

# W h o I a m

November  
2004

## Note From the Director

November, 2004

Once again our October Open House, which we did in collaboration with the Women in Ministry Initiative and Sider Institute, was a great success!! Thanks to all who stopped by! Opportunities to network are invaluable!!

We're excited!! This year we are organizing our programming around three primary themes. They include biblical equality, domestic/sexual violence, and healthy living. Each of our goals of awareness, education, and advocacy will be addressed within each theme. Here is a sampling of what has happened to date: This fall, along with the Women in Ministry Initiative, we co-sponsored a bible study on biblical equality led by Janet Peifer. We sponsored Messiah College students to walk in the Breast Cancer Walk held in Harrisburg in October. We also co-sponsored an alternate chapel this fall with the Department of Politics on gender and voting (a timely topic!) and two talks are being planning around the area of violence---check inside the newsletter for more information!

We have a Gender Studies Project listserve; directions on how to subscribe can be found on our website at [www.messiah.edu/gender](http://www.messiah.edu/gender). Please subscribe to receive timely emails related to our programming and other events here on campus or in the community at-large related to gender. You will receive the newsletter via email; if you prefer a hard copy, please let Stephanie Craft know at [GenderStudies@Messiah.edu](mailto:GenderStudies@Messiah.edu).

Finally, we welcome your involvement! Ways to be involved: students could join committees; students, faculty and staff can write for the newsletter, work on a GSP programming initiative, or even create your own programming initiative. Be sure to mark your calendars—a GSP planning meeting will be held February 8, 2005 from 5:30-8pm in B102. Pizza and sodas will be provided; please come to share your thoughts, dreams, and desires related to gender here in campus and in the world outside our campus!!

I pray that the semester is going well for you.

Debra Berke  
Associate Professor of Family Science and Women's Studies  
Director, Messiah College's Gender Studies Project

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# WHO I AM

BY DOROTHY GISH

In August I was at Daystar University on board-related business. While there I began writing “Who I Am,” the short piece Stephanie had requested for this newsletter. As I sat there in Nairobi, Kenya, I pondered how a farm girl, from an environment where formal education was not a high priority, became a teacher who eventually earned a PhD, and later, an experienced administrator, seasoned traveler, and respected board member. Given the impossibility of finding an easy or simple answer to such a complex query, I have focused my reflection around several themes that began in childhood and have characterized my life.

**ENERGETIC:** My energetic spirit was an asset for life on a farm where there was always something that needed to be done. It was less appreciated in Sunday School, where I found more imaginative ways to occupy myself than listening to a teacher talk about Heaven where people just sat around. But even there, my energy eventually became an asset when the teacher—out of exasperation—arranged for me to help with the younger children. Thus began my teaching career. Later, as a result of hearing a female missionary speak about her experiences in China, I decided that Christ's command to spread the Gospel to all the world was to be taken seriously and that unless barriers or obstacles directed otherwise, that was what I would do. My experience with teaching Sunday School and my limited knowledge of acceptable female vocations led me to prepare to be a teacher.

For me, recognizing a need meant that I was responsible to do something about it. This precept has led me into many stretching situations. I have frequently felt that others more gifted than I could have done things better, but I have tried my best in every situation believing that God, who called me to these tasks, measures success by obedience rather than by results. Yet, while my energy has propelled me into many things, it has also meant that I have had to work hard at not overwhelming others, taking time to consider all the facts and options as well as to reflect on learning from past mistakes.

**ORGANIZED:** Growing up, my playmates were all male. While I had no trouble keeping up with them, I sometimes found myself more interested in making mud pies and lining them up according to size or making a play house out of lumber that my father had bought for a building project. As the oldest of six children, I was in charge of getting meals ready while Mother and the rest of my siblings helped with the milking. I figured out to do things more efficiently and was fond of putting the house in order or rearranging my room.

As an adult, except for my first year of teaching, all of my professional life has involved some level of administration, from my first job serving as Headmistress of a girls' boarding school in rural Zambia to multiple positions at Messiah, including a year as Acting Dean of Students and later five years serving in the role of Academic VP and Dean of the Faculty. The President asked me to step into both positions knowing that there were very difficult issues that had to be dealt with because he knew that I had organizational skills and did not back away from hard challenges. Being organized has enabled me to do things efficiently but it has also meant risking the trap of doing good things at the expense of more important things or without having laid a proper foundation for the task.

