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# Heritage Horizons

...a memorial book was written in His *presence*, recording those who revered Him and those who had the highest respect for His name...Malachi 3:16



Editor: Lenore Lang

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"Reaching,

Ever reaching,

Stretching every fiber

To save,  
To love,  
To serve

We are a people  
with a mission."

Harold F. Lang

## Point of View *by Lenore Lang*

Much of our focus in this issue of Heritage Horizons is on the country of Japan. We have the joy of introducing to you a new book written by our "veteran missionary" Florence Miller. Edited by Luci Lengefeld, it is a labor of love from start to finish.

Read about some of our Mission History, page 2.

Notes about how Luci took up the task of editing, page 3.

Berneice Westerman shares some great memories in her ArmChair Traveler, page 4.

## Director's Notes *by Jackie Howell*

Today we celebrate the publication of Florence Miller's book, *Sowing in Tears, Reaping in Joy: the life story of Florence Miller, missionary to Japan*. The original source material is the letters that Florence sent to family, friends and supporters during her years in Japan plus the articles printed in the *Baptist Herald* and *Annual*. We received this compilation of sources from Florence in the fall of 2011. It truly has been a joy to watch this book unfold over the past 18 months.

Our previous publications have been translations of works more than a century old (the stories of August Rauschenbusch and August Schulte). Each of these books are part of our mission to make available real-life stories of NAB people that demonstrate the power of God and the modeling of His faithful people through the years.

Florence's book is available as a e-book for those who find the technology of the Nook, Kindle and other formats a more convenient way to read her story. The link to order the paperback on-line is [http://www.bookstandpublishing.com/book\\_details/Sowing\\_in\\_Tears\\_Reaping\\_in\\_Joy](http://www.bookstandpublishing.com/book_details/Sowing_in_Tears_Reaping_in_Joy). Amazon.com and Barnes and Noble have both the e-books and paperbacks.

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# HERE'S HOW IT ALL STARTED.....

By Lenore Lang

“We believe that the Lord is showing us an open door to begin a mission work in Japan. After due deliberation and prayer the GMC went on record to open such a field. We are of the definite conviction that this new venture will not result in a division of our missionary giving, but rather capture the interest of all our people in the prayerful and missionary giving support. To begin this work properly three persons are under appointment pending the approval and the appropriation of funds: Mr. and Mrs. Jay Hirth of Chicago, Illinois and Miss Florence Miller of Benton Harbor, Michigan.

We wish to add this note that for these appointments promises have been made that their salary will be paid over and above the regular missionary giving.”

(From the Report of the General Missionary Secretary, Rev. R. Schilke to the General Council in Session at Forest Park, ILL on April 26-27, 1951.)

## AND CONTINUED.....

In 1963 , our Mission published a book, *Opening Doors in Japan*, detailing how the work moved forward from that initial beginning in 1951. The book has nine chapters, each one written by one of the missionaries to Japan. The fifth chapter by Florence Miller informs us of how “Our Mission Enters the Open Door”, and now fifty years since the publication of that book, we “NAB-ers” can be very grateful indeed that we did enter that open door.

Following that publication, the July/August 1982 issue of the *Baptist Herald* had as its main theme “Celebrating 100 Years of Missions” . At that time the Rev. Harold Lang was serving as our denominational associate missions director and in the words of the *Herald's* Interim Editor, Barbara J. Binder, he “painted with words in a sweeping brushstroke what North American Baptists have done at home and around the world. ” That issue includes many photographs , with the Rev. Fred Folkerts assisting in their selection.

No doubt all of us will agree that war is an awful thing, but it is remarkable how the Lord works to bring something good out of the “awful”. How? you ask? In Harold Lang’s words, “During the war, (WW II) many American servicemen became exposed to the people of Asia for the first time. Some of these servicemen came from North American Baptist churches. Although they were in the Pacific to fight a war, they became aware of the spiritual needs of the people. Increasingly, it seemed that the land of Japan might be open for missionary effort.”

So we come full circle back to the report of 1951 (cited above) when those who were experiencing “the Call of God” did not just sit on their hands and do nothing, but used heads and hearts and hands for Christ in answering with a resounding “Yes! We Will Go!”

Florence Miller was one of those who answered in that way. I encourage each of you reading this to get a copy of her book, just off the press, for a closer look at her experiences in the country of Japan: *Sowing in Tears, Reaping in Joy*. You will be grateful for how the Lord worked in and through her life to bring Japanese people to Himself . You will find yourself praying that others today will catch a new vision of what it means to serve the Lord — in Missions!

