–mah] continued his walk with the Lord and with his studies for pastoral ministry. He was ordained and later became the first District Superintendent of the Chimbu-Eastern Highlands District, covering the two provinces to the east of Kudjip. He is now well-past what most people would consider the age to retire, but he and his wife are still going strong, serving the Wahgi Valley Church of the Nazarene in Banz,” Jiwaka Province.

Life was certainly never dull on the mission field. Screams and shouts rent the air, disturbing the serenity of the mission station on one quiet, peaceful afternoon. Wanda, turning into her drive from a service with high school students in Mount Hagen, noticed a lot of commotion up near the airstrip and started to go and investigate. Marjorie Merritts and Shirley Howes [HOWZ], missionary teacher and nurse respectively, running down the road, stopped her with a shout, saying, “We’ve been sent to your house [center of the station] for protection!” The Wabag tribe from the Southern Highlands and the local Kuma tribe had had a confrontation, and fighting had flared with

arrows and spears flying thick and fast. They fought for about three hours; however, only six or seven casualties were brought into the hospital. These warriors were badly cut up and bruised (they also throw big stones), but at that time no one had died. Wanda had an amazing reaction. “Actually, I haven’t watched a fight so closely before; it was fascinating.” She wondered if this fighting might be something like war in Old Testament times.

### **Editor’s Note: Tribal fighting**

Contrary to the hopes and prayers of the early missionaries, tribal fighting still continues throughout PNG.<sup>23</sup> Often it is one clan against another, or one family against another, or even factions within families. Fighting is usually over one of four matters: land, women, pigs or money, and usually some combination of those. Sometimes fighting starts with a brawl between groups of young men, perhaps when they have been drinking. In these cases, the older men usually put a stop to it—they don’t want unnecessary trouble over “small” matters. But at other times the fighting is carefully planned by the leadership, and the attack is cruel and deliberate.

In Wanda’s time in PNG, most of the fighting was done with bows and arrows, bush knives (machetes), axes, sticks, and rocks. Today, the bows and arrows are seldom used, and firearms have been added. Guns are

<sup>23</sup> “Tribal fighting” doesn’t usually mean an entire tribe fighting against another entire tribe, but the term is used for any organized fighting between two defined groups.

illegal in PNG, but the tribes seem to come up with them when the need arises. Ammunition is scarce and expensive. Therefore, they don't use guns unless they judge it to be necessary. Also, they don't waste ammunition on practice. That means that they often miss their intended targets, so collateral injuries are not uncommon. There are homemade shotguns, consisting of a crude wooden stock, a piece of pipe, ground-up match heads serving as powder, and stones or sweepings from machine shop floors serving as shot. Not surprisingly, these can inflict brutal wounds that prove difficult to treat.

The fighting would be much more frequent if not for the Christian people in the community. Many times, they have taken stands against fighting. Our pastors proclaim the message of peace, kindness, and forgiveness. If there is any hope of ending tribal violence, it is the hope that the message of salvation will reach deeply into more and more hearts.

The years 1960 to 1975 were replete with rich, fulfilling ministry for Wanda. From the altar of that small home mission church to a Christian college to a parsonage, to the rugged terrain of Papua New Guinea, she had followed the leading of her heavenly Guide. Along the way, she had experienced disappointment, heartache, sorrow, and pain, but also, she had experienced deep satisfaction, peace, and always deep joy. In a letter home, shortly after her return from furlough in 1972, she reflected those emotions. "How



could I possibly describe the feeling I have within right now? I am sitting in my office, looking out toward the mountains, watching the people pass on the road. I've just completed my lesson in New Testament survey to give at the Bible school tomorrow, and my heart is overflowing. I have never before had such a burden for our people, even in the beginning, dark days. It seems there is a continual 'ache' deep down inside me somewhere that constantly breathes a prayer, 'O God, open their eyes, show them the truth of Thy Word; make them wise watchmen, tender shepherds, joyous Christians.' And yet along with this burden and ache, there is a contentment and peace deeper than I have ever known before. The wells of joy are truly running deep, almost to my bewilderment at times. Somehow, I have a strange feeling that this is a beginning of expectancy, the current in the air that the time is so ripe for our King's return." God was soon to change the direction of Wanda's life and ministry, but as always, where He led, she would follow.

### **Editor's Note: Nazarene Hospital Update**

From the time that church leaders first envisioned missionary work in New Guinea, the possibility of a hospital was part of the discussion.<sup>24</sup> The Knoxes recognized the need, and responded to it as best they could without any formal training, administering first aid, and even, it is rumored, giving penicillin injections.

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<sup>24</sup> Reference—Parker, J. Fred. *Mission to the World—A History of Missions in the Church of the Nazarene Through 1985*. Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1988. p. 608.

The first health care given by a trained professional began with the arrival of Mary Alice Conder in 1958. She was a Registered Nurse and had taken additional training to prepare for service in remote, low-resource settings. She had missionary experience before New Guinea, having served in Haiti. A small building was erected to serve as a dispensary, and two “wards,” just long traditional-style buildings were put up for patients who were kept overnight. The clinic was later remodeled into nurses’ quarters, and dedicated as the “Margaret Bromley House.” In 2017, it was demolished. The wards were torn down after the hospital was built, and a basketball court built in their place.

In 1961 Mary Alice became ill, necessitating the Conders’ return to the US. Margaret Robson arrived from Australia to take her place. Helen Bolerjack shortly joined her, and in 1963 Margaret married missionary Will Bromley. They went to work in the Jimi [JI–mee] Valley, a remote region some distance north of Kudjip. Helen carried on, dealing with emergencies as well as “routine” illnesses. She established monthly clinics in many surrounding villages, primarily for preventive care and vaccination of children. These clinics continue to the present day, currently being conducted in about 20 villages.

In the early 1960s, the vision for a hospital in New Guinea was taken up by the Nazarene World Missionary Society, now known as Nazarene Missions International. They were seeking a project to be the focus of their 50th-anniversary celebration and settled on raising

funds for the hospital. At the General Convention of the NWMS in Portland, Oregon in 1964 a giant check was presented to Louise Robinson Chapman to represent this gift.<sup>25</sup> By 1965 construction was begun and the hospital was dedicated and opened in 1967. Dr. Dudley Powers, DDS, MD (yes, he was both a dentist and a physician) was the first doctor. The first nurses were Helen Bolerjack, Virginia Stimer [STIE–muhr] (also from the US) and Bente [BEN–tee] Carlson, from Denmark. Later, after Will Bromley's death, they were joined by Margaret Bromley.

Evangelism and church planting have always been at the heart of Nazarene Hospital,<sup>26</sup> and a chaplaincy ministry was established from the early days. At present, there are two full-time chaplains, both Nazarene elders, and three part-time chaplains, one pastor and two laywomen. The chaplains visit with every inpatient daily, praying, sharing scripture, enquiring as to the patient's and family members' salvation, and leading many to a saving knowledge of Christ. Several hundred people are saved there every year. Many times, the chaplains find that there is no Bible-believing church in patients' home villages, and plans are made to plant Nazarene churches there. At one point a few years ago, Rev. Moses Munda [MUHN–dah], the Head Chaplain was supervising six or seven preaching points. He would

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<sup>25</sup> This 50th Anniversary Offering referenced here totaled \$150,000.

<sup>26</sup> The official name of the hospital was changed in 2017 to "Nazarene General Hospital, Jiwaka" [ji–WAH–kah]. "Jiwaka" is the name of the province where it is located.

either go himself, arrange for a missionary to go, or send a nursing student or Bible College student to go to these places to preach. The hospital staff planted approximately 30 of the churches that are now organized.

The size and scope of service of the hospital have expanded through the years. The medical staff has been around ten doctors in recent years. There are currently several Family Medicine doctors, two pediatricians (who have very broad medical skills and treat adult patients as well as children), and two general surgeons. Surgical services are provided by two missionary surgeons as well as visiting volunteers. Trained nurse-anesthetists (all Papua New Guinean) provide anesthesia. Services have included laparoscopic surgery since November 2016. Currently, two of the doctors are Papua New Guinean. Additionally, the hospital is involved in medical education, teaching medical students from the University of Papua New Guinea, and PNG doctors who are in specialty training.

The physical facilities have changed dramatically over the years. The 100-bed facility opened in 1967 was built with wood-framed walls. These did fine for 30 or 35 years, but by the early days of the twenty-first century were beginning to deteriorate. The amount of space was becoming inadequate. The space to accommodate the pharmacy, the operating room, and the emergency room was stretched to capacity and beyond. In 2007, with a grant from the Australian government, work was begun on a new building. It was dedicated in 2009. There were four new wards; all built of concrete

block with steel roof trusses and steel roofs. Compared to the old building, the new window area dramatically increased the amount of light in the new space. An outpatient building, operating room, and central supply building, as well as a building for emergency, orthopedics and X-ray, have been added. Funds from several sources were used to “round out” the facility to include a new pharmacy and an additional operating room.

By 2015 even the new hospital was desperate for space. Grants from Australia Aid, USAID, the Asia Bank were combined to provide for a series of infrastructure upgrades. First, a new hydroelectric system was completed, followed by a new water system for the hospital. Much of the staff housing had been built at the same time as the original hospital, now badly deteriorated. A series of projects provided new staff houses. There are no houses to buy or apartments to rent, so housing must be provided by the hospital. Many of the staff, even those holding senior positions, were living in very challenging circumstances. It is a testimony to their dedication that they continued cheerfully in their work without complaint about the houses. Eventually, over 50 new housing units were built. Plans have been put in place to build two to three new houses each year, to keep up with the need to replace older dwellings, and to provide for a growing staff.

Once staff housing had been dealt with, attention turned to the main hospital buildings. The outpatient clinic and the emergency rooms were remodeled and expanded by about 50%, and a new business office was

added. A new medical storeroom was built and is now in use.

