

# WOMEN, RISE UP!

A Fierce Generation Taking Its Place in the World

CINDY JACOBS



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*This book is lovingly dedicated to my mom,  
Eleanor Lindsey,  
March 27, 1926–February 22, 2016  
a great woman of faith and prayer,  
and my heroine*

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# Foreword

We are living in the most exciting time in history to be a woman!

When I was sixteen years old, God spoke to me in an audible voice telling me I was called to preach His Word. I had never heard of a woman preacher, although some were beginning to emerge. So I asked the Lord to show me somebody doing now what I would be doing then, so I could have a picture of what that would look like. He replied, “Jane, there is no one doing now what you will be doing then because I will be doing a new thing!”

Today there are many strong, anointed, prophetic women arising in every sphere of society. I believe we are now living in the days of “the new thing.”

Genesis 1:26–28 tells us that women are created in the image of God, just as men are, to be co-heirs of His Kingdom with the mandate to “be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion. . . .” Women are to be strong, capable partners in raising families, producing resources and ruling the earth. Sadly, since the fall of Adam and Eve, women have struggled in most cultures as an oppressed underclass, with little more vision or purpose than childbearing and mere survival. Rather than fulfilling their creation mandate to subdue the earth, women have been subdued and ruled over. Rather than producing resources, women have been some of the earth’s most impoverished. Their strength and leadership have been stifled, holding women in the bonds of silence and limitation.

When Jesus came to save humankind, He also began to restore women to their place of full function. When Mary sat at His feet to hear Him teach—which was against Jewish custom—Jesus validated her as a disciple. Jesus first revealed Himself as Messiah to the Samaritan woman and then released her to go preach to her city. Women were last at the cross, first at the tomb and the first to proclaim His resurrection. Throughout the first century, women were an integral part of establishing the early Church. Women like Mary, Lydia, Priscilla, Junia, Chloe, Phoebe and others are among those Paul commended for laboring with him for the Gospel.

Yet because of religious mindsets in the Church and the spirit of prejudice in the world, women were pressed back behind barriers, awaiting a new dawn of reformation. Even in dark times in history, though, we find inspiring women leaders such as Vibia Perpetua, a martyr for Christ who kept a stunning journal while she awaited execution; Joan of Arc, who led armies to battle because of heavenly visions; Florence Nightingale, a social reformer who founded modern nursing; Clara Barton, who founded the American Red Cross; and Harriet Tubman, an abolitionist who rescued many from slavery. Catherine Booth, Sojourner Truth and Maria Woodworth-Etter were just three of many early women preachers and healing evangelists.

These women are examples to us today that we can and must embrace our original creation mandate to subdue and rule the earth, dealing with injustice, poverty and pain, bringing the freedom of the Kingdom of God everywhere we go. God is sounding a clarion call for women to find their purpose, passion and authority to lead, whether in the Church, the business world, government or another area in society. It is true that women have been victimized, marginalized and immobilized by their culture, by life experiences, by lack of proper identity in Christ and by the inability to imagine the success and influence for which they were created. But God is doing a new thing!

For this reason I am grateful to Cindy Jacobs for writing this masterpiece, *Women, Rise Up!* It is a timely resource for cutting through the chains of religious mindsets and Scripture misinterpretation to bring us

*Foreword*

into “the new thing.” Both the biblical and modern examples of women fulfilling great endeavors for the Kingdom of God will inspire you to rise up and lay hold of your created purpose to bring righteousness and justice into your world. Women, rise up!

Dr. Jane Hamon, co-apostle of Vision Church @ Christian International;  
author of *The Deborah Company*, *Dreams and Visions*  
and *The Cyrus Decree*

# Acknowledgments

As I have written this book, there are many people I want to thank. First, of course, is the Lord Jesus Christ. Thank You, God, for helping me through the writing on the controversial subject of women in leadership.

Next, I want to thank my husband, Mike, who loves me and has been there for me throughout the ups and downs of writing *Women, Rise Up!* I also want to thank my family and friends for giving up time that they would like to have had on a personal level so the women of the world could be blessed!

To all my good friends at Regal, thanks for believing in me and for wanting a book to be written that would release women into everything God has called them to be. Thank you, Kyle Duncan. You lifted me up time and time again through our phone conversations when I would hit a slump in trusting God that I could, indeed, finish the course. Bill Greig III, you have been great to allow me to write what has been in my heart. Kim Bangs, thank you for suggesting that women in the 21st century need to be challenged and encouraged in their calling and destinies.

The two guys who spent the most blood, sweat and tears in the writing are Dr. Gary Greig and Bayard Taylor. Thanks for putting up with my lists of questions and inquiries about what the Greek and Hebrew really say concerning the woman question. You are going to have a special star in your crowns for this project.

