

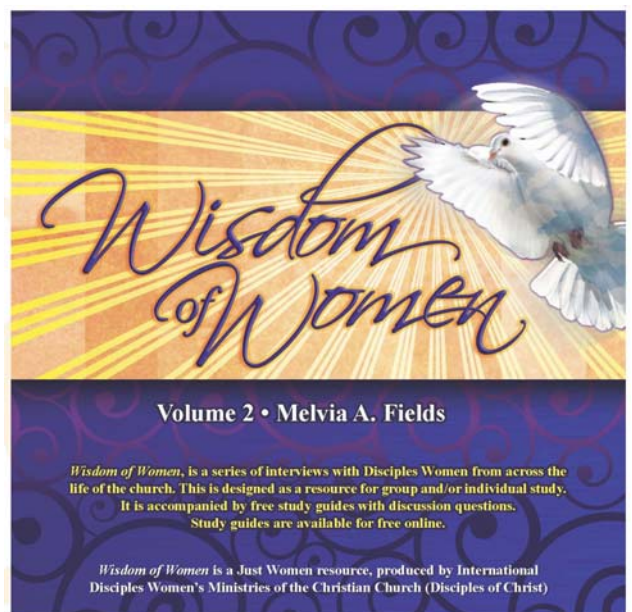


# *Wisdom of Women* Study Guide—Volume 2

International Disciples Women's Ministries

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## Volume Two: Melvia A. Fields

### Background:

*Wisdom of Women* is a new series of video interviews with Disciples women from across the life of the church. The purpose of this series is two-fold: to capture our history so that it is not lost and to enable us to share the wisdom that we have found, learning about who we are as women and empowering us to live into our future.

Touching on everything from how and when they heard a call in their lives to balancing roles as wife, mother, and career - nothing is off limits. Each interview consists of 60 to 90 minutes of conversation and wisdom edited into 13 or 14 short segments of six to ten minutes each. The study guide with suggestions for use and questions for reflection and conversation after each segment is available as a free download at [www.discipleswomen.org](http://www.discipleswomen.org) and will accompany each DVD. The DVDs are a cost item and can be ordered by calling 1-888-346-2631 or emailing [odw@dhm.disciples.org](mailto:odw@dhm.disciples.org)

The DVDs have been designed to be used by women and men in a variety of settings. Some may choose to watch the entire video in one sitting in the privacy of home, referring to it for that extra boost of encouragement. Journaling after viewing the video and reacting to the questions could be especially helpful if watching it alone.

Others may watch one segment with a group of friends, entering into discussion about what was just heard. The video could be the "resource person" for a women's retreat. Still others may make it a quarterly Sunday School class, viewing one or more segments each week, followed by discussion. This resource can be used as study for your Women's Ministry group gatherings.

Might men also benefit from hearing and discussing the wisdom of women? We certainly think so! However you choose to use this new resource, in whatever setting, with whatever participation, your life will be enriched by hearing and reflecting on Wisdom of Women.

**Melvia Anderson Fields** was born and reared in Bourbon County, Kentucky, which is near historic Cane Ridge. She is a writer, teacher, Women's Ministry leader, historian and inspiration. During her rich life, she has served as a Bible School teacher and youth

director. She also has a passion for Disciples Women Ministry, serving in leadership in her local congregation, her region and within the Kentucky Christian Missionary Convention.

She is the author of *Women On A Mission* which explores the lives and legacies of Disciples African American women. Ms. Fields co-authored *In Other Words-Stories of African American Involvement in the Early years of the Stone-Campbell Movement* in Kentucky with her daughter, the Rev. Sharon B. Fields.

## Nuggets of Wisdom (NOW):

What of value do study participants take away after studying each of the *Women of Wisdom* chapters? This ‘takeaway’, or essential lesson, is what we call “Nuggets of Wisdom,” (the “N.O.W.” of each chapter). Each chapter ends with this feature, asking study participants to try to identify a nugget of wisdom, small or large, that they can take forward with them and perhaps apply in their lives.

Our *Women of Wisdom* series features a diverse collection of women who will have many similarities with those who studying them, but depending on the woman being studied, also many differences from those who study them. These differences may include age, culture, race, ethnicity, education, experience, and even gender and nationality. Nevertheless, our goal is for our readers to find common universal truths in the wisdom each woman shares, and in other cases to see how from different situations we can nevertheless gain insight for dealing with the challenges of our lives today.

