

# PRAYING

our children  
into  
missions

✻ By Pastor Craig Wentzel

## World Mission Vision

The 2007 AFLC Annual Conference asked the World Missions Department to establish and communicate a long-range plan for the future of World Missions. Members of our committee have prayerfully sought God's direction in this area and have set six priorities as visions and goals for the future. They include: a revival of prayer for missions, preparing missionaries from childhood, reaching unreached people groups, pastoral training, developing self- (God-) reliant missions works and compassion for the poor around the world.

The following three articles in this mission edition and two more in the missions columns of May and June will describe these goals. The vision and goals will also be presented at this year's Annual Conference.

**I**n the last few months members of the World Missions Committee have seen that prayer and the preparation of our children are necessary priorities for our mission work in the AFLC. We have a good picture of this necessity in the story of Hannah in I Samuel 1-3.

Hannah is best known for two things: her prayers and her son, Samuel. In fact, if not for the effect she had on others through these two things, we wouldn't know her at all. Faced with a difficult family situation, she prayed, and the Lord answered her prayer by giving her a son who had a great impact on the world, even your small part of it.

### The impact of Hannah's prayers

Prayer had an impact on Hannah. Ole Hallesby compared prayer to a person in a boat throwing an anchor to the shore (God) and then pulling on the rope. Is the person pulling the shore closer to the boat or is he pulling the boat closer to the shore? I believe the Lord wanted Hannah to pray so that He could draw her to Himself. He wanted to give her a son, but He had great plans for that son, and she had to prepare him rightly to be useful to God. As Hannah prayed and offered her future child back to the Lord for His service, God eased the burden He had given her for the life of a child. "Her face was no longer sad" (I Samuel 1:18). Then God answered her: "The LORD remembered her. And ... she gave birth to a son" (vs. 19-20).

Hannah's prayers had an impact on the priest Eli. Her prayers were a testimony and an encouragement to him as he observed her earnestness and God's answer. Eli became entrusted with that answer: Samuel.

Hannah's prayers had an impact on Samuel. Every time someone called his name, he was reminded that God hears. He was the answer to his mother's prayers. Hannah told him why she gave him up to the Lord: he belonged to the Lord because of her promise to give him back as His servant. Because of her great example, he also became a man of prayer. Psalm 99:6 tells us: "Samuel was among those who called on His name: They called upon the LORD, and He answered them."

How do Hannah's prayers impact us? Like Hannah, we need to be dissatisfied with the way things are (our comfort zone) and take on God's burden for new life in others. Recently I realized that I had misplaced some very important records. For two weeks I looked everywhere. I became desperate to find that which was lost. I prayed earnestly,

knowing that the Lord knew where they were. When I had no more hope, the Lord brought them to light. The joy and relief I experienced when they were found gave me a taste of what the Lord feels when a lost, eternal soul is found. Will we let the Lord draw us near to Him in prayer so that we can feel His burden for the lost and become urgent in finding them?

### The impact of Hannah's child

Samuel had a great impact on Hannah. As God's answer to her prayers, he showed her God's love and power in her life in the most personal way. What she did with Samuel opened the door for the Lord to give her more children (I Samuel 2:20-21).

Samuel had an impact on Eli, God's disobedient servant. Samuel became God's mouthpiece to him, warning him of God's judgment and giving him an opportunity to repent.

Samuel had an impact on the world, leading God's people to victory and setting up the Israelite's first two kings. Psalm 99 puts him on an equal par with Moses, the giver of God's law, and Aaron, the father of the priests for God's people. Samuel was a great prophet and the only king-maker for Israel.

How can our children have an impact on the world like Samuel did? Give them godly and sacrificial examples, a concern for pleasing God, and — most of all — surrender them to the Lord to do with as He pleases, as Hannah did. Are you willing to let the Lord have your children as missionaries?

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