To all those who have prayed for me, I could not have written this book without the prayer shield you put up for me. I pray God will pour

*Acknowledgments*

back abundant blessing upon your heads. Please don't stop praying. We have just begun!

Last, but not least, I want to thank Jim and Becky Hennesy, my pastors, who are brave to agree to be my spiritual covering. You're the best! Thanks for standing with Mike and me throughout the years of our friendship and for believing in the call of God upon women.

Cindy Jacobs,  
Dallas, Texas,  
March 26, 2018

# Introduction

There can be no doubt that God has used and is going to use women in extraordinary ways in every generation. Why do I think this? We women love to fight injustice. From the beginning our Creator said that our seed would bruise the head of the serpent. I believe this is true (see Genesis 3:15). While this might be Messianic in its interpretation, it could also be said of our legacy, both spiritually and physically. There are great injustices around the world that need someone to “dance upon injustice” and rise up and fight.

As I both write my story and highlight the importance of women in leadership and society, I believe there are many issues about which we have been quiet—and need to be “silent no more.”

From sexual exploitation through being trafficked to intimidation and unwanted advances in the marketplace, and in the secular world as well as the church world, we need to speak out. We cannot refuse to speak regardless of the consequences. This needs to be done, not only for ourselves but for the generations to come.

I have written extensively in this book about women who were unafraid. I pray their stories give you great courage to fight against ignorance and injustice. Women in many countries of the world are, at this moment, facing death, simply for believing in Jesus.

When I started ministering in nontraditional roles for women, such as preaching, I did not really know any role models with whom I could study and ask, “What is my role as a woman in the Church today?” In

time, God brought some women into my life who helped me sift through my multitude of questions.

I have written *Women, Rise Up!* to show from a personal level absolutely that women have a right to fulfill any ministry in the Church—and in life. To controversial issues such as “Does a woman have a right to preach to men?” some today might respond, “Cindy, haven’t we gotten past all of that now?” I wish. While there have been major strides in many areas, as of 2017 women made up only 9 percent of senior pastors in Protestant churches.<sup>1</sup>

One of the most important reasons for writing this book—for me, as a woman—was to find out whether or not I had a right to stand in the pulpit to preach. I did a deep study in this regard. I delved into the writings of those who do not believe women can hold roles of authority, as well as those who differ from my stance on the role of the husband in the home.

Taking this journey along with me were two scholars, Dr. Gary Greig and Bayard Taylor. I must admit there was quite a bit of “spiritual jostling” as we debated different Scriptures. It was all done with deep respect for one another, and the end result is what you read in this book.

God is exposing the exploitation of women around the world today. The subject of this book is a serious one. Every woman wants to fulfill her destiny in God. All of us want to reach our full potential. This book is for us to reach not only our *personal destinies* but also our *corporate destinies*. We need to work together to bring change. When we do that together, it strengthens us and gives us the courage that is found in sisterhood.

If you and I were able to sit down together, you might say to me, “Cindy, why should I read this book? I am not called to be a woman preacher. My ministry is in the marketplace,” or “I am called to fight human trafficking,” or “I’m called to join the fight to end abortion.” In reply, I can only tell you that I have received calls from women in government who are fighting massive gender inequity, and glass ceilings exist, across the board, in almost every endeavor. All the things I have mentioned, and others besides, are ones to which you have a calling.

This book will strengthen you in your resolve to fight for justice, to change laws, to teach your children or to be a great student leader in your university. Sexual exploitation is no new problem, but we never need to be afraid to “blow the whistle” on those who would try to victimize us. We must find both our individual as well as our corporate voices.

The process of writing this book about the role of women in bringing biblical change has caused me to ponder the plight of women, in my own generation, throughout the world: Although the burning of brides is now illegal in India, torture and other atrocities continue to be perpetrated on women. Also, abortion clinics advertise with statements like, “*It is better to spend \$38.00 now to terminate a female fetus than to spend \$3,800 on her dowry later.*”

Chinese women are forced into unwanted sterilizations, and gendercide is a stark reality in societies that value the male gender over the female. I pray that some of you will be champions for causes that stand up to these injustices. I have heard that baby girls have been typified as “maggots in the rice.”

Impoverished women represent the majority of civilization’s poorest people. We need more women who see systemic poverty as their enemy and will stand against this societal plague. Together we must be a voice to stop such atrocities.

While talking to women across the world, I have heard their pain. Even now, pictures of hurting female faces flood my mind: women with lovely almond-shaped eyes spilling over with tears, and some with beautiful ebony complexions—all yearning for an answer to life. Again and again they ask: *Cindy, what does God want from my life?*

As I have gazed into those eyes and listened to the brokenness in their voices, I see mirrored images of years past when I, too, struggled with that same issue as a young woman aching to find purpose and destiny. Certainly Christ is the answer, but the subject of women in leadership has caused great debate in most Christian circles. Earnest men in the pastorate, who want to release the women in their churches, are seeking a balanced and solid biblical basis to do so. Some who are dealing with

gender-to-gender issues that are potential firebombs of destruction to marriages are feeling their way in the Spirit for a path of reconciliation.