We believe this is a good principle that applies to Bible study as well: persons we study do not have to be just like us for us to learn from their stories. When a person going along picks up **a nugget** of something they believe to be valuable, this is a two-sided action, a connecting place. Someone had to leave that nugget, and the discoverer must see its potential value, then act to bring it forward. We hope that in your study the NOW feature will be helpful and meaningful to you.

Chapter	Title	Running Time:
1	Growing up in the Christian Faith	8 min 33 sec
2	A Love for Learning	8 min 12 sec
3	Teaching Sunday School	3 min 30 sec

4	My Role in the CWF	10 min 51 sec
5	Finding Balance and Trusting God	10 min 15 sec
6	The Play: Women on a Mission	16 min 56 sec
7	Reflections of Women on a Mission	6 min 02 sec
8	Cane Ridge	9 min 55 sec
9	In Other Words	5 min 15 sec
10	At the Kitchen Table	3 min 30 sec
11	What God Has Called Me to Do	7 min 07 sec
12	I Can Do Anything with God's Help	8 min 48 sec
13	Quadrennial	5 min 15 sec
14	Sharing with the Younger Generation	6 min 08 sec
15	Wisdom of Women	7 min 33 sec
16	Women Are Here for a Purpose	3 min 48 sec
	Credits	1 min 33 sec

## Chapter One: Growing up in the Christian Faith

(Viewing time: 8 min 33 sec )

1. Melvia talks of tagging along as her grandmother worked in she garden and Melvia's mother was away working. During this tagging-along time, Melvia's grandmother would talk to her and the other children, sharing wisdom that Melvia would keep with her for the rest of her life.
  - a) Other than parents, who are some persons in your life who took the time to pass along wisdom that you would later use?
  - b) Think now of the reverse. What persons have looked up to *you*, or still do, giving you the opportunity to share wisdom? (*Don't skip this question if you are a child; younger children, and perhaps older, already look up to you.*) Do you think you take this role seriously enough? Do you make time for these sharing relationships, or do you see them as an annoying? How could you do better?

2. Melvia recalls her grandmother telling the seven girls that they would have difficulties in life. She said, “You know, all you girls will probably have a hard time.” She also gave them the sense that God had made Black women strong to be able to hold up to all the many difficulties they would have to deal with. How do you think this prepared Melvia for the hardships that did come in her life? Some believe that adults should not talk to children about life having hardships and difficulties because it will frighten or discourage them. What do you think?
  
3. Melvia’s grandmother was “always teaching something about the Bible,” and would put together little plays, skits, and songs involving the children. She told them that God gave people special gifts from the time they were born, “and that when you got old enough to do these things, then you could get up and do them: say a speech, sing a song, etc”. Her grandmother would asked of her - What do you think are your special gifts? Do you think you have cultivated all of these? What do you think may still lie ahead for you?
  
4. Companion scriptures that you might want to study: Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Proverbs 3:1-35, and Mark 10:13-16.

*Journal:* Write about one or more persons in your life who gave you encouragement, and took time to prepare you for life. If specific incidents come to you, what were the circumstances?

*NOW:* What nugget of wisdom do you take with you from studying this chapter?

## Chapter Two: A Love for Learning

(Viewing time: 8 min 12 sec)

1. Melvia tells of her mother always bringing books home for her children to read. Later Melvia did the same thing with her children, musing about when they would go to the store and many other children would come home with toys, hers would come home with books. As a child, she was comfortable in being seen as “peculiar” for spending time with books. How do you think this sense of priorities affected Melvia and her children? What priorities were set for you as a child?

2. Melvia speaks of bringing her children in from play and having a regular quiet time for them to settle down, rest, and read. Notice how Melvia and her mother provided a **love** of books, **availability** of books, and a **dedicated time** for reading them.

What happens if we apply these same three qualities to growth in faith in God, or to spiritual disciplines such as prayer? Do we help children and other seekers grow in their faith in God by providing: a **love** of God, **availability** to learn about God, and a **dedicated time** for practicing God's teachings? What about in your own life? Are any of these areas lacking for you?

3. In the last chapter we talked about positive mentoring relationships such as Melvia had with her grandmother. But not all children have a mentor like this in life, and some have unhealthy and abusive relationships with older family members. Some children enter school never even having seen a book.

