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Treasures Among Us

Shirley Mace

Shirley Mace is a family person. She says her favorite times and places are wherever her family is together. She was born in Benton, Illinois, and lived there till her early teens. Her mother, Opal, died of thyroid disease when Shirley was just three years old, which left her dad with five small children. He eventually remarried, and Shirley also has a half-brother and two half-sisters from that marriage. The family later moved to Peoria, and she went to high school in Pekin, Illinois.

She was baptized when she was 15 years old. At the time, her family worshipped with a congregation that did not yet have its own building. That April day in 1950 when she and her brother, Jerry, were both baptized, they used the baptism at the nearby Christian Church.

Jerry was the one who introduced her to Junior Mace, who would later become her husband. She came to Rolla in 1955 to visit Jerry and his wife, Claudia. Jerry had three guys he planned to introduce to her. One was a student at then UMR, but he had gone home for the weekend. The second was a soldier at Fort Leonard Wood, but he had just been shipped out. Jerry told her he had one more to introduce her to—a guy who was a member of the church. That suited her just fine because she really didn't want to date anyone who not a Christian.

After services that Sunday, Jerry invited Junior to come to their house for coffee. Junior declined and went to his car, then had second thoughts and asked Jerry if the invitation was still open. When they got to the house, Jerry and Claudia were out of coffee, so they wound up going to Dairy Queen for ice cream. Jerry and Claudia soon went on their way, leaving Junior and Shirley to get acquainted with each other. Junior kept talking to her

and telling her he liked her, but she felt like she didn't even know him, so she mostly stayed quiet.

She returned to Illinois right after that but was just miserable. She told her mom and dad she really wanted to go back to Rolla because she thought she was in love with Junior. Jerry and Claudia agreed that she could live with them, so Junior traveled to Peoria on a Saturday to bring her back to Rolla. She says she has been here ever since. It was hard for her to find a job when she got here, and she wound up delivering parts to the various garages. She didn't have a car, so she walked from the parts house to the garages to make the deliveries. Years later, she and her daughter, Vickie, had a day care center called "Granny's House." Her grandson, Bryan, was one of the attendees along with several other children.

Shirley did not work outside the home when their children were young. Junior traveled all the time with his work, so it was important for her to be there when her children got home. She did do some babysitting, which eventually led to the formation of Day School. She had several small children in her care and thought if she had the room, she could be teaching them about the Bible. The elders approved her using the building, so she and Mary Gibson started a class with 16-17 children. Not too long after that, Connie Rogers and Joyce Pruett started teaching another class, and Lovera Baird started teaching soon as well. Even now, Shirley is again assisting with Day School. What began with one class of 16-17 children has now grown into an excellent pre-school program with 48 children currently attending two mornings a week. When teachers are available, up to 60 children can attend.

She and Junior have two daughters and one son. Their daughter, Pam Penning, and her husband, Marty, live in Joplin. Their other daughter, Vickie and husband Mike Kemnitzer, live near Steelville and worship with Rolla Church of Christ. Their son, Mike, and his wife, Angie, live in Houston, Texas. Both Mike Kemnitzer and Mike Mace serve their congregations as elders; and her grandson, Bryan Kemnitzer, is a deacon with the Salem

congregation. She has eight grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Junior was only able to know one of his great-grandchildren. The others have been born since his death in 2006.

Together, Junior and Shirley have taught hundreds (maybe thousands) of Bible studies over the years. In addition to the many Bible studies in the Rolla area, they traveled to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and to Princeton, Illinois, on Campaigns for Christ. Shirley loves Philippians 4:13, "*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*" She also loves the song, "He Could Have Called 10,000 Angels," because it tells of how Christ could have avoided the cross, yet He chose to die there for us.

Other than going on evangelistic campaigns, she has not traveled a whole lot. She would like to go to Alaska some day because she thinks it is so unique and so different from anywhere she has ever lived. World events have never had a big impact on her. She says she just doesn't worry about things because, "What's going to happen is going to happen. It's all in the Lord's hands anyway, so I just don't worry." The main thing she looks forward to is seeing Junior again in heaven.

Shirley has served the Lord and His church for many years and in various capacities. She is yet another Treasure Among Us.

NOTE: This is the 16th in a series highlighting noble Christian women in our congregation. We truly have many "treasures among us" in the women who exemplify Christianity in all its facets and have much to teach us all.



Rebecca Voraritskul

Khon Kaen, Thailand

The greatest and most important life decisions are sometimes made while we are still young. At ten I was baptized; at fifteen I planned to be a missionary in a far-away country; and at eighteen I chose my life partner.