According to the World Health Organization 2017 report, around 200 million girls and women have been genitally mutilated to date, mainly from thirty nations.<sup>2</sup> Women make up 70 percent of the world's poor and 75 percent of the sick and disabled in the world.<sup>3</sup> According to a study by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control worldwide, one in five women in America has been raped. These numbers vary depending on the study taken. Some estimate that as many as two million women in America have been raped.

It is for these women I have written this book. Their only hope is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, for where the Gospel is preached, its transforming power changes lives.

The subjects I have tackled in this book deserve to be studied by both men and women in the Body of Christ. Thank God for men such as Ché Ahn, and, of course, my own husband, Mike, who have stood up for women both in ministry and leadership. Lee Grady has been a pioneer voice in helping to see women renounce their fears and stand up as leaders in society.

It is my hope and prayer that a whole new generation of emerging women in leadership will read this book and find fresh courage to conquer huge problems that exist in the world today. You might find yourself weeping, laughing or saying, "I've found myself!" It is with that hope tucked snugly in my heart, and with much love to all women who fervently desire to be used of God, that I have written this book to say, *Women, Rise Up!*

Blessings,  
Cindy Jacobs



# ONE

## The Journey

I am starting this book with my own story because I want us to be friends. As you read, I want you to know me and my own journey and how I got to be the Cindy Jacobs that people recognize today. While my own story and calling began with a calling to preach, yours might be in the marketplace, the classroom or home with your children. All of us, however, are called to rise up and make a difference.

The year was 1950. A struggling seminary couple knelt in earnest prayer, presenting a very special request to God. It seemed strange for them to ask such a thing in light of their present circumstances. “Lord,” they prayed, “please give us a baby girl.” They had lost one child through miscarriage but had a precious son. God answered their heartfelt petition in August 1951, and that is how my journey began.

I have always been deeply touched when I think about my parents’ prayer. It has given me a sense of destiny and purpose through many turbulent times as a woman minister. Perhaps the Lord knew I would need the extra confidence that such a blessed beginning gives so that I would have the strength to finish the course God had set for me.

People sometimes say to me, “When you were a little girl, did you ever dream you would be traveling around the world speaking to thousands of people?” The answer is no. I had absolutely no inkling. I have, however, always had the sense of God’s hand on my life for something very special, even as a tiny child. Maybe you have felt something similar.

Even people who have been in terrible rebellion but have a call of God on their lives will later recount how God saved them from disaster or a potentially life-threatening circumstance time and time again. If you are praying for lost loved ones or rebellious children, this should give you great comfort. God is faithful—always!

I have chosen to start this book with an intimate sharing of my life because most who will read it will be women, and a woman is born with a God-given need to know about people in a detailed fashion that is somewhat foreign to male thinking.

If you are a man reading *Women, Rise Up!*, please feel welcome in the following pages. You are extremely important in helping women find God's plan for their lives, and you may even be called of God to affirm and bless the work that God is doing through your wife and daughters, female friends or the feminine gender in your local congregation.

## I Love You, Daddy

The man who influenced my life the most as a child was my daddy. I adored my daddy as I grew up. He was a Baptist church planter and had a passion for starting churches. During those days, we had no understanding of the role of the apostle in the Church, so Dad rather puzzled us. He would start a church in one place, and it would grow rapidly. Then he would go into a building program, and within a period of only a few years he would have a thriving congregation. Then, to our great consternation, he would get an itch or need to move on and do it all over again! We now know that he was called as an apostolic leader to raise up new works.

As you can imagine, I moved quite a bit. I guess it could have really messed me up except for one factor—there was a lot of love in my family. I did not doubt for one minute that I was loved. Dad, even though he had been a gang member in New York City, had been born in Georgia, and he still had a bit of a soft drawl at times. Often, I would reach for his big hand that wore a size twelve ring, look up into his face (he was almost six feet tall) and say, “I love you, Daddy.”

And he would always reply with a grin, “I love you, too, darlin’.”

Food was not always easy to come by in those days. I remember times when we would receive big cardboard boxes full of food. The church called it “a pounding,” because some considered this kind of gift receiving food by the pound. It sure was fun to receive. We would get all kinds of exotic delicacies that people had been given for Christmas but had not sampled—pickled pigs’ feet and things like that. I loved it!

### **A Matter of Relationship**

Prayer was important in our home. Each night, until we all were eventually scattered asunder by jobs, school and the like, we would kneel by one of our beds to pray. I was always small for my age, so my nose never reached the top of the bed in a kneeling position. We would take turns praying, one at a time.

