

abwe

MESSAGE

SPECIAL REPORT

2022 Pro-Life Issue

Wonderfully

Made



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WHO IS ABWE?

ABWE was founded in 1927 as an independent Baptist mission. Supported by a network of 400 like-minded churches, we are a global family of ministries, dedicated to fulfilling the Great Commission by multiplying leaders, churches, and missions movements among every people. Currently, more than 1,000 ABWE missionaries are reaching the lost in 84 countries through evangelism, discipleship, church planting, leadership development, and national partnerships.

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EDITORIAL



A Life or Death Issue

BY PAUL L. DAVIS | ABWE PRESIDENT

Did you know that for every 30 missionaries who go to a reached people group, only one missionary goes to an unreached people group?

There's a lot to do in global missions. But that's not the only gap I see.

2022 will be a critical turning point for pro-life causes. This month, thousands of believers are marching for the unborn at the US capital. And this summer, the US Supreme Court will decide if the precedent from *Roe v. Wade* will stand. But protecting the defenseless isn't just a US political issue—it's a world missions issue.

Only 3% of abortions happen in the US. Yet 97% of pro-life funding is spent in the US. That means that 97% of funding is missing 97% of the problem.

When I was a pastor, I often encouraged our congregation to pray for, look for, and minister to their unbelieving friends undergoing crises. Why? Because personal crises consistently open doors for the gospel.

Crisis pregnancies open doors too. And throughout the world, we're seeing personal, relational, crisis pregnancy ministry lead to salvations and church planting.

So, we're shifting our normal schedule with *Message* to bring you a special edition—earlier than normal—about what God is doing around the world to save children, transform women's lives, and build his church.

The stories in this special issue are only a small sampling of what God is doing around the world. We couldn't fit stories of every life-affirming ministry into this edition, but you can learn more about these gospel-centered pro-life efforts at abwe.org/life.



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ON THE COVER

Human Baby in the Womb.

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HEALING YEARS IN THE MAKING

Once a wounded woman, now she offers hope to those who have none.



Written by Lexi Elder

WALKING OUT OF THE CLINIC, MARLEN CLOSED HER EYES, HER CHILD'S HEARTBEAT ECHOING IN HER MEMORY.

It was so strong, as if begging, Mommy, don't kill me!

Wiping a tear away, she sighed. Too late. The deed was done. The heart wasn't going to beat again.

But the pain she felt ran deeper than just this moment. As a victim of domestic violence, Marlen's childhood was characterized by chronic neglect and abuse. Every day, Marlen dreamed of when she could leave, convinced that would make everything better.

But the emptiness and consuming need for belonging only followed her into adulthood, manifesting in her relationship with her baby's father.

When Marlen realized she was pregnant, she was excited.

"I remember clearly when the doctor did the ultrasound. I was 7 weeks pregnant. And the baby's heartbeat was so

strong, so intense. It's engraved here in my heart and my mind," Marlen said.

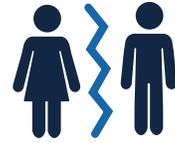
But her partner didn't react well to the news. Instead, she was faced with an ultimatum. Either have an abortion or raise the child alone. She chose to have an abortion. When the time came, the doctor reassured her the procedure would be easy, and it wouldn't affect her afterward. She let herself believe him.

But it did affect her. And regardless of her choice, her partner did leave her.

For all her desperate grasping, here she was. Desperate and alone, again.

For years, Marlen lived within a fog of loneliness, consumed by her grief and emptiness.

One day, someone invited her to a Bible study. They discussed sin and forgiveness through Christ, and Marlen's broken heart soaked up every word.



28.4%

*of women aborted
out of fear of losing
their partner.*

*Journal of American Physicians
and Surgeons 22, no.4 (2017)*



Photography by: Hannah Bohrer

That night, for the first time in decades, she uttered the word “abortion,” as she poured out her heart to God, pleading for forgiveness.

From that moment, her life began to change. “I longed so much to have a father, and he represents that to me now. My father, my beloved, my whole life, everything!” Marlen said.

When Marlen shared her pain with a friend, that friend pointed her to New Life Prenatal Center.

The missionary at the center radiated peace and love while providing postabortion counseling to Marlen.

As Marlen found restoration through Christ’s forgiveness, her passion for the women, who came to the center, grew. These days, Marlen pours her life into these young women, inspired by the godly staff around her and the purpose the Lord has given her. Once looking for help, Marlen is now helping many others as the Peruvian director of New Life Prenatal Center. □

**I remember clearly
when the doctor did
the ultrasound. I was 7
weeks pregnant. And
the baby’s heartbeat was
so strong, so intense.**



LEARNMORE about Marlen and
New Life Prenatal Center at
abwe.org/NewLife.

📍 Location: Papua New Guinea

A *Miraculous* Adoption

Written by Lexi Elder

Far too often, rape is a norm—not an exception—for working-class women in Papua New Guinea.

Alani was a first-year student at Goroka Bible College. As a young, Christian woman, she dreamed of becoming a teacher.

