



---

## A Story to Tell and A Friend to Remember

### *Louise Mueller 1920-2008*

by Janice Kerper Brauer

---



“If the LWML doesn’t publish the stories of missionary women, who will?” Louise asked. “Unless we tell the story of their courage and commitment, what they did will be forgotten.”

Louise Mueller had a passion and a dream. Her passion was that the contributions made by Lutheran women to further God’s kingdom would be remembered. Her dream was that the LWML would play a part in making sure that happened.

Gloria Edwards remembers: “My strongest memory of Louise was her insistence that LWML publish the stories of missionary women. This was her dream. Louise was also very supportive during my presidency. It meant a great deal to me to have someone of her long-term commitment to the organization and her obvious love of it show such kindness to me.”

With Louise as the driving force, the LWML published three books highlighting the lives of LCMS missionary women: *A Rainbow of Saris* (1996), *One Cup of Water* (1997) and *Dreams Dawn in Africa* (1999). Louise wrote many of the missionary accounts herself, while also conducting research, scouring maps and diaries, and encouraging other authors. All told, the books provide a permanent history of more than 30 women missionaries in India, China and Nigeria.

Louise told other stories as well. As editor-in-chief of the *Lutheran Woman’s Quarterly* from 1981-1987, she opened a forum for women to share their stories of faith—the joys and challenges of following Jesus in daily life. During the 1980s, Louise also served on LCMS President Ralph Bohlmann’s Commission on Women. One of the results of the commission’s work was a Bible study called, *The Therefore Woman*. The study addressed contemporary issues facing women and defined a “therefore” woman as one who has experienced the love of God, been redeemed by the blood of Jesus, filled with the Holy Spirit, and **therefore**, lives for Him. That describes Louise exactly. She was secure in her identity as a redeemed child of God and loved to tell the story of God at work through His people and in the world.

Alberta Barnes served with Louise on the Commission on Women. “Louise had a keen mind,” says Alberta. “She was an asset to any decision-making body. She had strong opinions, and she stood firm.” Louise’s service as editor-in-chief of the *Quarterly* coincided with Alberta’s term as league president. “Besides being a talented writer, Louise could always come up with unique ideas,” Alberta continues. “Louise coordinated the printing of 1 million copies of a particular issue of the *Quarterly*, so our official publication could reach every LCMS woman’s home.” Alberta remembers that when her term as president was up, Louise crafted a memento recalling the high points of her four-year term in words and pictures.

Louise’s vivid memory was a fount of information on the LWML. Marlys Taege Moberg, who has often written of the LWML’s history, remembers: “When I was doing research for *Women in God’s Service*, I stayed with Louise and her husband, Howard, in their home. Louise was always a gracious and caring hostess. She and Howard were so helpful and encouraging to me.”

Marie Biesenthal also remembers Louise’s gift of hospitality. “Louise demonstrated love in myriad ways. She entertained many, many people. I can’t count the number of times we were at her home for a meal. And I always remember that she would not attend an LWML event out of town without preparing meals for Howard for each day she would be away.”

Louise was an encourager who knew the power of God’s Word to strengthen women. With that in mind, she collected and edited a small devotional booklet, *Golden Nuggets from God’s Word*, with meditations based on the fruit of the Spirit and godly virtues such as mercy and hope. The booklet was published in 1991 to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the LWML. Louise also wrote numerous Bible studies for the *Quarterly*. In the most recent, “Total Trust” (Fall 2002), Louise shared many Scripture verses that encourage us to place our total trust in the Lord Jesus.

Many LWML sisters in Christ remember Louise warmly. Following is just a sample of some of those memories.

“I can think of two words to describe Louise Mueller: little, and mighty! She loved her Lord. She loved the LWML and gave it her all for many years.” —Virginia Von Seggern

“Louise was a dear friend and coworker during my years on the Board of Directors. When Louise retired as office manager, it was my daunting task to hire her replacement. She was Mrs. LWML; ask her any question and she knew the answer!” —Doris Durkee Heidorn

”Louise was a special friend, because we were the two appointed, advisory members of the 1983-87 Executive Committee. One of the fun times we had was writing a skit to introduce the LWML personnel at the 1987 convention in Forth Worth. It centered around a young woman who had come to Fort Worth from Louise’s hometown of Muleshoe, Texas to audition for the Dallas Cowboy cheerleaders, but got lost and ended up at the LWML convention instead!” —Ida Mall

“Louise was a mentor to me when I served as Nebraska North president. Her faith was solid as a rock. She was talented, humble, and unassuming, yet had a dry sense of humor that would surface at just the right time.” —Janyce Warneke

“I’ve always considered Louise one of my mentors. I appreciated her intelligence and spirituality. She was an encourager and a gifted writer.” —Pat Beach Schutte

Standing less than 5 feet tall, Louise was nevertheless a giant in service to her Lord and the LWML. Her legacy is twofold: the lives she touched as she served the Lord with gladness and the stories she told about the spread of the Gospel. Let’s let Louise have the final word through a poem she wrote in October, 1999:

*I sing a song that’s right for me;  
I cannot sing for you.  
Joys and blessings? Love anew? Times of testing? Comfort, too?  
Only you can tell your story.*

What will your anthem be?

---

If you would like to help continue the telling of the Gospel story, consider a gift to the LWML Endowment Fund in memory of Louise Mueller. You may make an online donation by following these steps:

1. go to [www.lwml.org](http://www.lwml.org)
2. on the left bar, click on Giving and chose Donate Online
3. on the Give Online Today page, choose Click Here to Donate Securely Online Today
4. on the Donation Information page, under Donation Type, select LWML Endowment; under Notes type “In Memory of Louise Mueller”.