

## **Friends Women Essay**

By Geraldine Willcuts

The Friends Women organization was started by two women of Vision, Julia Pearson and her sister, Marie Haines. These women found other Women of Vision who shared their concerns for Missions. In the very early days of Missions, many Quaker Women felt the Call to go teach and share the Word of God, and that Vision has not been lost since.

Women of Northwest Yearly Meeting have strengthened that Vision of missions to the world through the years. Some women in the early years, had to insist, bravely insist, carefully insist, that they could teach and share, nurse, and nurture in any country where God called them. Quaker Women left their homes, and sometimes their families to go the country of their calling. In the early days, the "foreign" countries were almost unknown. But, with God's protection and in the joy of serving the people, these willing women continued to serve. In Northwest Yearly Meeting, there have been over 29 women who have gone alone or with their husbands to Bolivia and Peru, the Fields of Missions which WE have considered "OUR Own." This meant serving in the high altitude which often took its toll on the health of the families. These families, helped and supported and gifted year after year, by the Friends Women, the helping, serving, supporting, praying group of the Yearly Meeting. YES, a Support Group like no other. Praying, giving, helping, advising with letters, cards, dollar bills stuck in those cards and letters. Hands on support. Banquets where cheerful smiling women gave their friendships to the women who had served in Bolivia and Peru. The Welcomes the Missionaries received with gifts of love. The encouragement given was with words of love. The constancy was always with love. The hugs and love was expressed in money, furnishings, homes, visits, listening and friendships. Thank you. God will reward you all richly.

And, because of the constant prayers of faithful Friends Women organizations, much of the work in Bolivia and Peru has been accomplished. The generous contributions have supported the pastors, the building of churches, digging wells for clean water, helping the people with clothes, furnishing homes. Each NYM family has benefited in education for their children or themselves. And, Friends Women has helped in salaries for Bolivian Pastors, as well as the Missionaries themselves. We walked on the streets of LaPaz to the shores of Lake Titicaca to The Yungas, to Guaqui and the Farm, all with your help. We shared the gospel with schools and groups because the Friends Women gave generously.

You see how the LOVE-STONES FOR FOUNDATIONS is basic and necessary for all mission work which has increased worldwide and has been constant from the FW Groups of the NWYM. For the work in Bolivia and Peru, outreach to other fields. YOU SEE, we could not have done all that work without the supporting, praying group of Friends Women.

God will reward you all. Jewels in your crowns.

Thank you, dear Friends, from our hearts.

Geraldine Willcuts (1947-1958)