Do you think it is possible for children who don't have a healthy mentor in their lives to gain wisdom through reading and hearing other people's stories and experiences, through books or other opportunities? Does your family, church, or community provide a way and a time for children to hear, read, and share such stories? What difference do you think this might make in the child's life?

4. Companion scriptures that you might want to study: Proverbs 4:1-9; Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23.

*Journal:* Write about how you have been inspired through reading or hearing about other people's stories. What persons and kind of stories inspire you? Why?

*NOW:* What nugget of wisdom do you take with you from studying this chapter?

## Chapter Three: Teaching Sunday School

(Viewing time: 3 min 30 sec)

1. This chapter opens with Melvia's son's announcing that he wasn't going back to Sunday School. What series of events did this set into motion?

2. Melvia's minister seemed to understand well about the natural flow between learning and teaching. As learners gained knowledge, they naturally began sharing what they were learning: becoming teachers and extending the reach of what the minister's teaching. And of these teachers, some like Melvia would take on new roles and discover gifts they hadn't realized they had. Have you had similar experiences? What can we learn from this about setting up programs and processes for learning?
  
3. Melvia's story is one where each step she takes and each new role she takes on leads to a door opening to some horizon she hadn't even seen before. One thing led to another. Have you noticed this pattern in life? Is this intimidating, or does it excite you about the opportunities to develop your own gifts? What are your gifts that God may be calling you to step out and begin to develop?
  
4. Companion scriptures that you might want to study: Psalm 119:9-16, 105-112; Proverbs 22:6.

*Journal:* Talk more about the gifts that you are aware of or are developing in yourself. Are there gifts that you wonder if God may be calling you to develop?

*NOW:* What *nugget of wisdom* do you take with you from studying this chapter?

## Chapter Four: My Role in the CWF

(Viewing time: 10 min 51 sec)

**CWF – Christian Women's Fellowship:** CWF is the name given to women participating in monthly fellowship and study groups in congregations. Since 2006, some groups and regional bodies have adopted the names **Disciples Women** or **Women's Ministries**.

1. Melvia's involvement with the CWF began with others telling her, "you know, we need somebody who can go to these meetings, and can bring us back what we are supposed to know." They encouraged her to be the one to do this, and she did. Have others ever had a hand in helping you see your potential and your abilities even

before you did? Have you done the same for someone else? What helps in being able to see ourselves as others see us?

2. What were some forms of resistance that Melvia found among some of the women she led? What do you remember in the advice she gives for leaders?
3. How do these elements of a strong women's fellowship show up in the local and regional CWF groups that Melvia describes? In your group, if you participate in one?

**Service/Action:** One of the basic necessities for a healthy, well-balanced women's ministry, service/action is best defined as "that which is done for or with persons other than ourselves".

**Stewardship:** The second basic necessity for a healthy women's ministry, stewardship helps to define time, talent, and treasure and discover ways to be responsible and giving Christians.

**Study:** A third component and basic necessity for a healthy women's ministry, a well-balanced study includes the Bible, personal enrichment, current issues, and mission.

**Worship:** The fourth basic necessity for a healthy women's ministry

4. Companion scriptures that you might want to study: Acts 2:1-13, 42-47. 1 Thessalonians 5:11-28.

*Journal:* Melvia's group worked on many projects that the individual women could do, such as collecting socks and panties, and blankets, and crocheting. Write about the potential in small gifts to magnify when people join their gifts together as one.

*NOW:* What nugget of wisdom do you take with you from studying this chapter?

**LINKS:** Go to [www.discipleswomen.org](http://www.discipleswomen.org) and click on Resources, or to discover how Disciples women are committed to being a blessing in the world, click on Social Action



Opportunities.

## Chapter Five: Finding Balance

(Viewing time: 10 min 15 sec)

1. What were some hardships that Melvia experienced when raising her children? Why did she drive all the way from Paris, Kentucky, into Lexington when her children were small to eat breakfast in a restaurant? Why do you think this was significant to Melvia? To her children?
2. In what way did the lessons she taught toward the way to treat others, show respect, and have proper manners, provide an ongoing balance in her life and in her children's lives?
3. Melvia mentions that she had a number of trials in life, including a marriage that was not always ideal. She describes that she *"survived because I believed that God never leaves. Sometimes we get a ways away from him, but he never leaves us. He is always there, always knows even when we are not doing what we should do, and gives opportunity to get it right."* What helps you survive your trials in life? Look back to a difficult time that you came through in your life, and the elements that helped you to survive.
4. Companion scriptures that you might want to study: Romans 8:18-28, Romans 8:35-39

*Journal:* Write about the attitudes, skills, and reminders that help you get through the tough times in life.