**SERVING:** Through serendipitous intervention, the Lord opened doors for me to attend Messiah College and this began a pattern that I now realize has characterized the whole of my professional life. My first year of teaching and graduate school are the only two professional opportunities for which I applied. All other positions I've held have resulted from following the Lord's leading, including my current position as Dean for the Equipping for Ministry program, developing and coordinating the theological and ministry education efforts of the Brethren in Christ denomination. He has continued to open doors of unsought opportunity at appropriate times. Some of the positions I most resisted, like the senior student development and academic administrative posts, were the most stretching and the most rewarding.

These three traits likely do not, and indeed ought not, characterize your life. However, it is important

to identify the characteristics and traits that you have brought with you to college so that you can capitalize on them for positive benefit and avoid the pitfalls of a strength carried to an extreme that becomes a hindrance. I am glad to have had nearly three decades of interaction with students at Messiah

College and rejoice to see the continuing developments there. Most of all, I am grateful for an experience-rich life filled with God's mercy and grace. My prayer is that I may extend that same Shalom to others.

## Controversy Arising over Female Combat Veterans

### National News:

WASHINGTON (WOMENSENEWS) -- Official records are incomplete, but well over 2,000 women died in battles but the most recent female casualties are getting a different reaction. "It's an abomination," says Marine Corps veteran Christopher Check. "A moral society should not be sending its wives and daughters to war."

Check, who now works for the conservative Rockford Institute think tank in Rockford, Ill., says a woman coming home in a body bag is "more tragic than a man because it's contrary to her nature to be there." The 1994 repeal of the "risk rule" barring women from combat launched a national debate over a woman's fitness to serve and the danger her perceived weaknesses posed to male co-combatants. Military women and their supporters fought long and hard to win the repeal and they are still under fire for it.

Check is among the critics, citing examples in a recent paper in the Rockford Institute's journal *Chronicles* of "the girl recruit who flat-out refused to navigate a night compass course because she was afraid of the dark; the girl lieutenant who burst into tears when she failed to qualify with the

9mm Berretta, and her Staff Platoon Commander (a girl captain) who consoled the distraught young officer by giving her a hug right there at the pistol range."

Such discomfort with the "weaker sex" fighting on the front lines grew with the Iraqi captures of Jessica Lynch and Shoshana Johnson. News that Lynch was slapped by her captors and footage of Johnson's terrified face horrified a public schooled with the axiom that you don't hit women. Their plight also reignited alarms over Rhonda Cornum's rape while she was taken prisoner in the first Gulf War. Headlines warned that women prisoners of war, or POWs, were at greater risk than men--despite the long and appalling history of torture and sexual assault visited on male soldiers.

But the debate now is not just over a female soldier's right to fight in battle; it's also about her right to die in battle. None of the big pollsters has revisited the military women issue since the war began, and none has addressed views on female casualties. Earlier surveys show that a slight majority support lifting the women-in-combat ban, but many polls taken in the past two years echo a 1991 Associated Press survey that found 64 percent thought it was

"unacceptable for the United States to send women with young children to the war zone."

That poll suggests it's more disquieting for a child to lose a mother than a father in wartime, just as the image of a woman dying while engaged in direct combat makes many more squeamish. During the 1994 debate on lifting the ban, female soldiers themselves were denounced for wanting to go into combat. Now men are taking some heat for letting them.

"Men of America, what's wrong with you? These women were in Iraq doing your job!" writes United Press International columnist Lou Marano. "Would you send your wife downstairs at 2 a.m. to investigate a suspicious noise? If there's a fight on the corner, would you send your sister to break it up? It's the same thing."

Opinion pieces and letters to the editor abound on the subject, charging men with "hiding behind women's skirts" and citing what they interpret as biblical exhortations against women fighting and dying in wars. One suggested pink body bags to raise awareness about who is in them.