The existing business office is being remodeled and expanded to become a new surgical outpatient clinic and new offices for the chaplains. A new pharmacy, a new laboratory, a new business office, and a new morgue are currently under construction, as is a new administration building. When the new administration building is complete, work will begin to remodel the old building into a new dental clinic.<sup>27</sup>

During this time, Nazarene College of Nursing has added a new classroom building, a new library, and new dormitories. A large multi-purpose building, to be shared by the hospital and the College of Nursing, has been discussed. Such a facility can serve as a large meeting venue, a gymnasium, and a cafeteria for the nursing students.

A few years ago, Nazarene Hospital was asked by the government of the newly-formed Jiwaka Province to serve as the provincial hospital on a contractual basis. In 2017, an agreement was worked out whereby the Church of the Nazarene will maintain firm control of the hospital, but the hospital will fill the role of Provincial hospital. The government does not restrict the spiritual ministry of the hospital in any way.

Dr. Scott Dooley served as Administrator of Nazarene Health ministries from 2012-2019. He

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<sup>27</sup> A dental clinic was built several years ago in part of the original outpatient clinic, and is now staffed by a Papua New Guinean dentist.

recently wrote, “The mission of the Church of the Nazarene is to make Christlike disciples. The mission of Nazarene Health Ministries is to ‘make Christlike disciples through excellent healthcare, education, prevention, and community transformation.’ This focus is seen throughout every aspect of the work.

“In an anonymous survey in 2016, 100% of workers—cleaners, maintenance, security, nurses, doctors, administrators—every single person said they saw their job as ministry. In a country with extremely limited healthcare, people pour in from all areas, because of the reputation of the hospital. It is a place that genuinely cares. Because this care is provided with the love of Jesus, hundreds of people come to Christ every year.

“The chaplains follow up with patients who request spiritual support after leaving the hospital.

They have planted four to five churches each year. If you look at a map of the Church of the Nazarene in PNG, Kudjip looks like the epicenter of an earthquake of church growth!”

Rev. Harmon Schmelzenbach IV served as the Field Strategy Coordinator for the Melanesia and South Pacific Field from 2009-2019. When asked about the role of the hospital in the ministry of the church, he wrote, “The Jiwaka South district that formed around Kudjip Nazarene Hospital is one of the most successful Nazarene districts in the world. Having long ago

reached Phase 3 Regular Status,<sup>28</sup> it has subsequently birthed three successful, self-sustaining daughter districts and continues to grow rapidly. Much credit must be given to the undeniable effect and testimony of Nazarene [Hospital]”

The future is bright for the hospital, as it continues to lead lost souls to Jesus, to relieve pain and suffering, and to support the growth of the church.

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<sup>28</sup> A “Phase 3 Regular District” has sufficient number of organized churches, ordained ministers, and members; is one that is 100% self-supporting, and shares in the challenges of the Great Commission within the global scope of an international church. (*Church of the Nazarene Manual 2017-2021*, paragraph 202.2)



Feb. 1954. My vroujie Wanda en ek  
aan die Sending Raad geskryf  
Soos ons verstaan het, deel die Raad  
die sending werke. En  
as of God met ons praat om na  
Sending werke was  
nog nie woor-heen in werke beg  
nie. Dit bedoel nie dat ons nie

## CHAPTER 4

# MRS. NWMS

The room hummed with happy, animated conversation. The table was filled with mouth-watering goodies, and missionary kids in all sizes sat cross-legged on the floor, chattering and playing games. Meanwhile, their parents were catching up on all the stateside news that the returning missionaries were sharing. Lee and Carol Anne Eby [EE-bee] and their four children were being welcomed home from furlough. Wanda, usually the leader of such discussions, sat at the edge in a rather pensive mood. In the midst of a crowded room, she and the Lord were in a discussion.

Since March she had had a period of uncertainty descend upon her. In the ensuing months, she had asked the Lord, if she were not to return to New Guinea, to please let her know ahead of time if possible. Then she could tie up loose ends, and leave the field knowing she had completed her work. On this warm August evening, He let her know. Wanda explained, "At the Ebys' welcome home evening, I knew, just like that, that I wouldn't be returning. It was just

as clear last time that I was to return, and what a glorious term this has been.”

Like Abraham, Wanda began to prepare to go out, though she did not know her destination. She only knew that when the Lord said, “Go,” she was to follow. She shared her feelings in a letter home to Ginny Griffin. “Only a few people here knew. Even Wallace didn’t know. I knew Dr. Johnson and Dr. Lewis were coming in February, and I felt I should tell Dr. Johnson first [Dr. Jerald Johnson was the General Director of World Missions at that time]. I had planned to ask him if there was some work in the mission office I could do, bookkeeping or some such. If there wasn’t, I planned to try Olivet, since Janie will be going there.<sup>29</sup> When I arrived back from our Madang trip, I found this telegram waiting for me, saying I had been elected to be executive director of NWMS, as Dr. Mary Scott was retiring, and to call immediately. I was floored ... and at first was going to refuse, for I still feel inadequate for such as this. But as I was praying that evening before calling the next day, I felt as if the Lord was saying: ‘You were going to ask Dr. Johnson for a job; I have given you this one.’ So, what could I do? I still feel scared to death, but I am utterly amazed at God’s timing. I’ve been a missionary for 20 years and have lost contact with a lot of the stateside activities, but if He has given me the job; then He will provide the strength and wisdom that I need to do it – in His way.”

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<sup>29</sup> Olivet Nazarene University is a Nazarene liberal arts university in Bourbonnais [BUHR–buh–nay], Illinois, USA.

## Editor's Note: NWMS and all those other letters

The missions auxiliary organization started in the churches that would later merge to form the Church of the Nazarene. Formally organized in 1915, the name has changed many times through the years:<sup>30</sup>

1915	Woman's Missionary Society
1928	Woman's Foreign Missionary Society
1952	Nazarene Foreign Missionary Society
1964	Nazarene World Missionary Society
1980	Nazarene World Mission Society
2001	Nazarene Missions International

The NMI has a General President, elected by the General Convention every four years, and a Global Director, elected by the Board of General Superintendents and General Board of the church.

When Dr. Johnson arrived, Wanda did accept the position. Mary was to retire officially March 1, 1975 but was willing to stay on until Wanda could come and get settled. The only “fly in the ointment,” as Wanda expressed it, was that Janie, because she was graduating from high school, would be unable to leave until after June 20. Finally, plans were arranged. Wanda would depart Kudjip in mid-March, spend a few days with Janie at Ukarumpa [ook-ah-RUHM-pah] where she attended high school, spend a few days in Australia and Canada, and then go straight to Kansas City, where Geron, in college at MidAmerica, would meet

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<sup>30</sup> For a full timeline of NMI's development from its beginnings, refer to [www.nazarene.org/nmi/history](http://www.nazarene.org/nmi/history)

her.<sup>31</sup> May 1 was the date set for her to be in the office. Dr. Lewis encouraged Wanda to do her visiting and vacationing before she got to Kansas City. Once she got into the office, it would be “quite a spell” before she could leave again. Wanda responded by declaring, “Man, I have so much to learn. I sure am glad I am certain this is in God’s plan, or I’d be even worse scared!”

Janie would remain in New Guinea to graduate and then travel home with a family and three of her school buddies. A promised visit to Disneyland helped ease her disappointment at Wanda’s missing her graduation, and plans were made to be reunited in June.

Wanda found that pulling up stakes after 20 years was a bit more difficult than she had anticipated. People that she had known for so many years kept coming by to say good-bye and give her chickens and presents to express their love and sorrow at her leaving. Wanda acknowledged their love by saying, “They’re sweet, but it makes me feel...oh, you know. When you’ve stayed this many years in a place, it really does become a part of you.”

Wanda was so caught up in packing and preparations for leaving that she was unaware of the many behind-the-scenes plans being made for her farewell. On March 7, 1975, Carol Anne Eby was to write, “Twenty years’ service is over, but an exciting new experience lies ahead for Wanda. We did it! We did it! Seventy people were involved, but we completely surprised her. What a lovely evening.”

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<sup>31</sup> MidAmerica Nazarene College [now University] in Olathe [oh-LAY-thuh], Kansas, USA.

Wanda walked into a classroom that had been transformed into a Papua New Guinean paradise. Janie, who had been flown up from school as a special surprise, rushed into her mother's arms for a hug, and then, the room quieted down as everyone enjoyed the culinary delights provided for this very special evening. The evening was filled with nostalgia as the group watched films of the beginning of the work at Kudjip. The missionary kids sent their elders into waves of laughter, giving a skit of Wanda's attempt to teach her *boi kuk* [BOY KUHUK]<sup>32</sup> how to make doughnuts. It was an evening of enjoying, loving, and being together in the "bond of love." It confirmed what Wanda had once said when asked why the Nazarene missionaries seemed to get along so well, while other mission staffs seemed to have strife. Wanda had replied, "It's because we have so many parties. We know how to love each other."

Wanda settled into her new environment and faced her new challenges with the same indomitable spirit she had portrayed in the past. Throughout the year, her schedule kept accelerating, until in a letter to her friend Ginny she exclaimed, "I had a meeting at 9 A.M., one at lunch, one at 1:00, one at 3:45, one at 7:00, and got home about 11:15 P.M. Meetings started at 8:30 Saturday morning, and I got home that night about 10:30. I'm a little tired – and miles (kilometers) behind. No Christmas decorations up or anything. Believe I'll go back to New Guinea!" Not only was the office schedule busy, but also there was much traveling connected

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<sup>32</sup> A *boi kuk* is a cookboy.

with her new job. Once she reported driving nearly 1,300 miles (2,092 kilometers) in less than a day and a half.

Though often exhausted, Wanda knew where to regain her strength. Many times, she would write notes similar to this: “I’ve lost two days’ work in the office, but maybe it’s been worth it. I was feeling the need of a break. I feel refreshed. I felt God’s strength and help so much these two days.” And afterward, this inner strength would then overflow into her work, as when she wrote, “Meeting was good ... free spirit of oneness, love... much business accomplished – prayer and fasting together – all in all, I’m pleased.”