*NOW:* What nugget of wisdom do you take with you from studying this chapter?

## Chapter Six: Women on a Mission

(Viewing time: 16 min 56 sec)

1. Melvia mentions Exodus 4:13 where Moses asks God to send someone else. Have you ever been given a task that you believe was better suited for someone else? What did you learn from such experiences?
2. Read, then reflect on Sojourner Truth's well known "Ain't I a Woman?" speech made in Akron, Ohio, at a women's rights conference. In what new frontiers do you see that God may be calling you to speak out or lead? (from p. 11-12, *Women on a Mission*).

Well children, where there is so much racket, there must be something out of kilter. I think between the negroes of the South and women of the North, all talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what's all this about anyway? That man over there—he says women need to be helped into carriages and lifted over ditches and to have the best every where. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, over puddles, or gets me any best place. Ain't I a woman? Look at me! I have ploughed and I have planted, and I have gathered into the barns. No man could head me! Ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as any man—when I could get it, and bear the lash as well. Ain't I a woman? I have borne children and seen them sold into slavery and when I cried out with a mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me. Ain't I a woman? That little man over there—he says women can't have as much rights as men 'cause Christ wasn't a woman. Where did you Christ come from? Where did he come from? He come from God and a woman, man had nothing to do with him!!! If the first women ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down, all alone, we women together ought to be able to turn it back and get it right side up again.

3. Which women in this chapter do you most identify with? Why do you think this is? (Go to the glossary at the back of the study guide for more information on the women in her book.)

4. Companion scriptures that you might want to study: Exodus 4:14, Jeremiah 1:4-9; Jude 1:3

*Journal:* Write about the gifts you have for serving and what stands in your way sometimes in using these gifts.

*NOW:* What *nugget of wisdom* do you take with you from studying this chapter?

## Chapter Seven: Reflections on Women on a Mission

(Viewing time: 6 min 02 sec)

1. What are some women who have been trail blazers in your life? What qualities in them do you most admire?
2. “Everything wasn’t good for us, won’t always be good for them, so do something about it.” Melvia speaks of a belief that the generations must pass along the whole story, the good and the bad, so that younger generations will know and be able to plan for their own struggles to come. Do you think that it is important to pass along teachings about the struggles, bad times, and things that weren’t so pretty? How can this help with what we do in the present and future?
3. In her book Melvia says,

Women’s faith today in the living God is the same as it was for our sisters in the past, but the journey and the results of that faith may be different. Women are still concerned about their spiritual lives and want help and support on her journey. The past is not a bad witness, but we must never be content with what we have done in the past. We must continue to push and stretch ourselves to greater awareness and understanding. (Melvia Fields, *Women on a Mission*, p. 30.)

Do you agree? What do you think God may be calling Disciples Women, your church, your group, or yourself to do in your journey forward?

4. Companion scriptures that you might want to study: Luke 1: 46-55

*Journal:* Melvia says, “I believe that all women are empowered, we just have to use it.” In what small or not so small ways do you feel empowered? Write about some possibilities where God may call you to serve in the future.

*NOW:* What nugget of wisdom do you take with you from studying this chapter?

## Chapter Eight: Cane Ridge

(Viewing time: 9 min 55 sec)

1. Melvia Fields grew up just a few miles from the site of the great Cane Ridge revival of August 1801. She was often able to experience commemorative worships, including at the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. She spoke of the site’s special significance to her, of it being a place where she could feel God’s Spirit and all came together, of mixed colors and races and backgrounds all worshipping as one. Of what significance do you think this heritage was throughout Melvia’s life?
2. What strikes you as most remarkable about Cane Ridge? If you have been to the Cane Ridge Shrine, what sense did you feel in visiting?  
What special places, in your life, do you go to feel closer to God?
3. Does your family or a group of close friends have reunions or celebrations where you come together and remember who you are and where you come from? How important is this in giving a sense of belonging and direction?
4. Companion scriptures that you might want to study: Acts 2: 1-21

*Journal:* At what times in your life have you felt especially close to the Holy Spirit? Write about the factors that may contribute to this special sense of closeness.