Military women have protested all this attention to their gender. While they have agitated to

change a system that perpetuates sexual harassment and assault and to modify facilities and equipment that fail to accommodate their needs, they abhor anything that smacks of special treatment.

Cornum has referred to her Gulf War rape in a way some view as cavalier. "It's just another bad thing that can happen to you," she said in a Women's eNews' interview in April. But she argues that men too are subjected to sexual abuse by their captors and that focusing on the risk to women serves only to underscore their "weaknesses."

Likewise, retired Air Force Captain Barbara Wilson says hand-wringing about women soldiers dying in battle is "archaic."

"Women die all the time in wars. It just doesn't get noticed when they're not in uniform," she says. Wilson, who now maintains an exhaustive Web site on women in the military, notes the way military women who made the ultimate sacrifice in past wars was different.

"They were not holding an M-16 or not standing in a gun turret, that's the difference," she says, adding that arming female soldiers is vital. Whatever the reason for this difference, polls do show public opposition to the war in Iraq rising with the casualty count, something that the losses of female troops may compound.

*Taken from an article by Gretchen Cook a freelance writer and radio reporter in Washington, D.C.*

## International News:

### Concessions won for Women in Afghanistan's Constitution

By Janice Duddy

On January 4, 2004 a new constitution was adopted in Afghanistan. Although the three-week long Loya Jirga, held to discuss the constitution, was embroiled in controversy, women won some significant concessions. As Human Rights Watch reports, "There is cause for celebration. That Afghanistan's political dynamics are being settled with words, instead of guns, is a welcome contrast with the country's recent past. The charter's prohibition against sexual discrimination is a victory for Afghan women, so recently oppressed by the Taliban"

However, Human Rights Watch points out that the approval process was dominated by warlords and factional leaders. Continued concerns with security raises the question, whether in this environment it will be possible to hold free and fair elections this year. This considered, it is important to acknowledge the gains that women made in this new constitution. The constitution explicitly recognizes the equal rights of men and women. This was lacking in drafts proposed prior to the Loya Jirga. The constitution ensures that "any kind of discrimination and privilege between the citizens of Afghanistan are prohibited. The citizens of Afghanistan - whether

man or woman - have equal rights and duties before the law".

Another gain was the fact that female delegates were able to double the number of women in the Wolesi Jirga (House of the People). The previous draft constitution called for at least one female representative from each of Afghanistan's 32 provinces. However, the adopted version calls for two female representatives from each province to the Wolesi Jirga, which will mean that women will comprise of at least 25 percent of this body. In addition, as the Feminist Majority Foundation Online explains, "The constitution also requires that 50 percent of presidential appointments to the Meshrano Jirga (House of Elders) will be women; the president appoints one-third of the members to this house of parliament"

Even with these gains there still remains some concerns with Afghanistan's new constitution. The constitution states, "in Afghanistan, no law can be contrary to the beliefs and provisions of the sacred religion of Islam". The Feminist Majority Foundation Online argues, "This language and another article leaving matters where there is no provision in the constitution or law to adjudication by religious laws may leave individual rights, human rights, and women's rights vulnerable to extremist interpretations of Islam."

*Source: Resource Net by the Association for Women's Rights in Development.*

## People of the Month

### Meet the New RDs!

#### Andrew Shriver, Naugle RD

A graduate of Gordon College in Classical Studies, Andrew came to Messiah from George Fox University in Oregon where he was an Area Coordinator. He has a masters from Gordon Conwell Seminary in Early Church History and another in Educational Ministries from Wheaton University. He enjoys Naugle's strong sense of tradition and the community this builds. Andrew appreciates the combination and exchange of information between the women and men as well as freshmen and sophomore students in the building. He intends to maintain the strength of tradition in Naugle and encourage the community to learn and grow together.

#### Kevin Villegas, Miller Hall RD and Fry Apartments

A nontraditional RD in many ways, Kevin joined Residence Education after working in Public Relations at Messiah since 1999. Kevin graduated in 1998 from Messiah in Communications with a minor in peace making after serving for four years in the Marine Corps as an infantryman. He has always enjoyed working directly with the students and appreciates the opportunity he has to work with the Miller Men. Some of that interaction is understanding again the energy and random behavior of college-age men that results in a sometimes noisy atmosphere. Kevin's goals include replacing the complacency common to many male students with an intentional attitude to develop strong, godly leaders among the Miller men.