Because of Wanda’s openness and directness, sometimes interpersonal relationships were strained, and feelings would get ruffled. Wanda fought for principles and, when she thought she was right, was determined to see right prevail. Sometimes that caused private pain. One day, during a General NWMS Council meeting, she excused herself and called her dear friend, Kathy Butts [BUHTS], to meet her in the parking lot.<sup>33</sup> In the car, she told Kathy to drive while she poured out her frustration in tears for several miles. When the storm passed, she wiped her eyes, turned Kathy back to Headquarters, and went back to the council meeting, and no one ever knew what happened. When people did disagree with Wanda, she always found it an occasion to do a careful introspection, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, to see if there were shortcomings within her that caused a negative

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<sup>33</sup> The late Kathy Butts served as administrative director for the General Secretary’s Office at the International Headquarters (now the Global Ministry Center) for 27 years.

influence in the situation. With that kind of an attitude, situations did turn around, and often Wanda would write positive words such as this: “These are good days. I can’t remember if I told you on the phone, but...have had excellent rapport...I feel God has given us a new freedom, and I praise Him for it. Council meeting should be good this year.”

Wanda’s five years in the NWMS office were marked with notable accomplishments, but she was not looking for commendation. As she noted in her first report, “I look forward to this coming year with anticipation and will do my best to fulfill the responsibilities given to me. I plan to talk with my Father rather often about \_\_\_\_\_

it, for it’s His ‘Well done’ that I openly covet.” She began the quadrennium with the promise from Revelation 3, believing Christ was saying to the NWMS: “Behold, I have set before thee an open door, \_\_\_\_\_

**Behold, I have set  
before thee an open  
door, and no man  
can shut it...**

and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and has kept my word, and hast not denied my name” (verse 8). Her promise to the General Board and general superintendents was, “It will be great to enter that door this quadrennium – for Him and with you.”

At the end of the first year, all the statistics had a plus, and during the next four years, Wanda practiced fiscal responsibility by seeing that the NWMS department was in the black.

Children’s interest in missions was a primary focus of Wanda’s, and she tried several creative ways of developing that interest.

Of all emphases of the NWMS, Wanda was most concerned about prayer. She believed with full confidence that only as prayer and fasting are stressed, sought after, and held up as the foundation of all other areas, would the church be able to see the success God wanted it to achieve. As she stated in her 1978 report to the General Board: "I read somewhere recently that the important task at hand is to link God's material gifts with the church's material needs. Well, I have a deep, burning desire that while we are busy about our task of 'linking God's material gifts with the church's material needs,' we will also be just as fervent and faithful in linking His spiritual gift with her spiritual needs." In 1979, the General Council voted to make the year of 1979-80 a special year of Prayer, Fasting, and Self-denial; and in 1980 Wanda was able to report a growing emphasis on prayer. Many churches were beginning or reorganizing prayer groups, and local, and district prayer retreats were being enthusiastically reported.

February 23, 1980, was a red-letter day for Wanda. As she explained it, "God spoke to me—clearly, as He always has in the past, when He was leading in a certain way. I felt that same inner assurance that I felt when going to Bethany, when getting married, when going to New Guinea the first and second time, and when coming back from New Guinea. He has released me from my responsibilities here at Headquarters. He told me clearly of one thing I must do first. I've done it, and He took care of it. Now I must wait for His timing to talk to Dr. Johnson and Dr. Coulter. It's good timing."



When Wanda shared her “nudge” with Dr. Johnson, he urged her to pray a little more and wait a few weeks. She did so but, feeling even more assured of God’s leading; they together shared with the general superintendents, then the NWMS Council, and then openly. Wanda began to prepare to enter college after the General Convention in June to complete her degree before going to different areas of the world as a “supply” missionary.

One day, Dr. Johnson asked her if she’d like to go to Israel to replace Earl and Norma Morgan while they were on furlough.<sup>34</sup> She could attend school in Israel. After checking in with her Heavenly Father, Wanda felt she was heading in the right direction and excitedly began making plans. After the General Assembly in June, where she would officially terminate her office, she would fly to Papua New Guinea for the 25th anniversary of the opening of the field and then on to Jerusalem.<sup>35</sup>

At great peace, Wanda once again declared, “Wherever He leads is good enough for me. I want to be a channel – a vessel He can move and use in any way He wishes.” And now to think, she would be walking

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is good enough for  
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He can move and  
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wishes**

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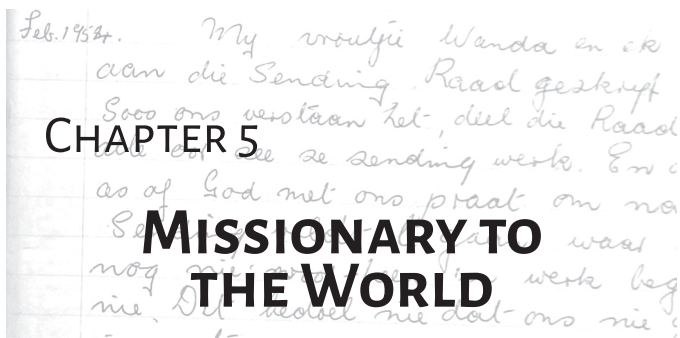
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<sup>34</sup> Earl and Norma Morgan retired from 33 years of Nazarene missionary service in Italy, Lebanon, and Israel.

<sup>35</sup> In 1975, the Australian-administered territories of Papua and New Guinea combined to form the independent nation of Papua New Guinea.

the very paths where once her Lord had walked. She felt this was a cherished gift from God that she was to treasure to the end of her days.

An added benefit of Wanda's five years in Kansas City had been the opportunity to be near her children. She felt it was indeed in God's providence to be able to provide a home for them at this time. These young adult years of making adjustments to college, seeking a career, finding a life partner, becoming established spiritually were difficult ones. Wanda had always leaned heavily upon the Lord to guide her children, and she had accepted separation from them, willing to do His work; but she loved being near them during these years, for above all of her other titles and jobs, she loved being a mother.



## CHAPTER 5

# MISSIONARY TO THE WORLD

Looking down at the mix of thick jungle inland and the congestion of streets and modern buildings bordering the coast, Wanda felt mixed emotions as she approached Papua New Guinea once more. The jet maneuvered into its landing pattern, and soon Wanda deplaned and made her way into the airport terminal. This arrival was so different from the previous ones. This time she was alone – no husband and no children. This time she was not beginning a missionary term but making a brief stop on her way to Israel and a missionary assignment there. She had ten days to renew friendships, celebrate the 25th-anniversary of the Nazarene work in Papua New Guinea, and rejoice at what had been accomplished for God and His kingdom. Anniversaries are reflections of beginnings. The next ten days were to be praise-filled hours for Wanda as she viewed the progress of the church in this land that had become “home” in such a special way to her.

As Wanda moved from place to place during those days, memories flooded her mind. On this very special occasion of the 25th anniversary, the new district center at Kiam [KEE–ahm] was dedicated. As Wanda sat in the service, she jotted down her reminiscences. She remembered when she and Sid had no Christian Papua New Guinean friend with whom to find fellowship. Now, here were hundreds and hundreds (almost a thousand) gathered, singing God’s praise. She rejoiced over the many pastors, and their families present whom she had taught in grade school.

She remembered when even a simple melody was difficult for the people to follow. Now, here was a choir singing in four-part harmony! She remembered when missionaries had to do everything. Now, here was a Papua New Guinean district superintendent handling the services so very well, national Christians leading the singing and playing guitars, praying and organizing the services. She was overwhelmed! She exclaimed, “Beautiful! I remember when even to the Christians, following Christ still seemed ‘foreign,’ but now I sense a depth of spirit and hunger for more of God’s Spirit in many that I have talked with. I saw a growth of trees that made the scenery change, and I sensed a growth of spirit that made me know the church is changing too – in good ways. ...I can do nothing except give praise for being allowed to be part of the beginning – and to share in this celebration of the 25th.”

## Editor's Note: The Church in PNG After 60 years

When Wanda visited PNG for the 25th anniversary of the work there, the church had grown remarkably since its founding in 1956.<sup>36</sup> Wanda noted the difference from the time that there were no Papua New Guinean Christians in the area where they lived and no churches. By that time, she was worshiping with a group of nearly 1,000 people.

I had the privilege of attending the 50th anniversary of the work in PNG in 2006.<sup>37</sup> At that time, the size of the crowd was very difficult to determine. There were estimates as high as 25,000 at some of the services. That celebration lasted a full week. There were messages from retired missionaries and early church leaders.

Wanda also commented on the fact that there was a Papua New Guinean district superintendent leading the celebration. That superintendent was Rev. Taime Dirye [ta-HEE—mah DIR-yah]. He went on to become the first full-time chaplain at Nazarene Hospital. Though his time in elected office was over, he was seen as a leader for the rest of his life. He was often consulted by church leaders when important decisions were being considered. He had a passion for church planting. At the time when he was anticipating retirement, I asked him what he planned to do to stay busy

<sup>36</sup> At the time of this 25th Anniversary, the work had grown to 50 churches (both organized and not-yet-organized), on four districts, with a weekly average attendance of 3,435.

<sup>37</sup> At the time of this 50th Anniversary, the work had further grown to 496 churches (both organized and not-yet-organized), on 12 districts, with a weekly average attendance of 20,653.

after he retired. Without hesitation, he replied, "Plant Churches!" It was my privilege to be at his bedside in the last moments of his earthly life, surrounded by four generations of family and many friends. His death was in sharp contrast to what I have witnessed so often in PNG, where the animistic beliefs heavily influence attitudes toward death.

The Church of the Nazarene has now been in Papua New Guinea for 63 years! If Wanda could see it now, she would again be surprised and pleased to see the changes.