For some reason the youngest always started, which was fine with me, because I am the middle child and that put the pressure on my sister, Lucy. I am convinced my life as an intercessor began on that bedroom floor—down on my knees, listening to the deep rumble of my daddy’s voice and the sweet, soft Texan accent of my San Antonio mom.

My parents had an effective way of teaching, which went straight to the heart. I especially remember one day when I was in college. The Jesus People movement was in full swing, so it was vogue to pray “Dear Jesus” instead of “Dear God” or “Our Father.”

That evening after I prayed for the meal, my daddy looked up, his gray eyes filled with sadness as he queried, “Honey, how did Jesus teach His disciples to pray?”

I replied, “Our Father, who art in heaven.”

“Then pray that way,” he softly instructed me.

Another time, I decided I would call my daddy, “Father.” I thought it sounded rather important. Dad was working on something in the backyard at the time. He stopped and simply said, “Sweetheart, your Father is in heaven—I’m your daddy.” He was not being mean. I knew

what he meant. The awareness of God in heaven was often brought to the forefront in our home.

If you read my book *The Voice of God*, you know that my daddy went to be with the Lord when he was 49 years old. I have thought, from time to time, *Now I have a Father and a daddy in heaven.*

### **Born to Bear Fruit**

Because Dad loved to start churches, circumstances were usually in a pioneer stage. This was great training for me as I learned to canvass neighborhoods. (If you are not familiar with the term *canvass*, it simply means going from house to house either to visit or leave a flyer about the new church.)

Early in life, I begged Mom and Dad to let me take piano lessons, so I played hymns for the church from the time I was ten years old. And because Sunday school teachers were often scarce—because we usually had quite a few new converts—I would sometimes teach the little kids younger than I with big, colorful, poster-sized Sunday school pictures that told the story on the back.

Life as a Baptist pastor's daughter was not always easy. I remember moving to a little Texas town during the third grade where everyone was either Catholic, Czech or somehow related. My life in that community was often full of rejection—subtle and otherwise. Years passed before I realized there was not something terribly wrong with my personality and that my being overlooked and left out was simply a matter of another person's prejudice. Thank God for the secondhand bike my dad fixed up for me. I loved to whiz down the country roads exploring God's world and sensing the weight of His presence. God and I talked—a lot.

When I was nine, I went to church camp in Prescott, Arizona. The presence of the Holy Spirit was precious during the meetings, and I loved to hear the missionaries' stories. I relayed in *The Voice of God* how the Lord called me during a camp session. One thing I did not tell was my struggle over what I was to be. The night service was sweet as we sang the old hymns of faith, such as "Count Your Many Blessings,

Name Them One by One.” I felt very close to God. I had surrendered my life to the Lord that afternoon in my quiet time, but now I knew I needed to “make it public,” as we called it.

Finally, the moment came when the speaker gave the invitation. Wafting through the night air came the strains of the camp song I loved, “I have decided to follow Jesus; no turning back, no turning back.” I knew I could not turn back. I had to go. Feeling nervous and a little embarrassed, I moved out from the wooden bench where I had been sitting. Quietly, I knelt at the front. The song went on, “Though none go with me, still I will follow.” Tears coursed down my cheeks; my heart was bursting with love for the Lord. I sang over and over with the melody, “I will go, Lord—anywhere. Just tell me what You want me to do.”

At the end of the invitation time, one of the workers handed me a commitment form to fill out. I sat down and studied the boxes: *pastor*, *evangelist* and *missionary*. I was not sure about missionary, but I never dreamed I could be a pastor or evangelist, so I signed up with the Lord to go to the mission field. Little did I know that decision would lead me to worldwide ministry.

It is interesting how choices we make even in our earliest years affect our lives. My interests as I grew up were in interior design and music. No one in my family played the piano, but as I mentioned earlier, I had an intense desire to learn. Unfortunately, there was no money, so my mom wrote to my grandmother, who sent us the money for my lessons. My first piano had been stored in an old firehouse, so the keys were warped and looked rather wavy. I did not care. One piano teacher told my mother that I was too little to reach the pedals and that my hands were too tiny to stretch wide enough to play, but that did not daunt my mom. She believed in me and found another teacher.

Years later the piano lessons placed me in good standing: I was granted a music scholarship to what was then Grand Canyon Baptist College. I honestly believed I had discovered my niche in life. This must be what God wanted of me.

I once heard the parable of a beautiful tree that grew beautiful flowers as it matured. The tree, seeing the flowers, came to the conclusion

that it was a flower tree and that it would always be a flower tree. But as spring progressed, the flowers dropped off and little hard balls began to form where the flowers had once given the tree its sense of splendor. This was most confusing to the tree, which no longer knew what it was. Time passed, and the little hard balls eventually matured into luscious ripe apples. Eventually, the tree realized it was meant to bear fruit and not flowers.