#### Grace McBrayer, Grantham Hall RD and Smith Apartments

Grace joins Messiah with her bachelors in Youth Ministry from Huntington in Indiana and a Masters in College Student Personnel from Bowling Green State University in Ohio. She always felt moved to work with Christians towards spiritual maturity by encouraging them to think critically. Grace feels that living in the residence hall is a great opportunity to develop relationships and help her students. Being able to relate to women's issues and dedicated to being in her position for the next several years,

Grace feels her gifts, personality and position fit well together. She is especially thankful for the help of her RAs and ALCs in reaching and working with the students in Grantham and Smith. She hopes to create an environment to foster leaders and good academics surrounded in strong community that she tries to develop through personal relationships with her students.

#### Meg Jones, Hess RD

Also a Messiah Alumni, Meg graduated in 2001 from the sociology department and went on for her masters in Counselor Education in Student Affairs from Penn State. After a year off when she worked on a project sponsored by a Lilly Grant, she has joined the Residence Education staff. Given the pilot project of the first all freshmen hall, Meg feels it has helped to develop community quickly among her students as they are all in the same "boat" and everyone is willing to make friends. The issues of finding friends and things to do are the priorities but there are secondary concerns that Meg deals with such as frustrations with registration and finding cars to get students off campus when necessary, like the critical midnight Wal-Mart runs. She hopes to be able to teach her students what it means to be in college and the new responsibilities that are connected to this transition.

#### Quote of the month

"No matter what accomplishments you make, somebody helped you."  
~ Althea Gibson

#### Courses offered this spring for the Women's Studies minor

ENG 250W - 20th Century Women's Lit  
FAM/PSY/SOC 342 - Women and Men in American Society (core course)  
HPE 410 - Topics: Women's Health  
IDSA 200 – Women in Science  
RET 354 - Women Theologians in the U.S.  
SOC 356 – Race, Ethnicity and Gender  
SOC 382 - Women in CJ System

Questions? Contact Deb Berke at x7205

## Proven Dangers and Disadvantages to Women

**PHILADELPHIA:** Governor Edward G. Rendell today announced a statewide multi-media marketing campaign to heighten awareness of the dangers and challenges women in the Commonwealth face and encourage advocacy and action to end them. Leslie Stiles, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Commission for Women, joined the Governor at his Southeast Regional Office in Philadelphia to outline the effort.

“We like to think that we live in an age of safety, advancement and equality,” said Governor Rendell. “But statistics prove this may not always be the case. The disadvantages Pennsylvania women face today are startling and unacceptable. The Shocking Pink campaign, spearheaded by PCW, will, I hope, make citizens more aware and energize them to do just what the campaign says: ‘Change It.’”

According to national and statewide figures, Pennsylvania women daily face threats such as rape, domestic violence, heart disease, breast cancer and unequal pay. For instance, **a woman is raped once every three hours in Pennsylvania; every five days a woman dies from domestic violence; every 1 hour and 21 minutes a woman dies of heart disease; one in eight Pennsylvania women gets breast cancer; and, on average, women in the Commonwealth are paid 23 percent less than men.**

Shocking Pink made its debut across the state this month and will continue through the beginning of 2005. The name refers to the shocking and unfortunate challenges women face every day, as well as the vibrant, hot-pink ad background. These ads can be seen and heard through television, radio and billboards across the state.

“Change starts with awareness, which leads to advocacy, which results in action,” said Executive Director Stiles. “Through this campaign we want to galvanize people all across the Commonwealth and inspire them to become change agents by calling

their legislators, forming activist groups, volunteering and reaching out to others.”

“The only thing more shocking than these statistics would be if we as an administration and as Pennsylvanians stood by and did nothing,” Governor Rendell said. “We’re here to make a better Pennsylvania -- the status quo cannot and will not be tolerated.”