The original district has been repeatedly divided, ultimately to form five districts. New districts were established in other parts of PNG, where the church spread, not by missionaries from Western countries, but by Papua New Guinean pastors and evangelists. As of the 2018 statistical year, there are 13 districts (and one more planned within a year), each with a Papua New Guinean district superintendent. There are 377 churches and 212 preaching points. On an average Sunday, 35,098 people worship in the churches. There are 319 elders, 19 deacons, and 328 licensed ministers. Papua New Guineans have gone as missionaries to three other countries. The entire faculty of the Bible College (now called "Melanesia Nazarene Bible College") are Papua New Guineans, except for one, who is a missionary from Samoa. Several of these have master's degrees, and a Ph.D. will soon join them.

In addition to MNBC, there is Melanesia Nazarene Teacher's College and Nazarene College of Nursing.

There are 2 Nazarene high schools and many elementary schools! As mentioned, the hospital has been central to the life of the church in PNG in a way most people outside the country may not imagine. It continues to bring those in physical and spiritual need to Christ through the Church of the Nazarene.

Rev. Harmon Schmelzenbach IV served as Field Strategy Coordinator of the Melanesia/South Pacific Field (which includes PNG) from 2009-2019. He recently wrote, "The last ten years have seen phenomenal growth for the Church of the Nazarene across Papua New Guinea under national leadership. The expansion of Nazarene Institutions and Districts has resulted in the establishment of the 13th and now the 14th organized district, and substantial steps in uniting the Bible College, the Teachers College and the Nurses College toward the fulfillment of the vision of a Melanesian Nazarene University.

The delightful ten days in Papua New Guinea ended all too soon. Wanda noted in her diary, "It's almost impossible to put down how I really felt, but ...it was a most beautiful time. I will live with that memory in my heart for many years. It was good to see the missionaries and other friends across the valley too. Another special gift from Him – and now on to Israel."

Wanda arrived in Tel Aviv on August 7, 1980, and was met by Merlin and Alice Hunter, missionaries serving in Nazareth, and Juanita Smith, who became a housemate and

very dear friend. Juanita had been a volunteer in Israel since 1977 and then had been put on special assignment to help Wanda during the Morgans' furlough. Wanda experienced her first meal in Israel at Quickly's, a small Jewish restaurant that was to become a favorite place with its specialties of chicken livers, pita bread, and hummus.<sup>38</sup>

From pioneering in Papua New Guinea to pastoring in such a tourist spot as Jerusalem was not an easy transition for Wanda. It was also difficult for a woman to have this kind of responsibility and authority in a very male-oriented society. In the beginning, some of the people had a real problem with this situation, but in a very short time, Wanda had won their confidence and respect and was deeply loved by them. It wouldn't have worked out if God had not been directing all of the time.

Wanda loved the Sunday schools out in the villages. Friday was the big Sunday school day in some of the villages, and as it was the Muslim day off, some of the Muslim children met with the other children for Bible stories. Wanda and Juanita always went a little early to allow time for buying fresh vegetables and fruit in the open-air markets. They would also buy fresh eggs and pick out the plumpest chicken, waiting for the vendors to kill it, drain, and pluck it.

Wanda also loved the Saturday afternoon services (mainly Arab and Armenian) in the Old City on Mount Zion. The people loved to sing, and one favorite chorus Wanda

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<sup>38</sup> Hummus is a traditional salad puree of crushed chick-peas with olive oil and red paprika.



sang in pidgin, and taught in English was, “Have I Not Told You That if You Believe, You’ll See the Glory of God.” Often as she labored, her heart would go out to the Morgans and the other missionaries who had labored so long and so hard for so little fruit. Such a ministry was not easy, but in spite of the difficulties, Wanda felt that God gave her a good year in many ways.

She met some wonderful people. She would cherish the friendships of Michael, a Russian Jew, and Um Deana [OOM dee-AN-uh], an Old City Armenian lady. Wanda and Um Deana couldn’t carry on a conversation because of the language difference; but, it was enough to communicate through a handshake and a smile, and to know that each was praying for the other. There were Halla [HA-luh] and Um Nabil [OOM nuh-BEEL] and their families, Arabs in the Jerusalem church; and Aroxie [ah-RAHK-see] and Saroon [sah-ROON], Armenians of Jericho. Aroxie served as the translator for the Saturday services in the Old City. There were encouraging prayer meetings and signs of God’s Spirit working in the lives of the people.

Wanda would also be able to complete 20 hours of college work at the Institute of Holy Land Studies while pastoring the church in Jerusalem. Going on field trips for the study of the history and geography of Israel gave her a new feel of the land. Traveling out of the borders of the old tribal clans, she felt she was being transported centuries back. As Wanda traveled the dusty roads and walked beside the Sea of Galilee, she felt as if the Lord himself walked beside her, showing her His earthly home place.

She enjoyed eating in the university cafeteria, but one day her presence almost created a riot. As she was getting her meal, she forgot and left her briefcase under the coffee urn. When someone saw it, unattended, they thought it was a bomb! People began getting up and leaving, not bothering to finish their meal. At last, an attendant came over to Wanda, who had not understood Hebrew and asked her in English if the briefcase was hers. When she stood up to get it, everyone began to clap, and she, red-faced and embarrassed, retrieved the offending case.

Wanda had many unique experiences in Israel. Once, she and Juanita were invited to go to Beersheba with a couple from the Christian and Missionary Alliance church, to minister to some Bedouins. As they approached the tents, some women saw the car and put their veils over their faces because of a man being present. When the missionaries gave a friendly greeting of peace, they were immediately invited into the tent. Taking off their shoes, the group sat down on mats and enjoyed tea along with good fellowship and the sharing of the gospel. It was fascinating watching the women make a fire from a few pieces of wood and cardboard. One of the women then put some water into each of the glasses she was going to serve the tea in, and using her fingers, cleaned the inside and outside. When the water began to boil, she put loose tea and two handfuls of sugar into the pot and boiled the mixture a little longer. It was very sweet. They always serve from a tray, and if it is a friendly visit, they will serve three times. It would be impolite not to drink it.

One afternoon Wanda and Juanita were doing a little sightseeing with Merlin and Alice Hunter in the city of Nain [NAYN]. There is a small Franciscan church built there in memory of the miracle performed by Jesus. They were walking through some high brush to take a picture of the church when Wanda stepped up on a rock wall and felt something, either a sting or a bite. At first, she thought it was her toe, but then she found a mark halfway up her shin. Her foot and leg became numb, and she thought whatever it was must have put some poison into her system. She decided it might have been a scorpion. Juanita remembers, "Along the way to Mount Tabor, a couple of miles (3.2 kilometers) away, we had prayed individually, but when we were in the Church of the Transfiguration, we prayed collectively, and Wanda began to feel a change right away. Within a few minutes, the pain and discomfort had completely gone, and we thanked and praised God for His touch."

An added joy of the Israel experience was Janie's visit at Christmas. It was Wanda's delight to show Janie the sights and sounds of this lovely land. During Janie's two weeks there, they did much traveling. Shopping had always been a favorite pastime of Wanda's, and now she loved to wander through the many shops in the Old City, enjoying the bargaining even more than the shopping, and usually able to get her bottom price. On shopping excursions, sometimes conversations would develop with the shopkeeper about everyday living and life in general. Living in Israel, one had to be careful how subjects of religion were handled. Wanda deftly handled such situations. A Muslim shopkeeper, who

was a mystic, told what he experienced in his religion; and Wanda would say, "Ah, but you can have so much more." And then there was the Jewish craftsman who told her that his boy had just recently had his Bar Mitzvah, and said, "Now his sins are upon his own head; I'm no longer responsible for him." Wanda replied, "And we have Someone that took our sins upon himself." As Wanda would share with Jews and Muslims, she would often turn and wipe the tears from her eyes, because her heart was breaking as she listened to them share with her that they were doing and living the best they could. These believed in God, but so much different than she.

Janie, having become engaged to Dennis Norrick, enjoyed making wedding plans with her mother.

Following the year in Israel, and after the wedding in August of 1981, Wanda moved to Bethany to continue her education, so that she might be able to offer herself to the World Mission Department as a supply missionary, or in whatever capacity, she was needed. She completed her B. A. degree during the fall semester and then worked on her master's degree during the spring and fall semesters of 1982.

Wanda became a part of Bethany First Church staff as college pastor while she was on campus. Though she established many close relationships with the college young people, she didn't always relate as she wished, because of her age, and her absence from American culture for so many years. Wanda lived a very simple lifestyle and was often concerned at the affluence and materialism she saw among many of the students. She was also deeply concerned that spiritual

experiences were shallow rather than a deep commitment to God. Her godly influence was felt on campus, and students like Gary Yarberry [YAHR–ber–ree], then a pastor in Arkansas, said of her, “Wanda was an inspiring person who always exemplified the servant,

Jesus. I have wished many times to have the commitment level she possessed. Her dedication still speaks to me.” Gary said he would always remember some counsel Wanda once gave him in a diffi-

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**“When your head tells you one thing and your heart another, follow the voice of the heart.”**

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cult decision that he was trying to make. She said, “When your head tells you one thing and your heart another, follow the voice of the heart.” Gary said he had followed that advice in sermon preparation, preaching, visiting, board decisions, family matters, and many other areas of life and had never regretted following the “voice of the heart.”

Wanda’s achievements and influence upon the campus was remembered in 1984 when she was the recipient of the “B” Award from Bethany Nazarene College for meritorious service.

Wanda’s schooling was interrupted by another mission call, and this time she was appointed for a full term to the Caribbean Nazarene Theological College (now Caribbean Nazarene College) in the beautiful land of Trinidad. She left for Trinidad in February of 1983.

From Papua New Guinea to Israel, to the Caribbean took a lot of adjusting. Different environments, different cultures, different languages evoked different responses. Both Wanda and the students at the seminary had lots to learn.

Errol [ER–ruhl] Carrim [KE–ruhm], one of her students, took Wanda’s openness and friendliness as a front, and so when she asked to go with him to town to do some shopping, he thought she was kidding. Missionaries just didn’t do that, so he left her. When he came back, she met him, demanding, “Young man, you left me standing here. Why did you leave me?” Realizing her genuineness, Errol entered into a friendship that was to impact his life significantly.

