



# Preparing Souls To Serve The Lord

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## Mary Onetha Millard (1942-2006)

[In a cover letter with a tribute to sister Millard written by Donna Prysock, the following excerpts are taken:]

*Dear Mr. Stearsman:*

*I enjoyed speaking to you on the phone yesterday and was happy to inform you of additional monies from the Mary Onetha Millard Trust to be used by the Florida School of Preaching ...*

*I would like to receive your newsletter ... Also, I am enclosing information about Miss Millard if you want to use it in one of the newsletters ....*

*Mary was a very giving lady as you know. She knew how she wanted her earthly wealth to be used, and she was confident that the Florida School of Preaching would use it wisely by spreading the gospel.*

*In Him,*

*Donna Prysock, Trustee of the Mary Onetha Millard Trust*

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*Because she believed in helping others and spreading the gospel, Mary Onetha Millard listed Florida School of Preaching as one of the beneficiaries in her trust.*

*Miss Millard was a school teacher in Kansas, Missouri, and Arkansas teaching various subjects. She retired from the Mountain Home Public Schools*

*in Mountain Home, Arkansas, in 2003. Upon retirement she moved to Searcy, Arkansas, where she continued to use her talents by volunteering at one of the elementary schools. Hundreds of children's lives have been impacted by this one woman during her career.*

*A longtime member of the church of Christ, Miss Millard was a member of the Four Mile Hill church of Christ in Searcy where she taught young children's classes. On the day of her funeral one of her students released a balloon up into the heavens in Miss Mary's honor. Another asked his mother if Miss Mary and his Granny could stop it from raining (he wanted to go outside to play). Recently, one young girl made the statement, "If Miss Mary were still here, she would teach my class because she liked to teach me." What an inspiration she was, and still is, to those young children.*

*Bringing college-aged students into her home for a meal was an enjoyment for her and the students. Her home, along with her heart, was always open. On Thursday, March 9, 2006, this Christian lady hosted and taught the Thursday Night Ladies Bible Class which she had done numerous times. However, this night was different. It would be her last. Miss Millard went to be with her Lord early the following morning.*

*Funeral services were held in Searcy on March 14. Graveside services were held in Elkins, Arkansas. On March 15 a memorial service was conducted in Mountain Home.*

The above commendations speak for themselves. However, we are indebted to the Timothy Kidwell family for their influence in securing the support for the Florida School of Preaching of this Christian lady.

Sister Millard assisted Timothy for a number of years while he was working in the mission field in Maryland. By her Christian charity, Sister Millard also made it possible for Autumn Kidwell to attend two years at the Florida School of Preaching.

The Bible demands that we honor those who are worthy of honor (Rom. 13:7). Without the combined contribution and generosity of others we could not function as the Florida School of Preaching to train and encourage workers in the service of the Lord.

In thinking of the thoughtfulness of sister Millard, a number of things come to mind.

### Misunderstanding

There is in the mind of some the idea that women in the Bible were placed in a insignificant role in spreading the gospel. In religious matters, women were/are restricted in leadership roles over men (1 Tim. 2:8-15). The complete picture of the role of godly women is often neglected. There were women recognized for their great contribution to the cause of Christ.

### Sisters in Philippi

Paul in writing to the church in Philippi made the following admonition: *I exhort Euodia, and I exhort Syntyche, to*

*be of the same mind in the Lord. Yea, I beseech thee also, true yokefellow, help these women, for they labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow-workers, whose names are in the book of life (Phil. 4:2-3 ASV).*

Women may have strong emotions and need, as do men (1 Cor. 1:10), to be of the same mind in the cause of Christ. Here are women who are laboring with Paul in the gospel. Also, these women are in need of assistance themselves. Above all, these laboring souls are enrolled in the book of life. Providing the life giving message secures our name being written there.

### Lydia

Informed students in the Bible know that the earliest converts at Philippi were associated with Lydia. Lest we forget, read again: *And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple of the city of Thyatira, one that worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us (Acts 16:14-15).*

When reading of these things, we are tempted to wonder if some of those women mentioned as fellow laborers with Paul were of the household of Lydia.

Lydia was a successful business lady. She was from the city of Thyatira and was in business in Philippi when she

obeyed the gospel. It is evident that she was a very successful and prosperous lady. Purple was the clothing of the rich (Luke 16:19; Rev. 17:4).

Her generosity like sister Millard was evident from the very first. As a new convert, Lydia asked to be a part of the advancement of the cause of Christ. She persuaded Paul and those traveling with him to use her home for lodging. Following the release from the abuse and imprisonment, Paul and Silas returned to the house of Lydia. When they had seen the brethren they departed (Acts 16:40). Was the church using her home for meetings?

Of the churches we know in the New Testament, Philippi was one of the most loyal. Luke remains here for some time, and these brethren are continually involved in the spread of the gospel (Phil. 1:3-5; 4:15-18).

It is not idle speculation that the Christian women of Philippi made a great contribution toward the stability of the congregation and enabled

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it to be evangelistic from the very beginning.