*NOW:* What *nugget of wisdom* do you take with you from studying this chapter?

*LINKS:* Go to [www.caneridge.org](http://www.caneridge.org) to learn more about the rich history of Cane Ridge.

## Chapter Nine: In Other Words

(Viewing time: 5 min 15 sec)

1. Melvia and her daughter wrote the book, *In Other Words...Stories of the African-American Involvement in the Early Years of the Stone-Campbell Movement in Kentucky*. In it they tell of the first two black Christian Churches in the United States, Midway and Little Rock. How did it come about that African American slaves became involved in the Christian Churches?
2. What important purchase did the women of Midway Christian Church make? How did Samuel Buckner come to be preacher of the Little Rock Church?
3. How do we make sure we hear all voices? Those who have been silent or silenced in the past? Who are the silent voices today that you think the church needs to make effort to hear?
4. Companion scriptures that you might want to study: Acts 20:28-29, 1 Corinthians 16:9-27, Galatians 3:26-29

*Journal:* Write about some voices of persons in the past that you wish you could hear today. Who would these people be?

*NOW:* What *nugget of wisdom* do you take with you from studying this chapter?

*LINKS:* Go to [www.discipleswomen.org](http://www.discipleswomen.org) and click on *Just Women Magazine* to discover our resources

## Chapter Ten: At the Kitchen Table

(Viewing time: 3 min 30 sec)

*"We owe much to the fruitful meditation of our sages, but a sane view of life is, after all, elaborated mainly in the kitchen."* -Joseph Conrad

1. Melvia Fields lists a number of important activities that happen in her experience at the kitchen table. What are some that she mentioned? How do these compare to your own experiences?
2. Do you have a special place that you go when you are seeking inspiration? Do you have a special place for meditation, where you can "Be still and know that I am God?" Where is this or where would you like it to be?
3. Describe the symbolism of the kitchen table for the people of God. What does this mean to you as a child of God with a place at the table?
4. Companion scriptures that you might want to study: Psalm 46, Mark 14:12-26

*Journal:* Write about a special time and place where you felt very close to God.

*NOW:* What nugget of wisdom do you take with you from studying this chapter?

## Chapter Eleven: What God Has Called Me to Do

(Viewing time: 7 min 07 sec)

God's various gifts are handed out everywhere; but they all originate in God's Spirit. God's various ministries are carried out everywhere; but they all originate in God's Spirit. God's various expressions of power are in action everywhere; but God himself is behind it all.

***Each person is given something to do that shows who God is:*** Everyone gets in on it, everyone benefits. All kinds of things are handed out by the Spirit, and to all kinds of people! The variety is wonderful. -1 Corinthians 12:4-7, The Message

1. What gifts and talents have been nurtured within you?
2. What do you believe you were placed on earth to do, to help show who God is?
3. How do we cultivate our gifts?
4. Companion scriptures that you might want to study: Psalm 23; 1 Corinthians 12: 4-11

*Journal:* Melvia tells of her experience of lying very ill in the hospital with a lung infection and a high fever that wouldn't go down. She awoke one night aware of a presence in her room which she came to believe was the presence of Christ. The next morning her temperature was normal.

Write about any experiences you have had where you felt the presence of Christ with you in ways that were not easy to explain - or - write about the special calling that you believe you are being called to do something about, at this time.

*NOW:* What nugget of wisdom do you take with you from studying this chapter?

## Chapter Twelve: I Can Do Anything With God's Help

(Viewing time: 8 min 48 sec)

1. Consider the man who saw it his gift to teach others to drive, and who taught Melvia, then let her use his car for her driving test. What was the significance of that gift in Melvia Field's life?
2. What kinds of things have you overcome in your life? What are you working to overcome?

3. What specific people and kinds of people have helped you overcome some of the tough things of life? To what degree do you think that God helps people through a teamwork of God's people working together?

Companion scriptures that you might want to study: Psalm 91:1-6; Philippians 4:12-14

*Journal:* Write about some accomplishments that you find most remarkable in your life. Where was God in all this?

*NOW:* What nugget of wisdom do you take with you from studying this chapter?