Wanda added a refreshing dimension to the campus with her vitality, friendly hospitality, and her “tough love” that never felt tough because it was so loving. Her classes were stimulating and different. She read from Calvin Miller’s *The Singer* every morning. It was the first time that Errol had ever experienced a perspective and interpretation of Christ other than the Bible, and it was very meaningful to him. Even today, he says whenever he sees that book, he thinks of Wanda. She introduced the students to C. S. Lewis and Shakespeare. She encouraged the students to dramatize Shakespeare’s works in class, and what a compliment it was to them when she told them they had done it well!

It was the little gestures of friendship that so endeared Wanda to Errol. He pastored a small home mission church plant while in school and traveled to the church on public transport. Many a Sunday evening, coming in dead tired, he would go to his mailbox and there, find a note of encouragement from Wanda. It was his dream that someday when he finished his education, he and Wanda would teach in the seminary together. Expressing the influence of Wanda upon him, Errol said, “All of us in life have people we

want to achieve for. In my background, there was no one in particular, but I wanted to achieve for Wanda. I wanted to accomplish something for her.

### **Editor's Note: Errol Carrim**

When asked for his memories of Wanda Knox, Errol Carrim began with the words, "Teacher, mother, friend."

During Wanda's final illness, Errol continued his studies at Eastern Nazarene College in Quincy, Massachusetts, USA. While studying there, he served as associate pastor at Hartford, Connecticut Church of the Nazarene; he served as youth and visitation pastor. Though he had hoped to see Wanda, he was not able to travel to Kansas City before her death. He received a B.A. in 1986 and an M.A. in 1987. Around the time of his graduation, he received word from Wanda's dear friend, Kathy Butts, that she wanted to underwrite his tuition to attend Nazarene Theological Seminary (NTS), in Kansas City.

During his time at NTS, Errol met Rhonda Gibson at a singles' Sunday school class at then Kansas City Hillcrest Church of the Nazarene. She was studying at NTS for her M.Div. in Missions. They were married five days after their graduation in 1990!

Errol and Rhonda's first place of ministry was back where Errol had begun his ministerial education, and where he first met Wanda, at Caribbean Nazarene Theological College. He and Rhonda taught there for ten years.

Rhonda completed her Doctor of Ministry in Spiritual Formation at Asbury College in Wilmore, Kentucky

in 2000 and then began doctoral studies at Nazarene Theological College in Manchester, England. During their time there, they had a baby daughter, Kimberly. The Carrims returned to the US in 2004, where Rhonda accepted a faculty position in the School of Theology and Christian Ministries at Northwest Nazarene University (NNU) in Nampa, Idaho. While she continued to teach at NNU, Errol began a practice of Life and Leadership Coaching in 2013. Since 2015 they have both directed the Ethnic Leadership Development Initiative. In 2018 Rhonda took a sabbatical, and the two of them, along with Kimberly spent six months as pastors of a church in Dargaville [DAHR–guh–vuhl], New Zealand.

Rhonda is now Principal of Nazarene Theological College, South Africa, in Johannesburg, South Africa. Errol is working in support roles there, helping to restore the physical facilities, and helping with teaching responsibilities.

I asked Errol about Wanda's long-term impact on his life and ministry. "Without a doubt, Wanda's long-term impact [has been] her openness to people. When she showed up at the College in Trinidad, from day one, she interacted with everyone with a kind, caring, and gentle spirit. Between classes or at the end of the day, she did not hustle off to her apartment. Instead, she stood around and talked with us, students. Often, she would invite a group of students to her apartment to share some popcorn and hang out. Wanda taught me how to be open to people and that I should learn to trust people."



I then asked him to speculate as to how his life might have been different had he not known her: "I think I would have continued struggling with my self-worth. When Wanda reached out to me, she demonstrated genuine care and helped me begin seeing I had worth before God and the people of God. Up to that point in my life, very few people had shown me that I had worth at all. I also would have found it difficult to trust others. Little did I realize that her brief investment in my life in Trinidad was preparing me for my journeys to the US, England, New Zealand, and now South Africa."

Wanda's contacts with the students and with the people gave her great enjoyment and fulfillment, which helped to alleviate the distress and discouragement she sometimes felt in some of her circumstances. All of the water had to be boiled, and since she used most of hers in making drinks for others, she was always running out. There were extreme changes in the weather, and she was often awakened in the early morning by fierce storms. Travel was always difficult, and the roads were challenging to her. Her classes really did drain her as she put in hours of work developing new curriculum. She missed the close relationships of previous years and said, "Sometimes I'd like to relax with someone I could talk to about anything, but I'm not complaining. I'm grateful to the Lord for the place He's given me to serve."

While she was in Trinidad, she received exciting news from home. She shared in her diary, "Today Geron called. His voice was filled with excitement and pride. He and

Loretta have been blessed with a healthy, beautiful (my eyes haven't seen her yet, but Geron says she's beautiful) baby girl –Lindsey Marie, 6 pounds 11 ounces (3 kilograms)– on November 6, 1983. My first grandchild! I have wanted a grandchild for quite a few years already, so how can I explain how I feel? I feel warm and happy and so tender, yet I ache inside too, to be so far away. The only comfort is in knowing I am where He wants me at the present time. But I am human enough to long to see and hold my precious granddaughter in my arms. Lindsey – I will be thinking of you so much and already (before you were born) I've been praying for you and will continue to do that, and your grandmother just wants you to know that you are so precious, so special, and I love you dearly. Even if I can't hold you in my arms – I hold you in my heart.”

The deep need around her touched Wanda's heart. Sickness and death ravaged the people. Once Wanda took a very ill student to a clinic. The nurse asked if the student was bleeding from the eyes, ears, or nose; and when Wanda said no, the nurse declared it was not an emergency and wouldn't see him. After a long wait, the guard at the clinic finally said, “He don't look sick to me!” Wanda, incensed, said later, “I could have hit him!” Fortunately for all concerned, the student, at last got the necessary medical treatment he required.

While in Trinidad, Wanda was also able to go to Barbados for special services. She loved the services there – the singing, clapping, and playing of tambourines, the dancing down the aisles, Wanda exclaimed, “I love, just love it! They praise the Lord so uninhibitedly. They do more congregational

singing, fewer specials. I like that.” At the missionary convention, a dramatic flair was added by having people dressed up to represent Mr. General Budget (the precursor to the World Evangelism Fund), Miss NWMS, Mr. Prayer and Fasting, etc. They rode in cars to the church, escorted by a policeman who was saluting everyone and beating back the crowd who were trying to see the VIPs (very important persons). It reminded Wanda of the times she as a young person would so enjoy the District Assembly. These people seemed so relaxed, seemed to be having so much fun, and seemed to be so enjoying the Lord.

In December of 1983, Wanda had her Christmas break all planned. She had been invited to six different homes for a “day” during the holidays. Also, she had paint on hand and was planning to paint her kitchen and bathroom during her days off. She was looking forward to relaxing and doing a lot of swimming, but her well-laid plans were interrupted. She began feeling very tired but thought it was the humidity. Then she noticed a large bulge in her abdomen. She thought it was because she was now middle-aged, and that she was just getting fat, but decided to check with a doctor. The doctor, discovering a large mass, wanted to operate right away, but Wanda decided to return to the States to have the surgery. Kathy Butts, hearing the news in Kansas City, was stunned and called Trinidad immediately to talk to Wanda. Wanda seemed quite calm and in complete control of the situation. She mentioned that she would need a doctor in Kansas City since Dr. Howard Hamlin [HAM-lin] had been her doctor before she

left.<sup>39</sup> Now with his death, she would need another. Wanda had made her plans. She told Kathy, “I’ll fly to Oklahoma City on Christmas Day to be with my folks for the holidays. Then I will come on to Kansas City to see the doctor there. Will you care for me if I have to have surgery?”

On Christmas Day, Wanda experienced her first Christmas dinner in the air. She enjoyed the few days with her mom and dad and had the unexpected pleasure of seeing Janie and Dennis, at her mom’s. Then the holidays were over, and she made her way to Kansas City. Kathy met her at the airport, and they went to a special restaurant on the way home. Wan-

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**He’s been in control of my life for a long time now, and I feel confident that He is in control now regardless of the outcome.**

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da’s appetite was as good as ever, and she loved to eat. Wanda had chosen her doctor, who was the one that had cared for Dr. Hamlin during his illness. That first night after her arrival in Kansas City, she and Kathy talked most of the night. It was a beautiful talk about death and dying and heaven and grace and all the wonderful things Christians have to look forward to, even in the face of adversity or sickness. They shared their common beliefs deeply—prayer for healing and intercession. It was a precious time of heart fellowship.

The visit to the doctor was a bit tense for both Kathy and Wanda. Wanda was a little nervous, mostly because of the new doctor. She came from the examining room and admit-

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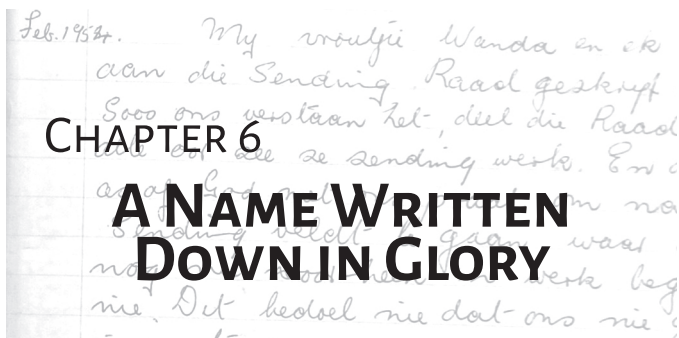
<sup>39</sup> Dr. Howard Hamlin was a Nazarene layman and former medical missionary to South Africa and Swaziland (now, Eswatini).

ted that surgery was inevitable. But she was quite pleased with her doctor. Even though he was a Hindu, they immediately shared an in-depth discussion about religious matters and their own personal beliefs. Kathy observed, “She never did wait long to get on those subjects.”