The apple tree's story is much like life's passages for those whom God calls. Many times, a young leader will assume what his or her eventual destiny will be by the beginning flowers of his or her calling. That is exactly what happened to me with music. I loved to play Bach, Beethoven and so forth—so much, in fact, that I thought this would be my call.

Years later, I was offered a job teaching voice at a Bible school, and my desire to take the job was so strong that I had a hard time hearing God's will for me. Even though my schedule was full of speaking engagements that I would not be able to fulfill if I took the vocal teaching job, I still struggled for a yes from the Lord. Finally, in the wee hours of the morning, the Lord gently instructed me to finish the course by preaching the Gospel, not by teaching music. I heard Him say in a still, small voice, *Cindy, the call to music is the call of your soul [or emotions], but the call of your spirit is to preach the Gospel.*

## God Will Make a Way

Emotions can color the decisions we make along the way, and they will eventually affect our destinies. We must be cautious when feelings begin to dictate our actions. Let me explain.

When I first started ministering in Argentina during 1990, I fell so in love with that nation that I wanted our whole family to move there. I even dialogued about the move with some Argentine leaders. One day, when I was riding in a taxi to a meeting in Buenos Aires, the voice of the Lord said in my heart, *Daughter, I will allow you to give your heart to this nation, but not your life. I have called you to the nations of the*

*earth, and you must not move here—you would get so focused on this one place that you would not fulfill your calling.* I knew I had to obey His voice rather than the voice of my emotions.

I completed my bachelor's degree in music and went on to study a fifth year for my master's in teaching music. The fact that I studied music and desired to use my gift for the Lord will help you understand one of the challenges, or tests, that came before me as a young married woman in my church.

Mike and I lived in California and attended a little fellowship with only about fifty members. Mike worked all night for an airline and would sleep during the day, so I often attended church alone on Sunday mornings. One Sunday, the pastor approached the back of the church, where I was sitting, to talk to the man on the other side of me. He leaned across me and in a quiet voice asked, "Homer, would you stand and lead a song this morning? We don't have anyone who can do it."

Homer, obviously very uncomfortable with the thought, shot back, "Pastor, you know that I can hardly carry a tune!" The pastor walked away and led the song himself.

Now, Mike and I were personal friends of the pastor, and he was well aware that I was working on my master's degree in music. In fact, the week before, for my orchestral conducting class, I had observed my professor as he directed the Burbank Symphony. Part of my training was in conducting symphonies, but now, *because I was a woman*, I could not even stand in front of my church to lead a hymn! As a 23-year-old woman who wanted to use her gift for God, that was a heartbreaking moment.

What did I do? Well, I knew I had several options: One, I could go away bitter and never return to the church. Two, I could stir up trouble against the pastor. Three, I could make a godly choice and seek the Lord as to how I could use my musical training in this church that did not believe women had a place behind the pulpit. I chose to pray and forgive the pastor; then I started a youth choir.

What transpired was glorious! That little choir became the best sound around, and many of the youth made commitments for the Lord Jesus. I really grew through that experience.

Young leader, man or woman, please read this carefully: God will always make a way for you if you are obedient to Him. Nothing will stop you from using your God-given gifts.

*God will always make a way for you if you are obedient to Him.*

If a door closes, look for the window. Be creative. When life is full of frustrations and tests, never give up.

Many people ask me, “Cindy, why has God used you all around the world for His Kingdom?” Well, it is not because I am more gifted than most, or a better speaker. I earnestly believe it is because when there were obstacles in the way of what God called me to do, I trusted Him to make a way where there was no way. Has it been easy? No. Has it been worth it? Yes!

Ladies, you may at times experience unique challenges in pursuing your destinies, but your attitude along the way will make or break you. If you choose bitterness or anger, or you get eaten up inside at how unjust the system is or how prejudiced some men are against women, then you will never survive in the ministry or be successful in your life, either. And remember, being prejudiced against men is just as ungodly as the other way around.

It takes a lot of courage to follow the call of God—many times more courage than you can personally muster. This is why you need to have an intimate walk with the Lord.

Obstacles are inevitable. There will be storms. And friend, sometimes God does not take the storm away—He just tucks you in the eye of the storm, where you will be protected from its raging.

### **My War, His Will**

At other times, however, the storms we experience come from our own struggles to follow His will. God touched me when I was 31 years old and told me to pick up my cross and follow Him in taking the Gospel to the nations. Well, I had a terrible struggle accepting the call. In fact, during that time, I had a brilliant idea. I would offer my husband, Mike,

in my place! You see, I never dreamed I would be the one preaching. For some time I had prayed and believed God that Mike would preach and I would be his loyal intercessor. That nice, neat package would not have offended anyone.