# A NEW BOOK FOR US ALL

By Luci Lengefeld

On October 29, 2011, Paul Ewing (missionary in Japan), my husband, Bill, and I visited Florence Miller in her home in Benton Harbor, Michigan. We missionaries — and others — had been on Flo’s case for *ages* to write an account of her years of missionary service in Japan, from 1951 to 1989. She was prepared for our visit with a *fat* binder of materials — about 700 pages! “Wow, Flo!” we thought in amazement. She had been working on it for a number of years, and *this* was the result! Now she was facing some serious medical issues that would necessitate major changes in her lifestyle, and she was only too glad to put her memoirs into other hands.

After a member of Napier Parkview Baptist Church graciously had copies made, *Flo’s Memoirs* arrived at the NAB Heritage Commission in Sioux Falls. Paul, Bill, and I met with Dr. Jackie Howell to discuss our plan of attack. We decided to edit the “Memoirs” down to a 250-page book. I don’t remember discussing *who* was to get this task, but it began to look as if Bill and Luci were the likely candidates! “Well,” I thought, “How hard can it be? Just correct the punctuation and check for spelling errors, right?”

Bill and I started this project together, but soon realized that editing as a team was not going to work. Suddenly I found myself the sole editor of this daunting task. The first, last, and only time I had done anything remotely resembling this was when I co-edited my high school newspaper in 1964! Unwillingly, I started to ruffle through the pages. Florence’s family and friends had saved almost every letter she had written home, and Flo had used these as the basis for her memoirs. Additionally, she had written numerous articles for the *Baptist Herald*, a publication of the NAB Conference in years past. Soon I discovered that a lot of the articles/letters were repeated two — and sometimes three — times! It took time to read them all, decide which was best, and delete the rejects. I also had to be careful to remove any stories that might cast someone in a bad light. I felt like a wicked, unfeeling person as I ruthlessly cut — cut — CUT!

While this massacre was going on, something else was happening in my heart. Florence’s experiences with loneliness, lack of ability in the Japanese language, overwork, depression, taking on duties for which she was ill-prepared, and her single status — to name a few — became very real to me since I had faced some of the same situations. Through baring her heart and exposing her real emotions, I saw the reality of God’s abundant grace at work in her life.

By the time I had read and re-checked the manuscript for the fifth time, I found my heart crying out in praise to God for giving me the wonderful privilege of editing Flo’s book, *Sowing in Tears, Reaping in Joy*. It is my prayer that this book will help its readers to learn a bit more about the history of the NAB mission work in Japan, and about God’s working through the life of this truly dedicated woman of God. To Him be all the Glory!

# THE ARMCHAIR TRAVELER

by Archivist Berneice Westerman



There were three of us missionaries who went out to our fields of service about the same time: Florence Miller in 1951, Myrtle Hein in 1946, and yours truly in 1950. Yes, we went to different fields. Florence went to Japan, and Myrtle and I to Cameroon.

Myrtle had plans to get married when she went to her home in Canada on her first furlough, (or what is now called “home assignment.”) Upon her return to Cameroon she was married to Jack Funnell at our Soppo station.

Rev. Ken Goodman joined Myrtle and Jack in marriage in the Soppo Church, and I well remember our challenge of putting the wedding cake decorations in the closet with a burning farm lantern to keep those decorations from wilting in the very humid air. For the reception we had tables, but they were not all the same height. Ever the careful engineer, Jack insisted that we could not have the tables touching each other, but that each table must be separated with a separate cloth, so that is how we did it. Jack’s lawn in England was always without leaves, for if one would fall, he would be there to remove it!

Through the years, Myrtle and Jack remained my good friends. Every trip coming to the USA on ‘furlough’, I planned a stop at the Funnell’s in England and found that stop to be a highlight of rest and relaxation after the tense time of packing up, turning over the work, as well as attending many farewells along my way.

On one trip, a new malaria medicine that I had begun caused me to be a very sick patient, but both Jack and Myrtle got me back up and able to keep my scheduled trip to the USA.

Six years ago Jack died, and Myrtle followed on April 16, 2013. She would have been 98 years of age on May 21, 2013. My annual birthday greeting to her did not get sent this year because I heard she had graduated to Glory. Now I am looking forward to seeing Myrtle and Jack when God calls *me* Home.

For those of you who get [\*\*The Servant Link\*\*](#), you will find a more detailed story of Myrtle’s life in the next issue.



This Soppo church in Cameroon was built by Missionary Carl Jacob Bender in the area where he worked faithfully for his Lord for nearly 30 years, starting in 1899. Funnells were married here.