Women of Africa Care Pty Ltd

WOAC On Air
Episode 69

WOAC Inspiration is brought to your by our Air Crew Erika, Murdel Shinaaz and Angelina
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Topic: Women you have Purpose

The Life of Maria Woodworth-Etter (A woman who lived life on purpose)

Ephesians 2.10 "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before time ordained that we would walk in them." So many people lose their vision because of challenges.

Maria born in 1844 in Ohio, America. She was 1 of eight children born of Samuel and Mathilda Underwood. Maria was 5 years old when her parents were saved. Her dad died in 1850 from sun stroke because of farming activities, she was 6 years at the time. Maria's family lived in poor conditions and the big family needs led her and her sisters to leave home to work, she desired to go to school and be educated but it was not possible. She loved God, couldn't go to church due to work responsibilities, and resorted to reciting bible verses on in the kitchern from age 8. Maria got baptised in 1857 at the age of 13, and accepted the Lord as her personal saviour at church. When she got baptised in water she said "I asked the Lord to save me fully, trusting myself in His hands, and while going into the water, a light came over me, and I was converted. The people saw the change and said I had fainted." [Maria-Woodworth -Etter quoted in the Pale Horse and His Rider: are you ready for the other world? Page 19-21]. From age 13 she felt the call of God to evangelise but she kept on resisting the call because women were not permitted to preach. There were cultural and religious barriers that did not allow woman to partake in front line ministry, they had the opportunity in the mission field as they serve in supporting role.

Delayed "resistance to the call"
a) "…You can't do a ministry like this, if you're afraid to take risk and if you're afraid of what people might think about you." Maria makes this statement in her later life, and it stems from her own personal failures, of opposing the call of God earlier in her life. [Antje, J. *Revivalist Review: Maria Woodworth-Etter*].
b) She had "Opposing recurrences." For 22 years Maria wrestled with the call to work in the ministry through human rationalisation namely:

I. She had fears related to gender constraints placed on Christian women in the ministerial activities. Religious culture in those times only allowed woman to provide hospitality support in missionary activities such as sewing, providing quilts and food etc. and women could only preach in the mission fields for her this meant she must travel to Africa or Asia;

II. Discouragement by society led Maria to settle for agrarian lifestyle, married to a war veteran who was incapacitated from war activities and had regular battlefields in his mind;
III. Maira had 6 six, of which five passed away progressively one after the other in early childhood. During this tragic time of her life she continued to get visions from God to step out in the work of the ministry, and rejected the call due to logical reasoning (she is a woman and woman don't have rights to minister unless in mission field);
IV. An answered prayer – Mr Woodworth gets saved and starts speaking in tongues, and Maria thought wow, this means she can now get active in the mission field because hubby has found a new found life in Christ. Great disappointment her elation, her husband was discouraged by the challenges of life, and fluctuated with few mountain top experiences and remained for most of his life in the low valley experiences due to the battlefield in the mind, which hindered all desire for the mission field.
V. When Maria finally had the personal courage to step into ministry, her husband and her only surviving daughter Lizzie who was 16 years old at the time dissuaded her from ministry - it led to her seeing her self a "gazing-stock for the people" [Maria Woodworth. Life and experience of Maria Woodworth, 1885, Page 31]
I. She received prophesies from several ministers of God at different times about responding to the call of God. Her responses were "If I were a man I would love to work for Jesus." One minister's response to her was that the job was a role no man could fulfil and that she was called to the West to save souls; [Maria Woodworth-Etter. Life and experience of Maria Woodworth, 1885, chapter 4, page 32.] and
II. When her fifth child Willie passed away through sickness, satan used this incident as an excuse to persuade her not to move forward in the work of the ministry. This bereavement almost took her life, but the Lord was more real and near to here in this time than ever before.

Almost at point of death herself, she surrendered herself to Jesus and said to him that if He restored her to health she will undertake to accomplish the ministry that He has called her into, but she asked if He would equip her for the role. God gave her a vision of a plank standing between heaven and hell, and she was placed on that plank helping people to move heave ward rather than hell ward. Maria said that the vision left such a burden in her heart and the vision stayed with her, which catapulted her living on purpose. For the first time since her growing up misfortunes, she was hopeful and found a new found peace of being a woman in the place of ministry, and was glad to have found biblical accounts of women who were in ministry such as Deborah, Miriam, Hannah, Huldah, Phoebe, Tryphena, Mary. And in the Prophet Joel she learnt "Your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and *hand maids* in those days will I out my spirit." [Joel 2.28-29]. Maria accepted that under the new dispensation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Apostles themselves acknowledged that women were to participate in this work of the ministry with the men as the Holy Spirit was no respecter of persons.

a) WOAC will uncover inspiration from Maria's life.
b) WOAC highlights challenges in her life that our listeners can draw from her life – to indicate that even the most successful legacy makers lived through challenges to get to where they at, and that no problem can take away a God given call..the call will persist till you go to the grave as in you will never be happy till you find your place of purpose in God's will.
c) The 5 key character traits that made Maria a trail blazer without allowing the oppression and challenges that she faced to weigh her down and give up on the call. She kept on the

ministry till age 80 when she went to be with the Lord. She was an itinerant evangelist, and at age 74 called her to open her own church, at 74 years of age.

d) WOAC discussed the Holy Spirit being the forefront of Maria's life since she stepped into her calling – allowing her to break all barriers and face her future with resilience, power, energy and momentum.

Maria's life brought relevance to thousands of people in America and redirected many people on route to hell, towards heaven bound. How about you Gospel 4 Grampian Listeners. God has got great plans for every human being.
Jeremiah 29.11 "For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you, to give you a hope ad a future."