My wrestling with God began in earnest when I realized God was not negotiating. He wanted *me* to preach, not Mike. Now, this was about as foreign to my thinking as my signing up for the “astronaut program.” Anyone who knows me would double over laughing at the thought of my doing anything that requires athletic ability. When we played volleyball in school, I ducked when the ball came my way.

The war was on! I gave the Lord plenty of reasons why I could not possibly preach. “God,” I pleaded, “didn’t You notice that I am the *wrong gender*? Besides, Lord,” I further whined, “I don’t like women ministers. They have those high, squeaky, unpleasant voices. So, God, don’t ever ask me to preach, especially over radio!” (I have lost track of the number of times I have preached or been interviewed on the radio throughout the world since that prayer.)

The next horrible thought that zinged through my brain was, *Oh, God! What about my children?* I winced at that. You see, I lived in a little Texas town where some of the men did not have a very high regard for women ministers. I did not want anyone to hurt my kids. I am afraid my next statement was not very spiritual: “God, I’m not laying my children on the altar of any ministry.” I was unwilling to see my children mocked, made fun of or isolated as I had been.

For nearly a two-year period, I paced the floor after everyone was asleep at night, fighting the call. Again and again the voice in my head screamed, *No, no, I won’t do it!* Rebellion was running deep. *Why me, God? Please, God, no!*

### Struggling Veterans Who Preceded Me

I began to read autobiographies of others who had struggled with their sense of destiny.

*Aimee Semple McPherson*

One day I came across a book about Aimee Semple McPherson, who founded the Foursquare denomination. The story related her struggle with the Creator. She had been a missionary wife whose husband died while they were newlyweds on the mission field in China. Aimee was widowed, with a small baby to care for. In desperation, she came back to America to raise her little daughter.

About that time, Harold McPherson, just six months older than Aimee, asked for her hand in marriage, declaring his love for her and her little girl. Aimee agreed to wed, with one stipulation: because all her heart and soul were really in the work of the Lord, “If at any time in my life He should call me back into active ministry, no matter where or when, I must obey God first of all.” They married on February 28, 1912, under those conditions.<sup>1</sup>

For a while, Aimee attempted to stay at home and forget the call of God upon her life. She and Harold were living at her mother-in-law’s lovely home in Rhode Island. She had also given birth to a baby boy during that time, and she took up collections for The Salvation Army in order to augment their income. Finally, however, as Aimee tells in her own words:

All through these strenuous days and that of the comparative quiet of our Providence home, a Voice kept hammering at the doorway of my heart. It shouted, “Preach the Word! Do the work of an evangelist!”

“Impossible, Lord!” I would protest. “Impossible!”

“I have called thee a prophet unto the nations,” echoed the Voice.

“No, Lord, I cannot go!” I would reiterate. Then would come a paralyzing silence which ensues when a telephone is disconnected. Returning to the privacy of my own room, I weepingly sobbed, “Oh Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!”<sup>2</sup>

Aimee’s health broke under the strain. She suffered a major operation and steadily grew worse. All the time, the Voice inside kept bidding her to keep her pledge to preach the Word. To continue in her words:

Finally, my condition became critical, and I was taken into a separate room to die. A nurse sat by me in the early hours of the morning, watching my flickering pulse. Through the death silence, which was broken by my own painful breathing, came the Voice of the Lord in trumpet tones, “NOW WILL YOU GO?”

Lying there face-to-face with the Grim Reaper, I realized that I was either going into the grave or out into the field with the gospel. I made my decision and gasped out the words, “Yes—Lord—I’ll—go!”

Instantly, new life and warmth surged through my being.<sup>3</sup>

It helped to know that I was not the only one who had ever kicked against the pricks to answer the call of God (see Acts 9:5; 26:14). Not only did I realize that, but the consequences for saying no suddenly loomed large before me. Maybe it would not be healthy to tell God no—I did not want to take that chance.

### *Sister Gwen Shaw*

Other women have also wrestled with accepting the fact that God had a call on their lives. One of them was Sister Gwen Shaw, who was the head of the End-Time Handmaidens. The Handmaidens consist of a large network of intercessors who must fast 21 days before they can become an official part of the organization. In her book *Unconditional Surrender*, Sister Gwen tells the story of her call to China during a revival in her Canadian Bible school days:

It was around 11:00 PM when I entered the building and found my way to the classroom downstairs, where students were praying. As soon as I knelt, I felt a great burden for intercessory prayer come upon me. I put my head down under the chair and the Holy Spirit began to travail inside of me. Hour after hour I wept and wept. Today as I look back, I know it was that God would give me another chance to do His will and fulfill His calling on my life.