In January 1984 Wanda wrote, “Only He knows what ‘84 holds for me. But you know, He’s been in control of my life for a long time now, and I feel confident that He is in control now regardless of the outcome. I only pray that He will give me strength to glorify Him in all things. Really, to live or die matters not if we really believe what we say we believe! And in my heart, there’s a deep, deep peace – in spite of the human reluctance to face suffering. I love him more each day.”

Surgery was scheduled for Tuesday, January 10. Wanda’s testimony and faith were anchored upon God’s Word, and she entered the operating room with His promise: “‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the LORD, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future’” (Jeremiah 29:11, NIV).





## CHAPTER 6

# A NAME WRITTEN DOWN IN GLORY

The shrill jangling of the telephone broke the silence of the hospital room. It was the first sound to reach Wanda's consciousness as she came out of anesthesia following her surgery. Then she heard Geron's voice in conversation with the caller. "Not too good – it was malignant, and they didn't get it all." Later, reliving those moments, Wanda shared in her diary, "It would be impossible to explain the depth of peace that flooded me at that moment. I have looked back to it many times since. I didn't know what all the future might hold, but at that point, all that mattered was that He was holding me – and He still is."

The waiting room was jammed with family and friends also awaiting the surgery results. When they received the news, they cried. There were tears of relief that the surgery was over but sorrow that the malignant tumors were not completely removed. There were tears of hope at the news

that with chemotherapy, there was a chance of recovery. There were tears of pain as those who loved her realized she had more suffering ahead of her.

When everyone but Kathy was gone, late in that first night after surgery, Wanda said into the darkness, “How bad was it? Tell me everything.” And Kathy did, for they had agreed before surgery that nothing would be withheld from Wanda. Kathy explained the extent of the spread of the ovarian carcinoma, but also the good news that the implants that could not be removed had not penetrated any other vital areas. Several times during the night, Wanda woke up and asked more questions, but the peace that flooded her soul in those first moments after surgery held her in the days that followed.

Wanda’s recovery from the surgery was quite normal. She wrote letters, received visitors, and generally kept everyone cheered up. In a letter written in February 1984, she assured her friends, “I’m in good health – other than this ‘invader’ – so the doctor is conservatively optimistic. I will be taking chemotherapy (once every three weeks) for six months. After three months, and then again after six months, another series of tests will be run, and if by then, nothing is found to be growing, they may do a second surgery just to see what is happening inside – to see if the implants are drying up. ...I won’t deny the change of direction has been difficult, perhaps because it was so sudden. I’ve delighted in teaching in Trinidad. I’ve loved the students and the people, and I miss them immensely. But then, what a joy to be able to pray for them personally along with others that I’ve been with, in



Israel and Papua New Guinea. I feel at peace about it. I'm still where I have been for many years now – in His hands.”

Life had become different for Wanda from what it had ever been before. It was the first time she would remember not having time limits. She tired easily, and so did a lot of resting, hoping it would speed her recovery. She delighted in the close association with Geron and his family during these weeks of recovery.

Wanda loved to play with her granddaughter, Lindsey, and to work on her “Grandma’s Book.” Lindsey loved her special times with “Maamaw” [MA-mah] Wanda. Wanda, sitting in her big chair, would place a blanket at her feet where Lindsey would play contentedly. One evening Geron and Loretta brought pizza (Lindsey’s favorite food) to Wanda’s house. Wanda could eat only soup. Lindsey, settled at “Maamaw’s” feet, ready to eat pizza, suddenly realized that “Maamaw” had soup – not pizza! “Want soup, want soup!” Lindsey protested. Wanda, immensely thrilled, had Kathy discard the pizza, and grandmother and granddaughter shared the invalid fare that had turned into a special treat.

It was also during this time of recovery that Wanda received the joyous news of Janie’s pregnancy, and Wanda was exultant. “My blessings are coming quickly. I am so happy for you and am looking forward to holding this second grandchild in my arms.” Inspired by these events, Wanda took advantage of extra time to write personal letters to her grandchildren to open when they reached the age of ten.

When Wanda recovered to the point that chemotherapy could begin, her lifestyle changed drastically. Her

will to cooperate with everything medical science offered was amazing. These were difficult days. Early on Monday mornings, she would enter the hospital for several hours of chemotherapy. She would be violently ill on the way home from the hospital and for several hours following until sleep finally came. About 2:00 in the morning, she would awaken and ask for a couple of sips of juice and two spoons full of cooked cereal. She was motivated to get back on her feet as soon as possible. For three or four days following each treatment, her strength would seem almost gone, but she pushed and forced herself to eat, to keep in the best health possible. Between treatments, she and Kathy would travel around Missouri and Kansas, building up her physical strength. It helped her to cope, and Kathy remembers how much fun they had even in the midst of a most trying time.

Along with the sickness from the chemotherapy came the usual reaction of hair loss. Kathy remembers standing behind Wanda as she tried on wigs. Tears poured down Wanda's face, and that day a complete stranger sat down beside her, took off her own wig, and shared her experience. Wanda immediately responded with a positiveness about the hair loss. That positiveness carried her through to the time she removed her wig for the last time.

Wanda's second surgery was scheduled in October. About two weeks before surgery, a letter came to Wanda from Kaye Williams. She and her husband were finishing their second term as missionaries in Taiwan. Wanda was surprised to find that she was a very special person to Kaye. Kaye shared that she had felt God's gentle urging to write to Wanda, to let

her know she was praying for her, to encourage her, and to tell her that actually, Wanda had had a lot to do with Kaye's being in Taiwan.

The story unfolded that Kaye as a child had read Wanda's book, *Pioneers to New Guinea*, written for the children's missionary series. It had tugged at her heart and confirmed a mission call in her life. She had told her family and classmates at school, that when she grew up, she was going to be a missionary. She got Wanda's address at that time to write to her and let her know too. Kaye's mother was happy for her to write, but she tried to allay the possible disappointment of not receiving an answer by reminding Kaye of missionaries' busy schedules. However, a few weeks later, a letter from New Guinea came, and as Kaye said, "You just can't imagine how excited I was." God reminded Kaye of her call many times while she was growing up, but by the time she got into college, she had almost convinced herself that she could do God's work just as well at home. The night came, though, that God made it crystal clear to her that she should be a missionary. He took her on a journey through her memory, back to the little girl reading the missionary book, that was indeed a guidepost of His leading in her life. Kaye shared, "From that point until now, it's been wonderful just feeling the sweet, assuring leadership of God in my life. I just wanted to write and thank you for your part in the whole thing. Sometimes the enemy tries to get us down and make us think that it has all been in vain. But often, people are being touched by our lives when we are not aware of it at all. Thank you for touching my life – in an indirect, but

very real way. I pray for you during your illness. I am claiming Jeremiah 29:11 for you, “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Wanda laid the letter down, tears flowing freely as she thanked God for confirming His word to her again at the

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**“After all, isn’t our purpose to fulfill His will in our lives, and to glorify Him? He can help us do that whatever circumstances allow.”**

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very time through someone so very far away. She had begun the year with that very promise. She had never claimed the promise as complete healing, but felt it was God’s special way of telling her that she was His, that she was still in His hands and His plans, and that, whatever the future held, it would come out to good – whether

here on earth or on the other side. Knowing God was in control was all that mattered. As Wanda stated in a letter following her surgery, “After all, isn’t our purpose to fulfill His will in our lives, and to glorify Him? He can help us do that whatever circumstances allow.”

Having such faith enabled Wanda to say, “So when the doctor spoke in my ear as I was coming around...saying everything was all right...and then later as all the pathology reports came back completely negative, and they found no trace of the cancer left...I found that the joy of thinking of a healthy body again was rather overshadowed by that still ‘deep peace’ that He had already given for months. I found myself praying, ‘Well, Lord, Your plans must include some

things You still have for me to do here. Keep me sensitive to You, and don't let me disappoint You!"

The official report on the second surgery was a complete remission, but it would not be called a cure until at least five years had passed. During the first year, she was to have tests and scans about every three months and then have to be tested only once a year.

By November, Wanda was resuming her normal lifestyle and busy schedule. Helen Bolerjack had returned to the States for the birth of her grandchild, Sarah Mealiff [MAY-lif].<sup>40</sup> She remembers Wanda insisting they have lunch, though Wanda had sat up all night at the bedside of a dear friend who had undergone surgery. Helen reminisced, "I'm glad she did. During our very lengthy conversation, she shared with me, among other things, how the Lord had given her such a deep, deep peace that was so precious and real that it was difficult to describe." Wanda was also able to travel to Texas and welcome her new grandson, Aaron Norrick, into the world. She enjoyed a wonderful Christmas with her family and busily made plans to attend seminary in the early part of 1985 while regaining her strength, her health, and her hair!

During the ten months following her second surgery, Wanda was completely free from chemotherapy, and what a joy that was to her! Her strength returned rapidly, and she enjoyed a semester of study at seminary and made several

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<sup>40</sup> Helen and the late Ray Bolerjack served as missionaries to PNG for 29 years. Sarah is the daughter of Linda Mealiff, the Bolerjack's daughter.

trips to speak in various Faith Promise conventions. The 1985 General Assembly in Anaheim, California, USA, was a great blessing to her. She met and visited with many friends from across the years and arranged both Trinidad and Papua New Guinea reunions. With no responsibilities but to visit, worship, and praise the Lord, she experienced great joy. Following General Assembly, she spent several days in Texas “drinking in” her precious grandson, Aaron. Remembering that visit, she wrote in her diary, “Aaron, ‘bearer of light’ – I pray he will always be just that. ...what fun it is to be with you and hold you. You are growing so and have one of the most delightful personalities. I hope you will always stay sweet and loving.”