I had no idea what I was getting into, but I knew that I was willing to go wherever God wanted to use me. I felt that He had called me, and I trusted He would prepare me while I was in motion. I received no special training for mission work other than what Mother taught me. "Attitude is everything. Adjustment breeds happiness. Contentment makes happy wrinkles."

It is a frightening thing to leave behind all you have known and loved and truly leave your father and mother. Mother's last words to me before leaving America were, "If I never see you again, we will meet in Heaven."

I went from a modern life in America to Thailand's northeastern boondocks, to a culture I could not fathom, to a language I could not understand, and to food that kept me bone thin for many years. It was harder because we had two little boys, a 2-year-old, and a 10-month-old, and I was five months pregnant. Our luggage took ten days to catch up with us.

We moved upcountry when the baby was one month old. The Church began in our home with only Kim, the three little boys, and me. Eventually, the Church grew to the point they could rent a place. By then we had a new baby girl. We all traveled to Church on a 50cc girl's motorbike.

Kim and I have been in Thailand 41 years. When we arrived, the country was about 30 years behind America. I was barely 22, so the Thai people and culture have shaped all of my adult years. I have more patience, tolerance, and longsuffering than I think I would have ever developed had I never gone overseas. Following the Call and being willing to be transplanted is indeed life-changing from all that you remember before the journey.

Thailand is a Buddhist country; so many of the Thai traditions, culture, and beliefs are from Buddhist principles. Some ingrained thinking, like the belief in spirits, is very hard to change and does affect the reasoning and reactions of the Thai Christians. One has to adjust and adapt to blend in and gain the respect of the people you want to work with. Thais are taught to always be polite, respectful, gentle, and friendly; stay non-confrontational, keep a sense of humor, and easily produce a genuine smile—traits Jesus would want from us, too.

I've always loved watching baptisms in the pond. Besides our own children's baptisms there, one of the most memorable conversions was of Somporn, a 14-year-old girl, paralyzed from waist down. She was rolled through the grass to the pond in her wheelchair, picked up, and put on a red plastic chair. Somporn held on for dear life as two strong boys, slipping and sliding, carried her down into the murky water where she was baptized. She is now with God. Another was 67-year-old Manaat, who was in the hospital with three blocked coronary arteries. His sister, Sana, a Thai Christian, flew from Norway in deep concern for her brother's spiritual health. During her days with him, she spoke of God and the plan of Salvation. Manaat, convinced and wanting baptism, counted the days until he would be released from the hospital and could be baptized.

Within an hour of leaving the hospital, Manaat struggled into the Kum Hai church building and in his very weak state was baptized. His face lit up with pure joy as he rose shivering from the cold watery grave. A week later, pneumonia killed him. His baptism had taken his life but had given him an eternal one.

Funerals have their own troubles. We took the children to one. The plywood casket was sitting in the shade, and we were all sitting nearby on the ground downwind. The tropical heat was atrocious, and we got a huge mind-numbing whiff. A lady wrinkled her nose and said, "A dead dog is nearby." Well, I knew differently but said nothing. I noticed the preacher had moved upwind. Eventually, he finished his talk and six men lifted the casket and began to carry it to the gravesite. Several of them stumbled—not from the weight. Concerned, our little son turned to me and whispered, "How heavy IS a soul?"



*Rebecca says she has been planted by a tree by the water
in Thailand – Psalm 1:3*

For any young lady preparing to enter the mission field with her family, I would tell her there are three types of missionary wives. There are ones that are able to work side by side with their husbands—outgoing, able to teach and lead. Then there are the behind-the-scenes, backbone-type women who can do the finances, the newsletters, the correspondence, the organizing, the fundraising/reporting, schedules and things of that nature. And then there are the mothers who devote themselves to the survival of their children.

Do not feel that you must be those capable go-getters. Be yourself and get better at what you can do and love doing. Your job is to adjust, be happy, be content, and be a shining light. You will suffer bouts of culture shock; but if you endure, they will become fewer and shorter as the years roll by. Just identify them for what they are and overcome.

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MALACHI

"Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts."
Malachi 3:1, 2 [See WBS KJ lesson for other Malachi citation]

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers..." Malachi 4:5, 6.

It was the voice of God through Malachi, the last prophet—the last one chronologically, the last in a long line to receive a message directly from the Lord, the last one whose book appears on the pages of our Old Testament. Finishing the book of Malachi and turning the page, one usually

encounters a blank page, then turning again, a page with the words "New Testament" printed on it. But what is represented in that single blank page?

