



**WORLD MISSION PRAYER LEAGUE**  
TOGETHER IN CHRIST, PRAYER & GLOBAL MISSION

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## Leaguelight: Margaret Lindell

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*Margaret Lindell, celebrating her 90th birthday this month, is one of the earliest members of the World Mission Prayer League. Her husband, Paul (1915-1974), became one of our first Directors, while Margaret served for many years as Hostess of our Mission Home. Paul travelled extensively, overseeing our ministries and modeling our vision for “commissioned living.” Margaret currently resides in Minneapolis, where she continues to pray and serve... and faithfully remind us what it means to trust the Lord by living a “commissioned life.”*

### **How did you and Paul become involved with the Prayer League?**

Paul and I grew up in China, went to high school together, and were engaged in college. He went on to seminary, but he felt called to become a missionary in an unevangelized area. Well, the church board was not prepared for the idea. So instead of finishing seminary, he worked as an assistant to Pastor Clarence Granlund here in Minneapolis. Pastor Granlund had been teaching on missions at the old Lutheran Bible Institute, and out of that had developed the World Mission Prayer League - students from LBI and others that had organized prayer groups.

In 1937, John Carlsen and Ernest Weinhardt felt called to go, and not just to be praying. So they set out for Bolivia, trusting God to supply their needs. They were our first missionaries.

The Prayer League had the use of a large building which we called the Prayer House. It was a center for people who were preparing for the mission field. We all lived there together, so it was suggested that Paul and I get married so we could be in charge. So one week later we were married. Paul did a lot of speaking and led the prayer meetings.

When John Carlsen came back from Bolivia, he wasn't happy with what Paul had been doing. He said Paul and I should either go overseas or leave the mission, I guess. But Paul didn't feel that was the way the Lord was leading, because all these young people were coming to the mission for these Saturday evening meetings. Students would come from LBI and Augsburg, and nurses from the hospital would come, and we had mission meetings. There was singing, speaking about different mission fields, and testimonies of kids who'd really given their lives to the Lord. Paul was a gifted speaker, and he talked about a life of victory over sin and complete surrender to the Lord.

But we were young, and John Carlsen was middle-aged and conservative in his ways. So we decided to separate from the Prayer League. We still lived at the headquarters, still took care of the building, still held meetings, and still took care of the Prayer League bookkeeping for a couple more years. Missionaries came and went. And we were doing what Carlsen believed in - living and acting by faith. The money that came in for the Prayer

League all went overseas. We kept only the money that was designated for the Prayer House or for individuals. We began to pray for Central Asia as well as South America, and people committed their lives to whatever the Lord had for them that would fit into his plan for missions.

In 1943, we moved into a large house on Logan Avenue and called ourselves the Lutheran World Crusade (LWC). After some time it became clear that it was mostly a personality thing that divided us and that we should work together. So it was decided that the LWC would merge with the Prayer League. [In 1947, Carlsen became a synod evangelist and Paul took over as the director of the merged organization.]

Our neighbors on Logan Avenue were not keen about our rag-tag bunch coming and going in their neighborhood, so in 1946 we moved to the current mission home on Clifton Avenue. And when rent for our downtown office went up, we moved the office to the mission home, too. Paul and I lived there from 1946 till 1957. Then the mission bought a house for \$10,000 in south Minneapolis and we moved out there. We had four children by then, and it was kind of nice to think of having our own house. We lived out there for 15 years.



*Margaret served as Mission Home Hostess in Minneapolis for many years. Many who have helped in the kitchen over the years have been encouraged by Margaret's stories about trusting the Lord and his faithfulness.*

When staff and missionaries lived in the coach house and mission home, we would get together on Tuesday nights and there'd be a roomful of us praying. But when we lived in south Minneapolis, I would take the bus down there on Tuesday nights, and if the weather was bad I'd stay overnight at the mission home.

From the beginning we talked about committing our lives to the Lord and "commissioned living." To us, that meant that each Christian has a "commission" from the Lord - a place, and a purpose, that fits into God's world purposes. Each person can discover how his occupation or calling fits into the Lord's world plan.

When I first came from China, and Paul too, we didn't think of spending our lives anywhere but China. But then when we learned a little about commissioned living, I learned that our commission in God's world purpose could be here, too. I could accept that.

**But WMPL does prioritize the unevangelized peoples of the world. Do you think every person is called to some kind of cross-cultural outreach?**

No. What we understood by "commissioned living" was that every person has a place in God's worldwide plan. Now, that may be just for a mother in her home to teach her children the way of the Lord, so they will follow him. It's not likely that she will have any opportunity to reach out cross-culturally. Some do. But if she sees what she's doing as part of God's world purpose, it gives meaning to what she's doing. And she can give her children a vision for the world. She can contribute, like Paul's grandmother used to do. She didn't have any cash, but she had eggs and flour and sugar. She baked angel food cakes and sold them, and gave money to missions. I knew another lady whose husband was kind of a grouch,

but she loved the missionaries, and she wanted to do what she could for them. So she would save up whatever money she could... and she bought flannel and sewed pajamas for missionary families going overseas. That was her commission, and she delighted in it. That's how we thought of commissioned living. Then there were those who, like Paul's brother Jonathan, had a call from the time he was in college to go to Nepal, and he stuck with that year after year... until finally, Nepal opened. That was his commission.

**The early Prayer League trusted the Lord in some risky ways. You bought tickets to travel even before you knew if you could go. You claimed specific callings from God, and carried through with them, however far-fetched they sounded at the time. And you trusted God for your basic needs. How did you learn to trust the Lord like that?**

Well, I think that Paul and I learned a lot from our parents, who were willing to leave home and go to China without knowing much about what was coming up. They had lived in situations where they had very little. My dad grew up in Norway where they lived on fish and potatoes, and they worked themselves to the bone just to make a living. When they went to China they didn't expect a lot, but they knew that God was calling them. So I think that both Paul and I grew up with that sense that God would take care of us, no matter what happened. Also, we grew up learning about Hudson Taylor and other missionaries who lived even more by faith than we did.

The prayer group used to read missionary biographies together. I tell you, when you start reading stories of early missionaries and how they followed the Lord into the most impossible circumstances, it's a challenge. And it's a statement of what God will do if you trust him. Think of it... We give up on our own salvation. We say, "God, I can't do anything to save myself." And he'll save us. And we have to come to that place, sometimes, in other circumstances too. We can't do anything about it. Only God can provide what's needed.

**What is the secret to a good prayer life?**

Prayer and just having fellowship with God is a joyful thing. But we need to be consistent and pray in faith for what we feel God is showing us, and then keep praying until it happens.

**What advice would you give to a younger generation about prayer or world missions or anything?**

Give your life to the Lord without any reservations. And *then* he can show you what he wants you to do.

**That's difficult.**

Well, I think when Jesus said, "Take up your cross," that's what he meant. Usually we think of "cross" as some kind of difficulty or disability - something that happens to us and we have no control over it. But that isn't what Jesus meant. He meant take up the will of God. That is something we take up by our own choice. After that, he said "...for my sake and the gospel." That is very important, because the purpose of taking up our cross is to *get the word out*. §

### **What is Commissioned Living?**

by Margaret Lindell

A commissioned life is a life...

#### **SURRENDERED**

...without reservation;

#### **JOINED**

...with others in fulfilling the Great Commission;

#### **FOCUSED**

...on God's world purpose;

#### **ENABLED**

...materially and spiritually;

#### **ASSIGNED**

...by God to a particular responsibility.