After she returned home, a routine CAT scan revealed a small shadow. Surgery was scheduled for early August. Only Geron and Janie, Kathy and Dr. Nees [NEES], executive director of World Mission, knew of this new development. It was thought to be a small, benign tumor. Wanda noted in her diary, “They have found something in the scans. It doesn’t seem to be going away, so the tumor board has decided surgery is the best option. If it’s benign, they’ll take it out, and my plans to go to Bethany and on to Trinidad will remain unchanged. If it’s malignant...well, decisions will then have to be made. How do I feel? A little drained. It’s not necessarily easy living with this constant possibility. However, the deep, inner feeling of peace remains.”

Twenty minutes after surgery began, the surgeon called Kathy to come to the Consultation Room. He advised that the cancer had returned, and a colostomy was absolutely

necessary. He was devastated himself, since both the surgeon and the oncologist were especially fond of this vibrant missionary, who challenged their medical knowledge, along with their thought about God, His universe, and His creation.

The first night of this last surgery, when all company had gone for the night, Wanda rallied and said, “How bad is it?” She and Kathy called the cancer “gremlins,” and Kathy shared with her that the gremlins had returned. She slept awhile longer, then asked, “What else?” when Kathy told her she had a colostomy, she inquired as to whether it was temporary or permanent, still holding on to recovery. Kathy remembers, “When I told her it was irreversible, a dark cloud came over that room, and I knew a battle raged within. It took her two days to come to grips with her situation. But she soon had it handled with that undefeatable spirit to make the most of what was left!”

Wanda’s Hindu doctor met with her, the children, and Kathy and shared that all had been done that could be done. Weeping unashamedly, he said he would do all that he could to make her comfortable, and confessed, “As you know, we are very fond of this woman.”

In September, Wanda sent a form letter to her friends, informing them of her condition at the time. She went on treatment from M.D. Anderson Cancer Institute of Houston. It was an experimental drug, and no one was sure of the outcome. But, she assured her friends that, though her circumstances had changed again, God had not, and her promise from Jeremiah was more precious than ever, a constant that would continue through eternity.

The months that followed are permanently engraved in the memory of those who surrounded Wanda during those days. They will remember a woman who believed God to the end. No amount of pain could make her doubt His love. Though there were times she rocked on her knees in agony, she knew He was still holding her in His hands. The doctors agreed that the experimental treatment from Houston was not proving effective, as fluid built up, and Wanda had to have fluid removed from her abdomen about twice a week. Many emergency runs were made in the middle of the night when it seemed she was at the point of death. Kathy vividly remembers one such time, when after another crisis had been averted, Wanda, feeling much better, said she was hungry. She sent Kathy out for Mexican food, and when Kathy brought it, Wanda “wolfed” it down. The hospital room suddenly filled with the wonderful odor of Mexican food.

Thanksgiving time drew near, and though Wanda was very weak, the whole family was coming in to celebrate. Wanda was so looking forward to it and hoping it would be one of her good days. Donna Fillmore’s Sunday school class of sixth-grade girls took Wanda’s Thanksgiving celebration on as a special prayer project. In their classroom each week, they placed a rose to represent Wanda, and they would pray that she would have enough of an appetite to enjoy her Thanksgiving meal, and strength to enjoy the fellowship of her loved ones. Their prayers were answered. Wanda enjoyed her dinner immensely and was able to sit up and talk and laugh and play games with her children and grandchildren. Later, she sent a card of thanks to the girls: “I want to thank



you so much for your precious prayers for me. I especially wanted you to know that this week has been perfect. I have felt so good and enjoyed my family so much on Thanksgiving Day. I'm sure God answered your prayers."

Also in November, Wanda dropped a note to Nina Gunter, then executive director of NWMS (now NMI), apologizing for an uncompleted writing assignment.<sup>41</sup> Wanda explained that she didn't have the strength or concentration to write the article, but she did want to share some words about how the Medical Plan (now Mission-

ary Health Care) had helped her, and perhaps, her thanks could be shared in an article. Up to that point, Wanda figured her medical costs had been close to \$50,000. Wanda exclaimed, "What would I have done if our people had not provided for their missionaries an adequate medical plan? I think

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**"What would I  
have done if  
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not provided for  
their missionaries  
an adequate  
medical plan?"**

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that I've only had to pay around \$300 a year out of my own pocket for medical expenses since I've been ill! To fight the illness has not been easy – to have had to worry about finance would have been terrible. Oh, how grateful I am to our people around the church, who love us and believe in the call of missions, and are willing to support us in salaries, in prayer, in extras like LINKS (now Links—a network of

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<sup>41</sup> Dr. Nina Gunter, former pastor and global NMI director, was elected to serve as a general superintendent for the Church of the Nazarene in 2005. She was the first woman to be elected to this high office in the denomination.

personal connections between missionaries and Nazarene districts and local churches around the world) and the Medical Plan. I could never thank them enough.”

Dr. Alex and Joyce Deasley [DEEZ-lee] ministered to Wanda during her illness in a special way.<sup>42</sup> Wanda had brought Alex a Communion set from Jerusalem, and she enjoyed taking Communion in one of those cups. One day during a time of extreme weakness when she was barely able to lift her hand, during the Communion service while Alex prayed, she sat bolt upright. Remembering the electrifying presence of the Holy Spirit, Joyce said, “I thought she was going to get up!” Heaven came near.

Wanda directed Christmas activities from her big chair, and though Donna Fillmore addressed her cards, Wanda wrote the notes. In a parting, thoughtful gesture to the Deasleys, she sent a basket of delicacies – things that would please a Scotsman’s palate, such as Vegemite [VEJ-i-miet], Marmite [MAHR-miet], and special jams.<sup>43</sup> Knowing the end was near, Wanda began to designate pictures on the wall or dishes she wanted to give to her friends.

Wanda was very realistic about death. She acknowledged its ugliness but was very positive about the final outcome. She penned this original verse in her diary:

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<sup>42</sup> Dr. Alex Deasley taught at a number of Nazarene schools, including Nazarene Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Missouri, USA. He has also authored several books and publications.

<sup>43</sup> Well-known to those who live in territories of the British Empire, Vegemite and Marmite are similar black food spreads made from leftover brewer’s yeast extract and various vegetable and spice additives, which are typically spread on toast.

*I used to think – loving life so greatly –  
That to die would be like leaving a party  
Before the end.  
Now I know that the “party”  
Is really happening somewhere else;  
That the light and the music –  
Escaping in snatches  
To make the pulse beat  
And the tempo quicken –  
Come from a long way away.  
And I know too  
That when I get there,  
The music (and praise to Him)  
Will never end.*

In the last days, Wanda’s feet would swell, and Kathy had to buy her larger slippers continually. One day, Wanda looked at her feet that were turning black and said, “I’m dying, Kathy.” Those who saw her in that last week realized death was near, but Wanda’s indomitable spirit shone through. Miriam Hall remembers visiting the Sunday night before Wanda’s death to say good-bye, and after they talked, Wanda said, “But, we’ll meet again,” and laughed out loud.<sup>44</sup>

Linda Mealiff went by to see Wanda and was shocked to find her almost unrecognizable. She had wasted away, but

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<sup>44</sup> The late Dr. Miriam J. Hall, a former elementary school teacher, was elected as the first director of Children’s Ministries for the Church of the Nazarene, in 1977 and served in that capacity until she retired in 1998. She taught several courses on Children’s Ministries at NTS and authored several books.

when she smiled, the recognition came, and she was “Aunt Wanda.” Though Wanda was drowsy because of the medication, she was coherent, and they talked for a while. Even at this critical stage, Wanda was grateful for many things. She was thankful she could stay home. She had nursing care around the clock and was concerned for her nurses. Kathy was a pillar of strength and stability to her at this time. Wanda accepted her oncoming death better than anyone else. She planned her funeral and remained her cheerful, trusting self, believing God would take care of her. She would say, “I just want to die like a Christian.” Rather than being concerned for herself, she was concerned for the spiritual welfare of her children and grandchildren, and how they would adjust without her. Linda knew she’d never see Wanda alive again. Realizing she was the representative on location of all the missionary kids this lovely lady had loved and encouraged through the years, she struggled to say thanks. Inarticulate with grief, all she could say was, “I love you.”

Early on Friday morning, January 3, 1986, Kathy and Geron were at Wanda’s side, where they had been all night. Wanda had taken minimal morphine for her pain, for she wanted to be alert to the end. Kathy and Geron were holding her hands when she roused and said, “Let go of my hands,” and then lay back, and it was over. Wanda had escaped the bonds of illness, pain, and suffering and walked into His presence.

Two hours later Errol Carrim, Wanda’s former student in Trinidad, called and when he heard the news, sobbed openly over the phone. Errol says that Wanda’s death was

one of the most significant losses in his life. In 1984, even while she was ill, she had worked with Errol through the Sidney Knox Foundation and through scholarships to bring him to the States to further his education. She had made it possible for him to come to Eastern Nazarene College, and through these last two years, they'd talked on the phone and exchanged cards and letters but had not met face-to-face since they had been in Trinidad. He didn't have money to come to the funeral, but as he expressed it, "Memories are what you remember, not someone in a casket. I had the plaque she'd given me that said, 'The will of God will never lead you where His grace can't keep you,' and a water jug to remember her by." It seemed so strange that she'd died.

Helen Temple,<sup>45</sup> in her tribute to Wanda in the *Standard*, spoke of the legacy Wanda left for us all – "the triumph of faith in God over the worst that Satan can fling at us."<sup>46</sup> This was the theme of her funeral service at Olathe College Church on January 6, 1986. It was a joyful celebration, planned by Wanda and carried out by those who loved her. Trust, faith, and joy were proclaimed from the musical prelude to the final benediction. After reading the promise from Jeremiah 29:11 that Wanda had held onto during her months of illness, Pastor Paul Cunningham declared,

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<sup>45</sup> The late Helen Temple was the former editor of *The Other Sheep*, a missions magazine for the Church of the Nazarene. She wrote more than 60 books of missions stories for adults and children. While many assume otherwise, Helen never served as a missionary.

<sup>46</sup> The *Standard* is a publication produced by Sunday School Ministries (now Sunday school and Discipleship Ministries International) as a take-home piece with short stories, articles, puzzles, and expanded Sunday school information.