Four hundred years—that's what is represented. The children of Israel, and the entire world, experienced 400 years of silence—ear-splitting, deafening, numbing silence. There was no message to any prophet for the people to hear and reject yet again. There was no pleading for hearts to change. There was no warning about what would happen if they did not change. There were no gloriously beautiful God-breathed psalms nor wisdom-packed proverbs. There were no additional laws and regulations by which they could order their lives. There were no angels arriving in glory from battles on a spiritual plane to answer prayers—there was not even a donkey opening its mouth with a message from God. It seemed that God had said all He was ever going to say.

But then as the page rustles and we turn to those opening lines of the New Testament, an aging man, a priest, enters the Temple to faithfully conduct the ancient service, and the silence begins to crack and be broken. The 400 mute years end, and there in front of the priest—the gospel of Luke specifies exactly where, "on the right side of the altar of incense"—stands an angel of the Lord, Gabriel. He tells the priest that the Lord has heard his prayer and that of his wife for a child, and He will give them the desire of their hearts.

But then Gabriel delivers an even more important message, one that picks up right where Malachi and the other prophets left off all those centuries before. "He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." More than just the birth of another baby, something great for all people is about to happen. Later, the priest Zacharias, after his own time of silence imposed by God, also echoes the words of Malachi: "And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for Him."

And Gabriel is just getting started. Six months after he appears in the Temple, a young girl in Galilee looks up one day to see him standing in front of her to deliver an even more amazing message. And with that, the Lord begins to fairly shout out His messages. He sends an angel into a young man's dreams, His Spirit reveals to a just and devout man that he will not die until he has witnessed the Lord's Christ, He lights up the night sky with an explosion of light and angels talking to awestruck shepherds, He sends a message by means of a star to scholars in faraway Persia and then enters their dreams to warn them of the schemes of Herod. Finally, He talks to people as one man talks to

another—eating with them, walking with them, crying with them, warning them, loving them, dying for them.

It's been a long time since He walked on this earth, and some people think He is no longer relevant, no longer involved in our lives, no longer interested in fulfilling all His promises. But if that one blank page between the Testaments teaches us nothing else, it teaches us—*Never be fooled by the silence of God.*

Ina McKune, Rolla, MO

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A Seed of Faith

A seed—a mustard seed

the smallest seed of all

created by God.

Dying and decaying

nurtured by the ground and the sun

springs forth to a new life.

It grows and matures into a tree

capable of supporting and providing

rest for the birds.

Faith, a speck of faith

small as the mustard seed

believing in Christ.

Dying to self

nurtured by the truth and the Son

springs forth a spiritual life.

It grows and matures into a child of God

capable of moving a mountain

to glorify God.

Small things

given over to the I AM

become big things in life.

A small stone

held in the hand of a boy

who believed God to be the protector.

Two small coins

given in love by a widow

who believed God to be the provider.

A small baby

....placed in a basket in a river by a Levite woman

who believed God to be the deliverer.

May our lives

lived in faith and knitted together in love

become a church that glorifies God.

By Kathy Webber, Rolla, MO

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The Carpenter

The world spends a month talking about Jesus as a helpless babe, lying in a manger. That baby grew up!

When we went on a tour of the Holy Land, we visited Nazareth Village. There, local residents showed us what life was like in those days long ago. We saw the shepherd with his flock. We saw how the olive oil was pressed and were told the first pressing – the best – was given to the temple for their lamps so they would burn bright without smoking. We saw the threshing floors and the millstones turned by donkeys to grind the grain. It was a hard life.



We went to a carpenter's shop and saw the primitive tools used to make the tables, chairs and other items used in that time. After the demonstration, I asked the local man, who was the carpenter, if I could take a picture of his hands.

These are hands that are strong. They can handle working with the rough lumber and using the plane and the chisel. These are the kind of hands I like to consider when I think about the human-ness of Jesus.



These hands belong to a man who can understand the daily hard work of providing a living for a family. He can understand the tiredness at the end of the day. He can understand what it means to have duties and responsibilities.

The hands of my Carpenter, also bear the scars from the nails that held Him on the cross. The human-ness of Christ was necessary so the He could be that final sacrifice for the sins of all people.

I see Jesus as a strong man who allowed Himself to be slain for me. It deepens my gratitude for all He has done for me and inspires me to follow Him.

Lorna Smith, Lubbock, TX

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Sunrise is a monthly newsletter written and/or assembled by Kathy Webber and Evelyn Waite, members of the Rolla Church of Christ. If you would like your sisters in Christ or your relatives, friends, co-workers or neighbors to receive it, you can share your copy with them. If they would like to receive it, please send their email addresses to evelynwa@fidmail.com.

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