Prominent Pennsylvania women in the media came together to effect change by creating Shocking Pink pro bono. Betty Tuppeny, Chief Executive Officer and Founder of Domus, one of Philadelphia’s top 10 advertising and public relations firms, created the campaign from strategy to execution. Joanne Harmelin, Chief Executive Officer of Harmelin Media, the state’s largest media-buying service, negotiated the free display of the ads.

“The campaign itself is proof that we all can make a difference if we are motivated to do so,” said Executive Director Stiles. “Women can and should be forces of change.”

For more information about the Pennsylvania Commission for Women and the Shocking Pink campaign, call 1-888-615-7477 or visit [www.pcw.state.pa.us](http://www.pcw.state.pa.us).

### National Sexual Violence Resource Center

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has awarded the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape a five-year agreement to sustain and expand the National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC). “I am very pleased” about this grant, said U.S. Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA). “It is imperative that we curb the violence and lasting effects of rape by developing initiatives to prevent it.” Since its launch in July of 2000, the NSVRC has responded to nearly 7,000 requests for technical assistance. *More information is available at [www.nsvrc.org](http://www.nsvrc.org).*

We would love to hear from you! If you have ideas or submissions for *Who I Am* please contact Stephanie Craft, Box 5247 or email [GenderStudies@messiah.edu](mailto:GenderStudies@messiah.edu).

## Humor in Poetry

"The red-hatted mafia" is what my friend Paul called them. For anyone else who has seen these groups of women dressed in red and purple and wondered "what's up" here's the poem that started it all. Think about it and Enjoy!

Warning by Elizabeth Lucas

When I am an old woman I shall wear purple  
With a red hat which doesn't go and doesn't  
suit me  
And I shall spend my pension on brandy and  
summer gloves

And satin sandals and say we've no money for  
butter.

I shall sit down on the pavement when I'm  
tired

And gobble up samples in shops and press  
alarm bells

And run my stick along the public railings

And make up for the sobriety of my youth.

I shall go out in my slippers in the rain

And pick the flowers in other people's  
gardens...

But maybe I ought to practice a little now?

So people who know me are not too shocked  
and surprised

When suddenly I am old, and start to wear  
purple.

## Events Calendar

**Nov. 11: 6:30-7:30pm** Boyer 131  
"Family Violence: The Lifespan."

Why do people abuse others? What does an  
abused person deal with? Come to this  
workshop with Donna Wolfe from the  
Harrisburg YWCA to explore this questions  
related to the lifecycle of violence.

**Nov. 30: 8-9pm Hostetter Chapel**  
"From Hurting to Healing: Sexual Violence  
and Race in the U.S."  
Lori Robinson, author of *An African-  
American's Guide to Surviving Sexual Assault*  
9-10pm Talkback session

**Dec. 6: 12pm TBA** Lunch with the President,  
Kim Phipps. Have the opportunity to talk  
with Kim in a small group setting.

**Until Jan. 9, 2005:** Jewish Women's Archives  
at the Museum of Maryland

**Until Mar. 2005:** History of Women in  
Medicine, exhibit at the National Library of  
Medicine.

**Feb. 8: 5:30pm Boyer 102** Plan It! The Gender  
Studies Project invites you to help us

review our programming and improve it for  
the future! RSVP  
GenderStudies@messiah.edu or ext. 7214. We  
hope to see you there!

**February, 2005: Systematic Rape as a  
Weapon of War** (Alternate Chapel)

**Mar. 15: 7-8pm Riegsecker Lecture in Palmer  
Cinema.** "O Women Lift Your Voice"  
Catherine Kroeger, a board member of  
Christians for Biblical Equality, will be  
speaking on Biblical Equality. Students and  
faculty are welcome. If you would like to  
attend the dinner before the lecture, contact  
the GSP.

**March, 2005: Artist's Books: A Woman's  
Medium.** Come and see Messiah's elite

**To learn more about Christians for  
Biblical Equality check out:**  
<http://www.cbeinternational.org/>

collection of Artist's Books on display in the  
library.

**Apr. 26, 6-9pm:** Senior Women's Dinner at  
Grantham Church. If you are interested in  
helping to plan the dinner, please contact  
Campus Ministries ext. 6017.