### Priscilla

This Christian lady is mentioned time and again with her faithful husband Aquila. They are first mentioned in Acts 18 as they and Paul worked at their trade of tent making to support themselves financially. They travel with Paul when he leaves Corinth and remain in Ephesus. It is here that they help Apollos see the way of God more accurately (18:24-28).

We know that the church met in her home often as indicated in the following texts: *Salute Prisca and Aquila my fellow-workers in Christ Jesus, who for my life laid down their own necks; unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles: and salute the church that is in their house ...* (Rom. 16:3-5). *The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Prisca salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house* (1 Cor. 16:19).

Whether this lady was in Corinth, Ephesus, or Rome, the church had a place to gather. Can anyone suggest that she deserves no recognition for the advancement of the cause of the Lord?

### Phoebe

To the church in Rome, from the city of Corinth, Paul wrote of the contribution of a faithful Christian lady. His words are as follows: *I commend unto you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church that is at Cenchreae: that ye receive her in the Lord, worthily of the saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever matter she may have*

*need of you: for she herself also hath been a helper of many, and of mine own self* (Rom. 16:1-2).

There is no indication that Lydia or Phoebe were married with a family. Household does not imply children and a mate. This would have to come from additional information (in the reference to Lydia's household, Acts 16:15).

Phoebe is commended for her service to the church in Cenchreae, and of many others including Paul himself.

Paul would commend her to the church in Rome just as brethren commended Apollos to the church in Achaia.

We are not told of the contribution that Phoebe made to the brethren in Rome, but we do know of the contribution that Apollos made (Acts 18:28).

### Named Women

In Romans Chapter 16, we have Paul identifying Phoebe and Priscilla as women making contribution to the spread of the gospel. However, the English might not be as clear as it should be in identifying the gender of others listed. We mention the following as examples of women Paul cited as contributing to the spread of the gospel.

Notice the comment describing these ladies, and understand the contribution made by them in the spread of the gospel.

Why do you think they are mentioned by Paul? Did the Holy Spirit need "filler" for the Roman letter?

### Mary

*Salute Mary, who bestowed much labor on you* (Rom. 16:6, emphasis added, editor).

### Tryphaena Tryphosa and Persis

*Salute Tryphaena and Tryphosa, who labor in the Lord. Salute Persis the beloved, who labored much in the Lord* (Rom. 16:12).

### The Mother of Rufus

*Salute Rufus the chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine* (Rom. 16:13).

### Julia

### And

### Sister of Nereus

*Salute Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, ...* (Rom. 16:15).

### Conclusion

Paul plans to come to Rome, and then to carry the gospel to Spain. He sends greetings to them and recognizes the contribution made by many in spreading the gospel.

Paul does not hesitate to let them know that he will need their help to make this trip. Do you think he could expect assistance from them? If you had been there, would you have helped? ... *having these many years a longing to come unto you, whensoever I go unto Spain (for I hope to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first in some measure I shall have been satisfied with your company)--*(Rom. 15:23-24).

The Florida School of Preaching honored at the booster banquet in 2002 the ladies who have labored in the office over the years.

Only eternity can tell the total impact made by godly and generous ladies like sister Mary Onetha Millard.

## 38 Years

By  
Gene Burgett

By the time you read this article the fall semester will have begun at the Florida School of Preaching. This is a process that has been going on for thirty-eight years. That sounds pretty impressive to me. For almost four decades, men have been coming to Lakeland, Florida to learn what the Bible teaches about the work of preaching.

It is impossible to know what the exact size of our full-time student body will be until classes actually begin. Sometimes men we did not expect are able to make the fall term. Sometimes men we fully expected would be ready for classes fail to materialize. However, if our preliminary count is even close to what we will actually have in our classes, we expect to have a "full house."

The reasons why some who expected to start classes but do not are many. Funds must be raised in order for a man to be able to attend classes on a full-time basis, and raising support can be difficult. Though we charge no tuition, even preaching students must eat. Some just get cold feet at the thought of a two-year commitment to be a student for six classroom hours a day, plus homework. As you can imagine, it is often true that the most difficult part of being a student in a preacher training school isn't finishing the two years course of study so much as getting started in the first place. It is a huge decision for a single man to make, and an even larger decision when one has a family to consider. Though we are always glad to see the numbers of quality Christian men in our classes increasing, it is also true that with a larger enrollment comes an increase in the

funds needed for the school to operate. We are now in the second half of 2007. Congregations will soon be giving consideration to how they will allocate the funds they collect. Please keep the Florida School of Preaching in mind in this process. I regularly receive calls from churches looking for a preacher and they frequently are wondering if we have someone soon graduating that we can recommend. The truth is, it doesn't take very long for most of our graduates to find work in God's kingdom. This tells me there is a need for gospel preachers, and thus a need for schools that train men to preach.

I stand prepared to meet with any congregations, elders, or Christians interested in learning more about the Florida School of Preaching.

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