

LINDA PULLEY FREEMAN

INSPIRED FOR GREATER THINGS





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After completing the manuscript for *Inspired for Greater Things* in October 2013, Linda traveled to Cambodia to participate in a mission trip to assist Teen Challenge Cambodia (TCC).

TCC Men's Center provides youth and adult men overcome addictions to life controlling problems such as drugs and alcohol. TCC's Women Center serves women who have been rescued from sex trafficking and their children.

While at TCC, Linda was inspired to assist the center with one of their program sustainability ideas: installation of a biogas digester. Installing a biogas digester at the TCC Men's Center would allow them to transform manure from their livestock, kitchen food waste, as well as human waste into the methane gas for cooking and lighting. The biogas digester would remove their reliance on firewood for cooking, reduce the release of untreated waste into environment, and produce high energy, fertilizer that free from disease carrying bacteria and parasites.

Linda is organizing two mission teams to install the biogas digester at TCC. During the September 2014 Mission trip the team, along with the young men at Teen Challenge Cambodia Men's Center, will construct a the biogas digester and load the initial "feeding" of the unit with cow manure, pig manure, and kitchen waste. By November 2014, the bacteria in the digester will be fermenting and producing methane gas at a steady rate. A second mission team from Trinity will return to Cambodia to complete installation of the kitchen equipment and connect a gas line from the digester to the kitchen.

Linda is donating the 100% of the proceeds from *Inspired for Greater Things* to this mission trip.

*Inspired
for
Greater Things*

BY

Linda Pulley Freeman



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by Linda Pulley Freeman

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Introduction

*“Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father”
(John 14:12, NIV).*

Fifteen years ago I decided to take a leap of faith from my full-time job as an environmental engineer to full-time pastoral ministry. I didn’t leap alone. My husband and two children jumped with me. We landed in Miami, Florida, at Trinity Church in August 1999 where I became the benevolence pastor. Since that time the benevolence ministry evolved into the Peacemaker Family Center (PFC). PFC has provided social service assistance to thousands of individuals and families and has managed twenty-four million dollars in federal, state and locally funded social service programs. Not only have many lives been positively impacted, I have been changed. The people whom I have had the privilege to work with and the programs I have been involved with taught me lessons I could not have learned in a classroom. The purpose of this book is to share my lessons learned.

Our world is filled with communities of people who are suffering desperately from a variety of social problems. Could you visualize yourself as someone doing God-inspired greater things to bring help, hope and transformative solutions to your

community? Maybe you have your doubts, but Jesus said that whoever believed in Him would do even greater things than He had done. Consider Jesus' disciples. They were ordinary men, but God filled them with power to do extraordinary things throughout the world. Jesus said these words to them:

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling the people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

This supernatural infusion of power from the Holy Spirit inspired them to accomplish what they could never have accomplished in their natural strength and abilities. God has created us to do greater things as well. He wants to infuse each one of us with this same power so we can do the work He designed us to do. What we do and how we do it will be unique to us, but what is common for all of us is that God only asks us to be who He designed us to be. And this is the most important lesson I have learned: *Ministry is more about being than about methods of doing.* The ideas contained in each chapter represent key learning that has shaped who I am and how I approach social service ministries today.

I hope these lessons inspire you as you move forward by faith to do the greater things Jesus has designed for you to do.

Be blessed,
Linda

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*It is not thou that shapest God.
It is God that shapest thee.
If thou art the work of God,
Await the hand of the artist
Who does all things in due season.
Offer Him thy heart,
Soft and tractable,
And keep the form in which the Artist
Has fashioned thee.
Let thy clay be moist
Lest thou grow hard
And lose the imprint of His fingers.
—Saint Irenaeus*



Be Yourself

Read: Judges 6:11-24

“Then the Lord turned to him and said, ‘Go with the strength you have, and rescue Israel from the Midianites. I am sending you!’” (Judges 6:14).

The toughest lesson I had to learn was to be myself. For years and years I struggled with accepting myself. I focused more on what I wasn't than on what I was. In many ways I could identify with Gideon. God had given Gideon a clear, compelling mission—rescue Israel from the Midianites—but Gideon didn't think he was the right person for the job. He had reasons in his mind that were holding him back, reasons based on what he believed about himself in relationship to the circumstances of his life. Even though God Himself was speaking to him, Gideon could not see beyond the personal paradigms that boxed him in. Staying hidden in the winepress seemed like the best option.

Has God given you a clear, compelling mission? If the answer is yes, you must take action. If you aren't taking action, what personal paradigms are holding you back? Gideon was holding back because he was filled with:

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- low self-esteem
- fear of failure
- fear of people

Gideon believed he was the least likely person to be able to succeed at the mission. He did not understand that God had designed him specifically to lead the attack on the Midianites. Ephesians 2:10 says this:

“For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago” (Ephesians 2:10).

Like Gideon, our unique characteristics such as personality, physical characteristics, family history, education and environment make us the perfect person to complete the tasks God has planned for us. Whatever the mission is, God designed us with that mission in mind.

“For You did form my inward parts; You did knit me together in my mother’s womb. My frame was not hidden from You when I was being formed in secret [and] intricately and curiously wrought [as if embroidered with various colors] in the depths of the earth [a region of darkness and mystery]” (Psalm 139:13, 15, AMP).

One example from nature that helped me understand the importance of being myself is the amaryllis. The amaryllis is a flowering bulb that produces dramatic, bold flowers and beautiful leaves. For more than fifteen years I have been ordering amaryllis

bulbs in the fall from White Flower Farm. The bulbs arrive in late November. Shortly after the first watering the leaves begin to emerge from the bulb. Within a few weeks the flowers begin to appear. Not only are the amaryllis flowers beautiful, they are easy to grow because everything they need to flourish, except water, is in the bulb. Everything they become is an expression of what is in the bulb. They live fully expressing themselves from the inside out.

I decided I wanted to live like an amaryllis, fully expressing who God created me to be: me.

Do you struggle with being yourself? How is this struggle holding you back?

Reflections

“Every man has a vocation to be someone: but he must understand clearly that in order to fulfill this vocation he can only be one person: himself.” ~ Thomas Merton

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About the Author

Rev. Linda Pulley Freeman is an associate pastor at Trinity Church in Miami, Florida, and the executive director of its Peacemaker Family Center. With more than twenty-seven years of program management experience, as both an environmental engineer and a social service director, she leads this one-of-a-kind, faith-based community outreach ministry with excellence and energy. An ordained minister, a member of Leadership Florida and a Fellow at the Georgetown University Center for Juvenile Justice Reform, Linda obtained a master of science in environmental engineering from Stanford University and a bachelor of science in chemical engineering from the University of Michigan. Linda has been married to her husband, David, for twenty-eight years. They have five children in their lives: Zachary and his wife, Daniella; Vanessa; Nina, their niece; and their grandson, Noah.



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