*LINKS:* Go to [www.discipleswomen.org](http://www.discipleswomen.org) and click Social Action Opportunities to discover how Disciples women are committed to being a blessing in the world.

## Chapter Thirteen: Quadrennial Historian

(Viewing time: 5 min 15 sec)

Quadrennial is a gathering of Disciples women held every four years over a five-day period. Open to all women in the church and usually with participation of 3,500 to 5,000 women, this event has been described as a “cross between a revival, camp, and a family reunion.”

For more information go to [www.discipleswomen.org](http://www.discipleswomen.org) and click on Quadrennial Assembly under the Program pages section

1. Have you attended Quadrennial before? How many times? What was your experience?  
If you have not attended, have you heard about this? What was your reaction?
2. Often women come back from Quadrennial so filled and enthused by their experience that it is hard for them *not* to talk about it, even if not everyone wants to hear. In what



ways do you think the Quadrennial experience may capture some of that same sense of togetherness in God's spirit that was experienced at Cane Ridge revival?

3. Melvia talks of *learning* being such an important component of Quadrennial, but that much of the learning comes simply through meeting new people and types of people, eating with them, talking, and rooming with them. These times of just being together helped them see each other for themselves, not what they had grown up hearing. Have you had similar experiences when meeting people for the first time? What elements need to be present to help the meetings be helpful and positive?
4. Companion scriptures that you might want to study: Luke 2: 41-51, Hebrews 9:19-25

*Journal:* Tell about a time in your life when you learned something important by being in the presence of someone who had been a stranger to you. What was this lesson and how did it come about?

*NOW:* What *nugget of wisdom* do you take with you from studying this chapter?

*LINKS:* Go to [www.quadrennial.org](http://www.quadrennial.org) and learn about the history of the Quadrennial Assembly

## Chapter Fourteen: Sharing With the Younger Generation

(Viewing time: 6 min 08 sec)

1. Melvia talks about learning from the younger generation, and how one has to “get over” the worry of being seen as someone who is ignorant when asking questions, or they will never ask what they need to know to learn. In what ways does leadership like this encourage people to be lifelong learners?

2. Consider what it takes for a new generation to come into position as the one before them goes out. Should this be accomplished gradually or suddenly?
  - a. What must be happen on the part of the generation that is leaving the leadership positions?
  - b. What must happen on the part of the generation that is coming into leadership?
3. What new skills does leadership in the 21<sup>st</sup> century require? Do you think these skills are the exclusive property of youth?
4. Companion scriptures that you might want to study: John 3:22-30, 1 Timothy 4:11-16.

*Journal:* Write about areas where you are on the threshold of learning: something that you don't know, but would find it very useful to know. How likely do you think you are to learn this?

*NOW:* What nugget of wisdom do you take with you from studying this chapter?

## Chapter Fifteen: The Wisdom of Women

(Viewing time: 7 min 33 sec)

1. In this chapter Melvia speaks of the importance of seeing life as moving, so preparing upcoming generations with the wisdom passed down from previous generations. She sees that wisdom is often best shared through the telling of stories. Telling stories involves both the telling and the hearing.
  - a. How can we encourage people to tell their stories in a way that shares the wisdom they have gained?
  - b. How can we encourage people to listen to the wisdom-filled stories of others? In what types of special times and events can this take place?

2. Melvia talks of the need for empowerment of leaders. She says that often persons will not have that much confidence, so need to be told, "I know you can do this!" Has this ever happened to you? How much did the encouragement mean to you?
3. Do you believe that children and youth also have wisdom? How so?
4. Companion scriptures you might want to study: Proverbs 4:7-13, Matthew 21:14-16

*Journal:* Write about the wisest woman you have known, and what you think could be behind this wisdom.

*NOW:* What *nugget of wisdom* do you take with you from studying this chapter?

*LINKS:* Go to [www.discipleswomen.org](http://www.discipleswomen.org) and click on Woman-to-Woman Worldwide and discover the opportunity to personalize mission in the life of women.

[if time is short, Chapters 15 and 16 can be studied together]

## **Chapter Sixteen: Women Are Here for a Purpose**

(Viewing time: 3 min 48 sec)

### ***The purpose of Disciples Women***

*is to provide opportunities for spiritual growth, enrichment, education and creative ministries to enable women to develop a sense of personal responsibility for the whole mission of the church of Jesus Christ and to provide a channel through which women in the congregation and the regional Women's Ministries in the United States and Canada may be joined in fellowship and find means for effective participation in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).*

1. What do you see as your purpose in life?

2. When we are called to do something we think we cannot do, instead of saying “let someone else do it,” Melvia Field’s advice is to say, “I will try,” and see what happens. Has anyone every put you into a position that you thought you could not do, but once you got started, you learned that you could? How good are you at encouraging others to try new things?
  
