



Women by Design

Noland Road Baptist Church | 4505 S. Noland Road | Independence, MO 64055 | 816-373-0106 | nolandroadbaptist.org

Just a Needle and Thread

This time of year I usually begin to think about what life events will God take me through this coming year? From my human perspective I wonder what great things will come my way and what tragic events will God allow me to experience. Have you ever wanted to see into the future? If you could see where God wanted you in 5 years would you want to know? While you ponder that thought, let me tell you about my friend Leslie.

Leslie Crone lives in the St. Louis area and is a mother of 7, a grandmother of 10 and wife to a wonderful Christian man. When I first met her 8 years ago, she was living the typical life of running kids to ball games, dance practices, juggling church activities and dealing with some serious teenage challenges. She also was beginning the adventure of being a grandmother in her mid 40's.

The director of African Vision of Hope who is a close friend of Leslie's asked her 3 different times to go on a mission trip to help in an orphanage in Africa. Her reaction was "why would I leave the country while I'm still raising my children?" The Lord kept working on her heart, however. Like Moses, she struggled with what she had to offer as a housewife, a mother, a grandmother to a group of people halfway around the world.

Over the past 20 years Leslie had become a very proficient seamstress so as she began to pray God revealed to her that maybe, just maybe, she could teach the women of the villages basic sewing instead of working with the orphans.

With much apprehension, Leslie decided to go. For the first year she took a sewing machine and taught a few women to sew purses to sell. She went back again the next year, but still with hesitation on what she could really do. She had a couple more machines sent over, and she taught basic sewing instructions and made mitts for cooking over an open fire.

Leslie did not go the third year, but God continued to impress upon her the value of these African women. On her third trip Leslie had the ladies make a dress and participate in an actual fashion show. Women are not valued in Africa, and their self-esteem is very low. Each of the ladies walked with heads held high participating in the fashion show. You see, it wasn't about the dress itself, it was about those women understanding self-worth. By making their dress and wearing it with confidence, God was showing them their value. That year Leslie also started a ministry called Hearts of Hope by connecting a lady

from Zambia and a lady from the U.S. to be prayer partners. Those ladies understood that a very specific woman would be praying for them personally.

In August of 2011, Leslie went back to Zambia for the 4th time. This time they sewed banners for the walls of their church buildings. God also called Leslie to have a women's bible study called "Precious in His Sight". Oh, did I mention that Leslie and African Vision of Hope worked with the country of Zambia and was able to start a corporation to be owned by the Zambian women themselves called Threads of Hope. African Vision of Hope will pay these women to make school uniforms for the three orphanages.

God thinks of everything. You see, with 10 sewing machines now in Africa, there was a need for repair and maintenance. God called Steve, a sewing machine repair man from St. Louis to go to Zambia this past summer to perform maintenance and teach basic repair functions. In addition, he has coordinated for 10 hand held sewing machines (not needing electricity) to be shipped to Zambia on December 27th. These can now be distributed to more villages.

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For 2012, Leslie plans to continue training the women in their sewing and begin a training program for the junior high school girls. Their Bible study will be on the Ruth/Naomi ministry. The life expectancy in Zambia is 35. Widows are in a very dangerous situation, because if their husbands have died from HIV/AIDS as so many in Zambia have, they don't have many ways to earn income for their children to eat. Through the sewing ministry, these women become self-sufficient as they learn a real skill—allowing them to make clothing which they can give to their children or sell for income.

If 5 years ago, Leslie could have seen into the future and known that she would be a part of establishing a sewing corporation in

Zambia she probably would have passed out. You see, God has a plan and takes us ONE step at a time as He prepares us for HIS purpose. God just wanted Leslie to be available. He wanted her to hand Him her “Needle and Thread” and He would do the rest.

What is God calling you to do in 2012? Don't underestimate God. He can take the smallest thing and do amazing things if we will let him. What is your “needle and thread”?

May each one of us say, “God I'm available, use me” and just watch what miracles He can perform. In Leslie's words: Think Big and Expect Great Things....

✱ Nancy Cook ✱

2012 CHALLENGE

What's your needle and thread? What talent, resource, spiritual gift, time will you allow God to use this year and do what only He can do in amazing ways?



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MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

CHRISTIAN BOOK CLUB

A Most Unsuitable Match
by Stephanie Grace Whitson
Thursday, January 12, 7 pm
Connection Café

PROJECT LINUS

Tuesday, January 17
10 am – 12 noon
Fellowship Hall

JUST ONE

Adult & Youth Mentoring Ministry
Learn more Sunday, January 15

WINTER BIBLE STUDIES

Living Free
by Beth Moore
Wednesday, 6:30 pm
Begins January 11

James: Mercy Triumphs
by Beth Moore
Thursday, 9:30 pm
Begins January 19

Register for Bible study and Thursday morning child care at www.nolandroadbaptist.org/women or by contacting Beth Whorton.

SAVE THE DATES

Girls Morning Out
Incredible Hour Of Pancakes,
Praise and Prayer
Saturday, February 11, 9 am
Connection Café

Annual Women's Retreat
Stonecroft Ministries Center,
Kansas City, MO
April 20-22