

The Faces of Kyrgyzstan

A Special Report by Carolyn Blum

His face is one that will stay with us forever — the face of a person longing for Hope in the poverty-stricken, 80%-Muslim-dominated Central Asian nation of Kyrgyzstan.

“Why are you here?” queried that man on the street.

Taken aback by his question, I dashed off a quick prayer that the Holy Spirit would give me the right words to provide a witness.

As part of a team of four LWML women sent by **MOST Ministries** to assist LCMS missionaries **Bob and Sue Pfeil**, I had the privilege to help conduct retreats for the women of the Church, encouraging them to reach out with confidence to their neighbors and friends with Jesus’ love. Since many women are poor and unable to travel, our team took the retreats out into the villages.

Sandy Hardies, team leader from **Michigan**, had the opportunity not only to lead a Bible study at the retreats about the sick woman whom Jesus healed but also at the Sunday morning Bible class at **Konkordia Lutheran Church** in **Bishkek** and with the staff at an orphanage. **Carol Stuhr**, also from Michigan, dressed like Priscilla for her study that encouraged mentoring. In addition to conducting a study on the Samaritan woman, **Jean Jaskierny**, **Iowa District West**, led the women in designing a Christian banner that would brighten their homes and provide a witness for their guests. For my part, I shared a study on Mary and Martha and led the women in song. What an awesome thrill to listen to women singing praises to God in three languages at once!

The faces of the women in each church were of precious sisters in Christ. We were there to teach, but we also learned from them. Sandy stated, “Lilia, one of our translators, witnessed with ease and confidence to all we met on our journeys around the country. She was a fearless, yet content, child of God in a country which is not open to sharing the Gospel. We learned so much from her.”



[Left] Group singing at Ak Suu

[Top] Group singing at Kara Balta

[Lower left] Carol as Priscilla with translator Irina

[Lower right] Sandy and translator Lilia



Jean shared that she gained courage in Kyrgyzstan to tell others about Jesus here in the U.S. “Being so far from home advanced my trust in the Holy Spirit to guide me and to know that prayer is a constant help.”

“I went to Kyrgyzstan to share God’s love. But I received so much more in return: the joy of giving and the hospitality on the faces of the people,” summarized Carol.

Faces of the “Grannies,” some of whom had had their pensions stolen by their relatives and have been tossed out on the streets, will haunt us forever; nevertheless, the faces of the kindly Christians who have established nursing homes for them provide hope. Smiles have been placed on the faces of neglected and abandoned children through similar help in orphanages.

Serving in Kyrgyzstan reinforced to me how much of the world is in need of hearing about Jesus. It was a privilege to have this opportunity to make a small contribution toward this effort.