3. Based upon this study, can you think of any changes that you, your women’s group, or other group might be making? What are they? Why do you think the changes are important for your future?
  
4. Companion scripture that you might want to study: 1 John 1-3.

*Journal:* What have you learned about yourself through this study? In what ways, if any, will it change what you do in the future?

NOW: What *nugget of wisdom* do you take with you from studying this chapter?

What *nugget of wisdom* do you take with you from participating in this study led by Melvia Fields?

### **Disciples Women’s Prayer:**

Unto you, O God, we give our thanks and lift our hearts in prayer. May your presence be with us and your love surround us as we work together as women [people] of faith. Open our eyes to the needs of the world and fill our hearts with concern for all people. Guide us so that we may truly serve you through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

### **Benediction**

God, be merciful unto us and bless us, and cause your face to shine upon us; that your way may be known upon the earth, your saving health among all nations, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

**The purpose of Disciples Women** is to provide opportunities for spiritual growth, enrichment, education and creative ministries to enable women to develop a sense of personal responsibility for the whole mission of the church of Jesus Christ and to provide a channel through which women in the congregation and the regional Women's Ministries in the United States and Canada may be joined in fellowship and find means for effective participation in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

## Glossary of people and terms:

**Carnella Jamison Barnes**, born in 1911, was educated at Southern Christian Institute and Talladega College. She became National Field Secretary of Negro Missionary Organizations, based out of the United Christian Missionary Society at Indianapolis in 1938. She was ordained to Christian ministry in 1938. For seven years, Miss Jamison traveled all over the United States. In 1945 she became the Director of the Community Christian Center for the Avalon Christian Church in Los Angeles. In 1945 she married Anderson B. Barnes and mothered triplets. She later became the first African American President of the International Christian Women's Fellowship from 1974 to 1978. Under her leadership the 1978 Quadrennial recorded the largest attendance in recent decades of 4,914

**CWF – Christian Women's Fellowship:** CWF is the name given to women in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) participating in monthly fellowship and study groups in congregations. Since 2006, some groups and regional bodies have adopted the name Disciples Women or Women's Ministries

**Sarah Lue Bostick** (1868 – 1948) was a well known Disciples of Christ preacher, educator and leader, known for her compassionate spirit and ability to motivate all people to work together. Sarah Lue moved to Arkansas in 1888 where she attended college, then met and married Minister Mancil Bostick. Sarah Lue was later ordained to ministry by the Christian Church. She and her husband often preached together in black, white, and mixed congregations. Although often a victim of bigotry, Sarah Lue's grace, loving spirit, dedication to Christ, and forbearance allowed her to build bridges where others built walls. Sarah Lue Bostick organized the first African American *Christian*

*Women's Board of Missions (the Negro Christian Missions Board (NCMB)), and was responsible for organizing African Americans across the country for missions. This beloved and respected servant of God always maintained her quiet, gracious spirit and compassion for others. Although in her lifetime she raised tremendous sums of money for others, she was never wealthy herself. In her later years, she lived near poverty on her small pension. After she died, her will designated money painstakingly saved to help the people she loved, with \$100 each going to support Jarvis College and Southern Christian Institute, and \$50 to her home church*

**Rosa Brown Bracey** grew up in Port Gibson, Mississippi, the daughter of a pastor. At twelve, she entered the Southern Christian Institute in Edwards, Mississippi. In 1917, Rosa Brown became the first Field Secretary for Negro Work with the Christian Woman's Board of Missions. After 1920, she worked as staff member for both the newly-formed United Christian Missionary Society (UCMS) and the National Christian Missionary Convention (NCMC). After marriage, Mrs. Bracey, sometimes known as the "Sojourner Truth" of Black Disciples of Christ, worked until retirement in 1938. She continued her efforts as a missionary to the African American disciples until her death, at which time she was President of the NCMC's Christian Women Fellowship. We thank Rosa Brown Bracey for helping to build a foundation and legacy for all the women.