“Today she lives out that future with her blessed Lord, whom she will be with forever, and one day we will all be together again.”

Dr. Charles Strickland, representing the Board of General Superintendents, spoke of the legacy left by Wanda.<sup>47</sup> “Her missionary passion and gracious spiritual warmth won the admiration of the entire church in North America. Her dedication and her commitment awakened in our youth a desire to serve God, and there are many young missionaries today who testify to receiving their call in a convention led by Wanda. Wanda Knox has given to the Church of the Nazarene a modern example of what a totally dedicated life can give to advance the kingdom of God. ...A great host of people will rise to call blessed this beautiful handmaiden of the Lord, who brought light to so many who were in spiritual darkness, particularly those from the mountain jungle of Papua New Guinea whom the world had forgotten. ...It is our trust and hope that the church will never allow to be forgotten this beautiful life so dedicated to Christ and the church that she so greatly loved.”

Dr. Phyllis Perkins,<sup>48</sup> who followed Wanda in the position of executive director of NWMS, wrote a tribute to Wanda

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<sup>47</sup> The late Charles H. Strickland was a minister, missionary, college president, author, and general superintendent in the Church of the Nazarene. He and his wife, the late Fannie Strickland, served as missionaries to South Africa for 18 years. He was the first president of Nazarene Bible College and served as general superintendent from 1972 until 1988.

<sup>48</sup> The late Phyllis Perkins Howard served as a missionary to Japan, and was the director of Nazarene World Mission Society (now Nazarene Missions International), as well as a retired educator.

that was read at the funeral, and that spoke of Wanda pouring her life into NWMS. Dr. Perkins said Wanda would be remembered most for her missionary spirit, and her passion for lost souls that she transmitted to missionary societies throughout the international church. Dr. Perkins remembered that when Wanda was orienting her to the director's office, she had said, "When I came to \_\_\_\_\_ Kansas City in 1975, my missionary vision was primarily for Papua New Guinea; then after a short time, I began to feel the burden for the whole world." Dr. Perkins said, "In her genuine, enthusiastic way, she helped all of us catch more of that vision that permeated her life. \_\_\_\_\_"

**"So, help us, O Lord,  
today not to waste  
the lessons that You  
want us to learn  
through her life and  
through her death."**

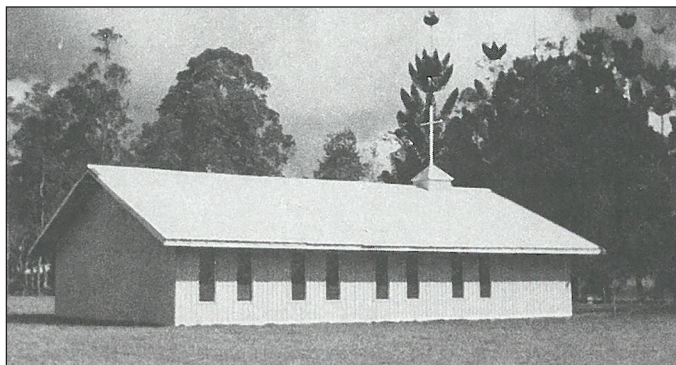
I have trouble keeping this letter in the past tense. Wanda is very much alive for me, and I celebrate her home-going and her freedom from pain. Today, Wanda is still with us in her investment and legacy of the missionary vision. We cannot forget her unselfish, total commitment to God's call to serve, nor can we fail to respond to His clear commission for us."

Dr. Cunningham's prayer declared, "If God can so mightily equip her, so mightily empower her, there is hope for us that Your Holy Spirit can do in and through us what You did in and through her. So, help us, O Lord, today not to waste the lessons that You want us to learn through her life and through her death."

And that determination was felt even as the service continued. Linda Mealiff said, "The most significant part of the

funeral to me was the song ‘Until Then.’” Linda said then her heart was flooded with joy. Everything was now all right. Finally, Wanda was home, and Linda would go on singing; she would carry on.

That legacy was reflected in Dr. Orville Jenkins’s funeral message, as he told of his encounter with Merilyn Wutsik, daughter of one of the first converts of Sidney and Wanda’s ministry.<sup>49</sup> Merilyn had said, “My mother heard the message of salvation through the lips of Sidney and Wanda Knox. I was taken to Sunday school and church as a very young child. I too met Jesus, and my life has been totally changed by the gospel.” When Dr. Jenkins had asked Merilyn to give one word of what the coming of the missionaries had meant, she answered, “Hope. I was given hope where there was no hope.”



Wanda Knox Memorial Chapel.

<sup>49</sup> The late Dr. Orville W. Jenkins was an American Nazarene minister, district superintendent, and emeritus general superintendent in the Church of the Nazarene. He served on the Board of General Superintendents from 1968 until 1985.



That legacy would raise up a Wanda Knox Memorial Fund that now has reached over \$75,000 to further mission education around the world. A memorial chapel would be built on the campus of Melanesia Nazarene Bible College in Papua New Guinea.

This simply designed but beautiful and worshipful building is a fitting tribute to Wanda, who experienced one of her greatest delights in teaching and training young pastors. Already, many hearts have been blessed and lives changed as they have gathered in this chapel, and sensed the power and presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

The benediction prayed at Wanda's funeral continues to be answered: "The powerful change that You made in Wanda's life, which enabled her to pour out her life as a drink offering to God, has been used by the Holy Spirit to change countless lives. She lived with great purpose, and may we in these days of our lives find great purpose in living; may we share the mission You gave her to reach the whole world with the gospel."

And, looking down from her heavenly pew, Wanda said, "Amen."



Wanda Knox Memorial Chapel. The Chapel was remodeled several years ago.



# AFTERWORD

Heroes. We all have some heroes. We idolize historical figures from world history or our own country's past. We idolize military personnel who have fought on to achieve a victory or save the lives of their comrades even in seemingly impossible situations. We see stories in the news about people who acted beyond their duties to save a life or prevent a bad situation from getting worse. Have you known someone whom we would all agree has acted heroically-- when asked about what they have done--they typically answer, "I'm not a hero. I was just doing my job." Or, "I was just doing what anyone would do in that situation." We know better.

We have heroes of the faith: Bible heroes like Deborah, King David (my personal favorite), or the apostles; historical figures like Saint Francis, Augustine [ah-GUHS-tin] — even Billy Graham. We have heroes in our own theological and denominational tradition—John Wesley [WES-lee], Phineas Bresee [FIN-ee-uhs bruh-ZEE], Hiram Reynolds [HIE-ruhm RE-nuhlds], and Louise Robinson Chapman [CHAP-muhn], to name a few. In missions, we may think of William Carey [KA-ree], Hudson [HUHD-suhn] Taylor, or Adoniram Judson [a-DOHN-i-ruhm JUHD-suhn], before the founding of our denomination, and Nazarene missionaries like Harmon [HAHR-muhn] and Lula [LOO-lah] Schmelzenbach [SHMEL-zen-bahk], Roger and Esther

Carson Winans [WIE-nuhns], Orpha Spicher [OHR-fah SPIEK-uh], Fairy Chism [FAYR-ee CHIZ-uhm], Elizabeth Cole and, of course, Sidney and Wanda Knox.

Heroes can be dangerous. Once we have put a hero on a pedestal in our minds, they become bigger than life, better than ordinary people, and yes, better than us. We come to believe that they must have qualities and abilities that we don't have because we haven't accomplished what they have. They must be smarter, stronger, braver, more creative, and more spiritual than we are, or we could do what they have done. The danger is that since we don't think we can do what our heroes have done, we hesitate to do anything. We stay home and apologize for being "just an ordinary person."

But in God's kingdom, we're all ordinary people, and every ordinary person is a hero. We all can have "what it takes" because what it takes are faithfulness and obedience. Sid and Wanda just did what anyone would do in the situation--that is what any Christian who is faithful and obedient to God would do. They said "yes," then they went where they believed God was calling them to go. There are probably very few who read these words whom God is calling to the jungles of New Guinea. A few more may sense that they are being called to some other specific place. But every single one of us is being called to something and someplace. Maybe God is calling you to serve him in your small home town in Africa, or the Philippines, or Canada. He may be calling you to take a job, using your unique skills in a city

in Indonesia, Argentina, France, or the United States, and there, to shine a light for Him. He may be calling you to teach a Sunday school class in the church you have attended for years. He may be calling you to volunteer in a ministry that is new to you or to continue what you've been doing for Him for a long time.

Please look at the life of Sidney and Wanda Knox, not as a high standard that you may never measure up to, but as an example of what every one of us can do for God. Use the strengths and abilities God has already given you to serve. Trust him to give you the physical, mental, and spiritual resources that are needed as you remain faithful and obedient to Him.

# ACT ON IT

1. What characteristics do you recognize in Wanda's calling, and its development over time? Make a list of those characteristics, and then make a list of characteristics you see in your own "called development." All are called to grow and to be obedient as we grow.
2. Are there lessons you have learned from reading Wanda's story and Sidney's journal entries that you can apply to your own life and ministry, wherever you are?
3. NMI is the global missions advocate in the local church, nurturing a spirit of missions and mobilizing the church into action, impacting people around the world. Can you see missions advocacy and nurture in Wanda's life and story? How does this challenge you?
4. One sees the strong influence Wanda had on other's lives during her ministry through missions. Each of us has the capacity to influence others around us. Take a personal inventory of how you are influencing others in missional ways, and commit to be more intentional in this.

5. What might you do in your local church and community to encourage those who are called into specific ministries or missions? How will you walk alongside them as they discern, follow and fulfill their calling?
6. Clearly, Wanda's life was marked by times of loss and times of adjustment. She seemed to handle that with great poise and grace. Did her losses and times of adjustments contribute to, or detract from, her faithful fulfillment of her calling to "go" and "share" the Good News of Christ with others. What insights has Wanda's life and story given to you to make the most of every day for the sake of others and for the sake of Christ?

