

Introducing Our Children to Our Sister, Sarah



Everyone Called Her Sister Sarah

by Ruth J. Bert

Illustrations by Kristine Westbeld

Scheduled for release at General Conference

A Call to Help Sarah (and Other Sisters)

Though the vote of the Commission on Congregational Life Materials and then the Board for Media Ministries was to move this project forward for a delivery at General Conference, it is in a way its own leap of faith to have done so. The project had been halted due to the budget cuts of last year, but was far enough along and deemed important enough to move forward on, even though there are no monies allocated to pay for it.

The first of the children's books to focus on one of the many sisters who serve our church, it will obviously be supported by its purchase when released. But, a call also goes out to see if there are those among you who would willingly join in this step of faith to see the work furthered to relay Sarah's story, as well as two other sisters' stories that are now on hold. Books on Fannie Scott, who helped with translation and other service in the early days of the Navajo Mission, and Beth Frey, who played a fundamental part in the start of Paxton Ministries, had been planned, but are now on hold due to budget cutbacks. *Could you help to see them put in front of our children? If so contact the BMM Executive Director Roger Williams at (574) 773-3164. (E-mail: clbacctg@juno.com)*

Sarah Bert's story is a demonstration of how even the smallest among us can answer the biggest calls of God through determined faith and prayer. And now, with the release of this new children's book at General Conference, her story is made available to some of our church's smallest sisters and brothers.

Though most accounts of Sarah Bert note her as a frail young woman, those same accounts also note she stands tall among the pillars in the early outreach of the BIC Missions program through her work at the Chicago Mission—for over 50 years!

From the windswept plains of Kansas and farmlands of Pennsylvania she had come to know and love for the first 34 years of her life, this fragile young farm girl, whom doctors had even fretted over during several childhood illnesses, soon found herself answering the call of God to go and help with the plentiful harvest to be had among the countless needy to be served in "The Windy City."

Even during her first several years of service, while racked with her own doubts and stresses over what she had to offer the work, Sister Sarah (as everyone called her) determined to follow the call she had no doubt God had sent her—to work and show God's love. Within a few years, the church administrators demonstrated their own faith in her call by placing her in charge of the mission, and even the officials in the city she went to serve came to respect her efforts of caring and outreach as the work of a saint.

When portraying the foundational work of nine brothers and sisters of the BIC church family in his book *Nine Portraits*, Dr. E. Morris Sider had even led off with a chapter on Sarah Bert. Now, though a written account for the children of our church, Ruth Bert, a former school teacher, takes great joy in telling the tale of her great aunt. Kristine Westbeld, a pastor in our church who has helped us visualize so many of our stories through her work with other children's books and the Jubilee curriculum, reported an extra joy at having been part of this project. ☺