**ICWF - International Christian Women's Fellowship (Now known as IDWM – International Disciples Women's Ministries)** Established in 1949, the purpose of ICWF is "to provide opportunities for spiritual growth, enrichment, education and creative ministries to enable women to develop a sense of personal responsibility for the whole mission of the church of Jesus Christ." The organization is governed by an Executive Committee elected for a four-year term at each Quadrennial Assembly. By virtue of membership in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), all women in the United States and Canada are members of ICWF. The name was changed to IDWM (International Disciples Women's Ministries) in 2006.

**Janice Newborn**, native of Youngstown, Ohio, was educated at Youngstown University and Malone College. Before joining Division of Homeland Ministries (DHM), Newborn taught school, was a physical therapist, and was an administrative assistant for two Missouri

state senators. In Indianapolis, she first worked for the Division of Overseas Ministries. Newborn joined DHM in 1983 as director of program implementation for the Department of Church Women. In 1986, she directed the Quadrennial Assembly. Newborn was the first African American to lead the Department of Church Women from 1988 until the office was abolished in the 1991 Division of Homeland Ministries (DHM) reorganization. Thenceforth, Mrs. Newborn was the senior associate for the Office of Disciples Women within the Center for Leadership and Mission of DHM until her retirement in 1994. Not one to rest in retirement, Newborn received an honorary doctorate from Christian Theological Seminary in 2008.

**Quadrennial Assembly** (quad-REN-ee-all) A gathering of Disciples women held every four years over a five-day period. Open to all women in the church and usually with participation of 3,000 to 5,000 women, this event has been described as a “cross between a revival, camp, and a family reunion.” This is sponsored by Disciples Women’s Ministries. Go to [www.quadrennial.org](http://www.quadrennial.org) for more information.

**Odatta Redd** served as vice president of the International Christian Women’s Fellowship (now IDWM) from 1986 – 1990. Mrs. Redd served in leadership in the local, regional and national level of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) She served on the General Board and General Nominating Committee. Locally, Odatta Redd served in leadership for the Virginia region as well as the Virginia CWF Cabinet.

**Sybel Thomas** served as a leader in general church and international leadership roles. She served as vice president of International Christian Women’s Fellowship from 1978 – 1982. Sybel was also called to serve as President of the World CWF (now known as Global Women Connecting). She served as a member of the first moderator team as Second Vice Moderator for the first General Assembly which met in Seattle in 1969. Sybel Thomas also served as a former president of the National Convocation. Mrs. Thomas was an outstanding leader who had a love for the church and a special place in her heart for the women. She passed away June 2011.

**Sojourner Truth** -was the self-given name, from 1843 onward, of Isabella Baumfree, an African-American abolitionist and women's rights activist. Truth was born into slavery in Swartekill, New York, but escaped with her infant daughter to freedom in 1826. After going to court to recover her son, she became the first black woman to win such a case against a white man. Her best-known extemporaneous speech on racial inequalities, "Ain't I a Woman?", was delivered in 1851 at the Ohio Women's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio.

**Harriet Tubman** was an African-American abolitionist, humanitarian, and Union spy during the American Civil War. After escaping from slavery, into which she was born, she made 13 missions to rescue more than 70 slaves using the network of antislavery activists and safe houses known as the Underground Railroad. In the post-war era she struggled for women's suffrage.

**UK** - Abbreviation for **University of Kentucky**, the large university and medical school in Lexington, Kentucky. This is where Melvia Fields worked and was hospitalized.

**Rosa Page Welch** spent a lifetime witnessing in word and song throughout her life. She was a distinguished graduate of Southern Christian Institute. Upon graduation she taught school in Mississippi, Kentucky and Virginia. A classically trained mezzo-soprano, she had a promising music career. A Disciples staff person arranged for her to lead singing at a Nebraska student conference, which led to numerous invitations from throughout the Disciples of Christ and other denominations. Rosa answered God's call to use her musical gift for the Church. In 1952, Welch went on a "global mission of goodwill" singing to audiences in Africa, East Asia, Europe and South America. This led her to serve during 1961 – 1963 as a Missionary in Nigeria for the Church of the Brethren. Afterwards she worked with Disciples United Promotion Office (Church Finance Council). This educator, civil rights activist, missionary and singer dedicated her life to being an ambassador for Christ.



## CREDITS

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