

Annie Armstrong Monologue

By Sheryl Churchill

To make your monologue seem more realistic you will need a costume and a few props.

Costume: Wear a long skirt—black, gray, or brown. Add a long sleeve white tailored blouse, a dark scarf, and a cameo pin. Or you may choose a blouse with a high neck and ruffles.

Props: Hold a copy of the book [Annie Armstrong: Dreamer in Action](#) and a pen staff. If desired, sit at an antique desk on which is an unlabeled bottle of ink, a quill pen, and blank stationery. Place the desk facing the audience so the pen and paper are visible.

Stage position: Stand next to the desk as the monologue is delivered.

MONOLOGUE

Good evening. I came here at the request of a friend to give you a personal insight into my life.

Someone handed me this book today. (*Hold up the book [Annie Armstrong: Dreamer in Action](#).)* She said I should read it. When I saw the title I was very surprised. It is about a woman who put her dreams to work. (*Reflective*) *Annie Armstrong: Dreamer in Action*. I suppose I was a dreamer in action. I saw the possibilities for helping people and before I knew it I was right in the middle of making something happen.

As you know, I served many years as corresponding secretary of Woman's Missionary Union, Auxiliary to the Southern Baptist Convention. It was that position that gave me opportunities to lead the women of the Southern Baptist Convention. Their response through the years was wonderful.

However, long before that I was involved in missions work in my church.

It took me a long time to decide about being a Christian. I could become a Methodist, a Presbyterian, or perhaps an Episcopalian, but never a Baptist! I laugh at that now. I could not have been anything else.

There were many things that influenced my early interest in missions. I saw my mother care for others. I watched my Sunday School children grow spiritually. I always felt that spiritual disciplines were an important part of growing up. It was important in my life.

Prayer and Bible study sustained me in the times of joy and difficulty, whether over WMU work or personal matters. I hung on to the reminder I found in 1 Corinthians 15:58: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

In 1893, the Home Mission Board appointed Marie Buhlmaier to work with German immigrants in the port of Baltimore. It was a dream of mine and a request I had made of the Home Mission Board. Now it was reality. This work was "Our opportunity. God has two distinct methods of propagating His gospel. First, by sending Christian people to heathen people. Second, by sending foreigners to Christian people."

The work with the black women was an exciting venture. The Baltimore women started mothers' meetings for the women and an industrial school for the girls. Through later contacts, I met and worked with Nannie Helen Burroughs, a woman of great potential.

We had no wide distribution of literature. To some the literature work we began appeared like drudgery, but it wasn't when you saw the potential for how the content could affect a woman's life. I believe that "knowledge is power, interest, inspiration."

We published a prayer card, two leaflets, two editions of quarterly programs. The prayer card presented a missions field each month with statistics and a Scripture passage. It grew to a yearly series. This was the only source of missions information besides state papers and mission board journals.

In the missions organizations there were Sunbeam Bands and Woman's Missionary Societies. I became increasingly concerned about the age group between those two groups. Eventually we were able to reach youth and young women.

We were pioneering, and we loved it. The newfound missions interest of women was growing.

I had at my disposal pen and ink (*pick up pen*) with which I could write thousands of letters of encouragement and requests. And write I did! I had a mind with which to think—and I did! My appeals went out all across our land—through the written word and the hundreds of visits I made to societies. (*Put pen down.*)

Oh, my dear women of the twenty-first century, you have so much at your disposal—such resources, such leadership, such large numbers. Yet, it is easy to get lost. Remember, you are God's and you have a contribution to make. "There is obligation upon womanhood to do her work as effectively as possible. . . ."

Yes, I dreamed. I saw what others could not see. I acted. I pressed forward. I continued constantly to challenge women to press forward, to stretch their abilities, to do more than they ever dreamed was possible for themselves and missions.

There were other missions influences. My older sister Alice, for, example, was one of seven women selected to serve on the home and foreign missions committee in our church—Eutaw Place Baptist Church in Baltimore, Maryland.

Maybe it was because I saw a potential for women leaders in this kind of role that I began thinking of my own involvement. Appointment to the committees on the poor, young converts, and the missions committee was a starting point.

In April 1872, our church held a service of prayer and dedication for eight missionaries who were on their way to China. What happened at that service tugged at my heart. I think if I had been called to foreign missions God could have used that service to show me.

Our church was known throughout the Southern Baptist Convention for its interest in missions and its large contributions. I hope your church is like that.

My mother and sister Alice were active in missions endeavors long before any kind of organization emerged. Later in time a mission society was formed.

Oh, I admired the faith and prayers of these older women, but I just was not interested in getting involved with them. So, I directed my energies elsewhere—the orphans at the Home of the Friendless, the city's poor and the sick.

I believe that God opened my eyes to needs in Baltimore so that I could lead other women in caring for these needs. We could help here with our hands, our feet, our minds. We discovered we could pack hundreds of boxes of clothes for Indian children. Don't get me wrong. I had an interest in foreign missions too. We later followed the suggestion of Lottie Moon (you remember that wonderful missionary to China) to have a week of prayer and a love offering for missions at Christmastime.

As my life moved on, I became more immersed in needs I saw in Baltimore and getting the women there to respond. And they did! In 1882 the Women's Baptist Home Mission Society of Baltimore was organized. They elected me their first president. Then followed my election in 1888 as the national corresponding secretary of Woman's Missionary Union, auxiliary to the Southern Baptist Convention. We pledged ourselves to praying for missions, giving for the support of missions, and learning all we could about the missions movement.

The women of my day had resources they did not know they had. We encouraged the women to give financially, often at the point of sacrifice. My constant plea to them was "Go Forward!"

The women's efforts challenged *them*. In Baltimore women were involved in work with specialty groups. Today I believe you call it mission action.

They became involved outside Baltimore too. I urged them to send boxes of clothes and other items to the frontiers—to missionaries who lived in destitute conditions. It was a mutually rewarding experience when women gave and missionaries gratefully responded. I was especially thrilled when frontier churches organized mission societies or gave to missions.

Go forward, women of the world! All of you are partners with God and with one another. Labor together in a partnership that reaches around the world and yet touches your neighborhood.

Go Forward!