After this experience, I looked at my watch. It was now 3:00 AM. In the other room there was still a lot of praying going on, so I got up and went in there.

As soon as I went in, I saw something I had never seen in my life before. One of the students was traveling for China. The Holy Spirit was weeping and calling through the student, “I’m calling you to China. I need you in China. Won’t you go to China? China. China.”

I looked around at those in the room and I wondered, “Who could God be calling to China?” The fact that it might be me never dawned upon me. After all, God couldn’t call me—I was married now, and anyway, I didn’t like the Chinese people. I was even afraid of them.<sup>4</sup>

The call of the Spirit persisted until one teacher asked Gwen, “Why don’t you pray about it?” She consented and tells the result in her own words:

Immediately, I began to feel a strange new burden grab hold of me for a nation I had never thought about. “I must be imagining this,” I thought. God surely wouldn’t call me. What would Dave [her husband] say?<sup>5</sup>

Gwen’s heart was so full of questions that at last she said, “Lord, if it is me You are calling, then You will have to put me on the floor. I’m staying in this chair.”

Suddenly the power of God hit me like a stroke of lightning and threw me on my back on the floor. I thought God was killing me! “Lord, I’ll go! I’ll go!” I cried in desperation.<sup>6</sup>

Upon arriving home, Dave was not at all happy about the decision his wife had made. He announced sarcastically that she might go to China but he was “going to Hawaii.” Gwen’s heart was broken, so she cried out to God. The Lord faithfully intervened. The same Holy Spirit who had dealt with Gwen later prophesied through a visiting prophet over Dave that he was called to North China.

This account should be encouraging to you if you feel a call of God even though your spouse does not.

As a matter of fact, I came close to calling off my wedding because Mike insisted that he did not have a call of God on his life. I broke up

with the poor guy about ten times because of it. The last time we broke up, Mike moved from Phoenix to Los Angeles, where we had met at a Baptist church.

After Mike left, I was terribly sad. I did not eat, and I was totally miserable. Finally, Mike called and quoted Matthew 18:19–20: “Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”

“Honey,” he said, “somehow I feel that if we will let God be in the midst of our marriage, everything else will turn out okay.”

Later on, Mike did receive a call and we started Generals of Intercession together in 1985. We have had many challenges, but God has truly been with us all the way.

## **Beginnings**

People often ask, “Cindy, what happened after you said yes to God and accepted His call?” The truth is that I had no idea what to expect after I surrendered my life to full-time ministry. There certainly did not appear to be much danger of anything too drastic happening to me because, after all, I lived in Weatherford, Texas—population twelve thousand. How could anyone find me there? In fact, some of us used to say jokingly, “Can any good thing come out of Weatherford?” We had not even started Generals of Intercession yet. What a good place to hide, right? Wrong! God can find you anywhere. (Read Psalm 139.)

When I agreed with God to preach the Gospel, I taught Children’s Church and led worship. Sundays were busy because I had to arrive early to work with the praise team, lead the worship for our little church, slip out and teach forty to fifty children from ages five to twelve and then slip back in to finish the service at the piano. It may sound overwhelming, but I actually thrived on it. God was at work! The children were praying for each other and God was causing short legs to grow, mosquito bites to disappear and warts to fall off. We had a great

time. Nearly one hundred children were born again within a year's time.

### When God Calls, He Equips

God actually started things off in a big way when I visited my in-laws in Phoenix, Arizona. We went to lunch with Faye Darnell, the women's pastor of a large charismatic church with nearly five thousand members and between two hundred and three hundred women in the weekly women's meetings. I had a nice time, and we agreed to meet the following day for the Bible study.

Had I known what God had in store for me that day, I would have been scared out of my wits. The Lord, however, had faithfully prepared me by waking me at six o'clock, impressing upon me to fast for the day.

At the meeting, I was puzzled by the strong sense of God's presence upon me—until Faye asked me to minister prophetically to twelve women. I agreed, and as I prayed, the Spirit of God moved powerfully. Not only did the twelve women fall under the power of God, but others

*God wants to minister through you and me in His power and not ours.*

in the room were also touched. Faye urged me to continue. The strong sense of God's Spirit rolled in like a thick cloud filled with His glory. I ministered for three more hours.

When I returned to Weatherford, I received a call from Faye, asking me prayerfully to consider ministering at her church's next ladies' retreat. She told me about the well-known person who had ministered the previous year and then said, "Cindy, we could get some big-name speaker, but we are hungry for the anointing, and we want you to come." Frankly, I was astounded.

Mike and I prayed, and we sensed this appointment was of the Lord, so I said yes. Then the struggle began. What had I done? To say that I was fighting intimidation would have been the understatement of a lifetime. It is in moments like this that the devil sits on your shoulder and whispers in an intimidating voice, *Who do you think you are? You*

*know you can't do that! What will you say that will have any meaning to those people?* Actually, it really was not very difficult for him practically to demolish me with those cutting words, because they exactly mirrored my own. Fortunately, when you and I feel totally inadequate, we are actually ready. God wants to minister through you and me in *His* power and not *ours*.

My one “plus” was that I earnestly wanted to obey God. I had more fear of the Lord in me than fear of man. (Believe me, I had tons of fear of man in those days!)

Next, I was overcome with a deep sense of emotional insecurity. I rehearsed a list of names of numerous other women who could do a much better job, and I tried to get God to change His mind. (Some of you are grinning because you have had a similar experience or else you are going through one.) Perhaps by now I should have given up on convincing God to change His mind, but at times I can be very stubborn and hardheaded.

Throughout these emotional roller coaster rides, I was also earnestly beseeching God for the subject matter I was to teach during the ladies' retreat. Faye had asked me to teach three times. *Three times!* I thought with sheer terror. *God, I haven't taught more than one time anywhere in my life!* Major panic set in as I sought the Lord for something to say during *all that time*. Thank God for praying friends who helped me through that big step.

### Leaping into the Dark

When I was young, my daddy used to preach about faith. I remember hearing him explain that it was like a little girl looking down into a dark basement and her daddy saying to this small child, “Jump, honey. I'll catch you!” The little girl cannot see her daddy, but she can hear his voice. That leap into the dark and into her daddy's arms is faith. Friends, I was leaping into the dark and hoping God was going to catch me.

The day the retreat began I felt assured about the message God had given me, but I had no idea how long it would take to teach this series

of talks on “Releasing Bitterness and Judgments.” I will never forget the first session. Faye introduced me, and I walked to the front. Fortunately, we had one of those old wooden pulpits instead of the new Plexiglas kind. Those Plexiglas pulpits are merciless: They show all of you—even your shaking knees. You cannot even take your shoes off if your feet hurt without the whole world knowing!

My knees were shaking and I was fervently praying, *Oh, God, please don't let them know how scared I am! Oh, God, help me!* But then, all of a sudden, I sensed the same presence of the Holy Spirit as I had at the weekly Bible study. It enveloped me like a garment, and the words simply flowed out of my mouth. Boy, was I ever relieved! In the end, not only did I have enough material, but I had too much.

God did all kinds of things that weekend. We laughed and we cried. People were able to forgive the unforgivable. The miracle anointing flowed. I will never forget when I gave a word of knowledge (supernatural insight about a certain type of action that is taking place) that someone had a corn on her foot and that God was healing the problem. Now, this was kind of corny (pun intended), because we were at a retreat center in *Cornville*, Arizona.

A woman named Juana laughingly said, “It’s me, it’s me!”

“Well, take off your shoe and look,” I urged. She did, and the corn fell right off her toe and onto the floor. Wow! It was great.

People were set free, especially from bitterness. One woman, who began manifesting a demon, fell on the floor. I started casting the evil spirits out of her. And when I called out “rejection,” the spirit manifested. It caused her to pound the floor as it left with a whiny voice, saying, “I’m the last one; I’m the last one.” What a glorious deliverance!

What did I learn? I hardly know where to begin. I learned that if I stepped out in obedience, God would show Himself strong on my behalf. I learned that He is greater than my fears and insecurities and those thoughts that rise up to intimidate me. I learned that if He is working through me, I never have to worry about what I lack, because He will speak through me—and He is not at all insecure or lacking in any good thing. Good lesson, huh? In chapter 11, “Anointed to

Serve,” I will share more about this and other lessons I learned while ministering.

### **God’s Open Doors Stay Open**

There was a real shifting of gears in my life that weekend. Other people quickly heard about what happened and sent me invitations to speak. It has always been my philosophy to let the Lord make the way. I have never sent out publicity résumés or tapes to solicit engagements. The Lord has opened all the doors. In fact, He has opened so many doors that I have had to run to keep up with Him.

I do want to balance my experience by saying that I know some people generate their entire incomes from speaking engagements. In those early days, Mike worked for American Airlines, so we did not have to use love offerings for living expenses. But people who live entirely by faith may have to initiate finding contacts and be selective about where they can afford to speak. Either way, if it is not the Lord’s will, the doors will usually shut rather than open (see Revelation 3:7).

I thought we had quite a big measure of faith before 1991, but now I realize my faith was in Mike’s paycheck. Today, God is the one who guides and provides every detail of our lives.

This was the beginning of my being thrust into ministry, which began in 1981. So much more that has transpired will be woven throughout the pages of this book. The next chapter, “Secret Pain,” gives crucial information as you discover God’s plan and purpose for your life. No matter what God calls you to do, striving to be a whole person in Christ is essential to finishing the race well. Let’s take the journey together. . . .