But things didn't go smoothly, at first. A few weeks into the program, she became concerningly ill.

As the doctor examined her, all signs pointed to pregnancy, and a quick physical examination confirmed it.

Horror dawned on the young girl's face, her composure hanging by a thread, as the doctor wheeled in the ultrasound machine. The dating placed the baby at twelve weeks.

When she heard the conception date—January 1—she broke down sobbing, reliving the horror.

That day, her mother had sent her to the public market for fresh food. Out of nowhere, a strange man had cornered her. And even though she'd fought hard, she was overpowered.

Feeling ashamed and alone, she tried to convince everyone that nothing was wrong. But her friends and family knew she wasn't telling the truth.

When Alani finally told her parents, they wept—not just because of the evil act committed against their daughter, but because she'd carried the sorrow and

shame and hurt alone for four, long months. Now, for the first time, Alani didn't have to stand on her own. Her parents were by her side, caring for her.

Despite the continued trauma and shame of a pregnancy, Alani decided abortion wasn't an option. She knew in her heart that a life, no matter how it was conceived, was still worthy of protecting.

So, she began looking for adoptive parents for her baby—and soon found a godly couple she could trust.

The president of the Bible college and his wife only had one adult child. They'd hoped for more, but God hadn't granted them another one—yet. Now empty nesters, they longed to pour their love into another life.

Alani decided abortion wasn't an option. She knew in her heart that a life, no matter how it was conceived, was still worthy of protecting.

When Alani met Jack and Dorothy and sensed their longings, she made up her mind. Jack and Dorothy would love her child. Maybe God had put them in her life for such a time as this. Together, they planned for her to return to campus a month before her delivery, have the baby at the college clinic, and give her baby to the couple.

As word leaked out about Alani's pregnancy, the Bible college students and staff rallied around and supported her. No gossip. No rumors. No back-handed comments. Just quiet, loving support.

When the day came, the president's wife stood by Alani through the delivery and welcomed a healthy, baby girl.

After recovering from the delivery, Alani was welcomed back to class by her peers. While healing from the trauma was slow, Alani was surrounded by the love of her family, friends, and peers at the Bible college. Her sacrifice was widely admired, honoring her baby's life despite the trauma and pain she'd experienced. □



LEARN MORE about ABWE's work with pregnancy centers at abwe.org/life.

Hope From Pro-Life Heroes

*Maybe her mom was right.
After all, she didn't want to be pregnant.*

Written by Lexi Elder

**“YOU CAN'T HAVE THIS
BABY. YOU HAVEN'T EVEN
FINISHED HIGH SCHOOL!”**

Maricielo's mother's voice faltered as she desperately tried to scream the baby out of existence.

The room was silent, as Maricielo hung her head. She was only 16. What was she going to do?

Retreating to her room, her mother's words repeated in her mind: “You need to get an abortion.”

Maybe her mom was right. After all, she didn't want to be pregnant.

As she began to seriously consider abortion, Maricielo's father walked into her room and sat down on the bed with her.

So far, he had been silent. But now, from behind his back, he pulled a plastic doll, one of Maricielo's childhood toys. Handing it to her, he asked, “You

want to tear off its legs, its hands? That's what an abortion is to a baby.”

Sickened by the thought of harming her doll, much less her baby, Maricielo whispered, “But what do I do?”

Her father already knew the answer, and the next day, he took her to speak with their pastor. After praying for them, the pastor directed them to New Life Prenatal Center, where they could get the resources and help they needed.

At the pro-life pregnancy center, Maricielo not only found the resources the pastor promised, but something more—she received the support of someone who had been in her shoes.

As she spoke with the director of the prenatal center, the director told her that she understood Maricielo's situation. Maricielo learned how the director had been pressured to abort her child and to her everlasting regret, she did. How, after the abortion, she lived as a shadow of her former self, until the Lord had filled the emptiness and restored her, transforming her pain into purpose.

Her name was Marlen.

Maricielo soaked up the director's wisdom as she listened to her story.



Photography by: FG Trade; Yobro10



49.2%

of women reported that they believed the fetus was a human being at the time of the abortion.

Journal of American Physicians and Surgeons 22, no.4 (2017)



“I remember clearly when [the doctor] did the ultrasound. I was 7 weeks pregnant. And the baby’s heartbeat was so strong, so intense. It’s engraved here in my heart and my mind.”

As the story ended, Maricielo was guided into the ultrasound room for a chance to see her own baby. The instant she saw the black and white image of her baby and heard the rhythmic thumping of its heart, she fell in love. The director was right—that heartbeat was engraved in Maricielo’s heart. She knew what she was going to do. She was keeping this baby no matter the cost.

Months passed by, and with the support and resources of the prenatal center, she gave birth to a healthy baby boy.

To this day, years later, she still remembers the moment with joy.

“When he was born, [the doctors] put him on my chest. I said this was inside me. He was moving and I started to cry. It was something lovely. A beautiful sensation.”

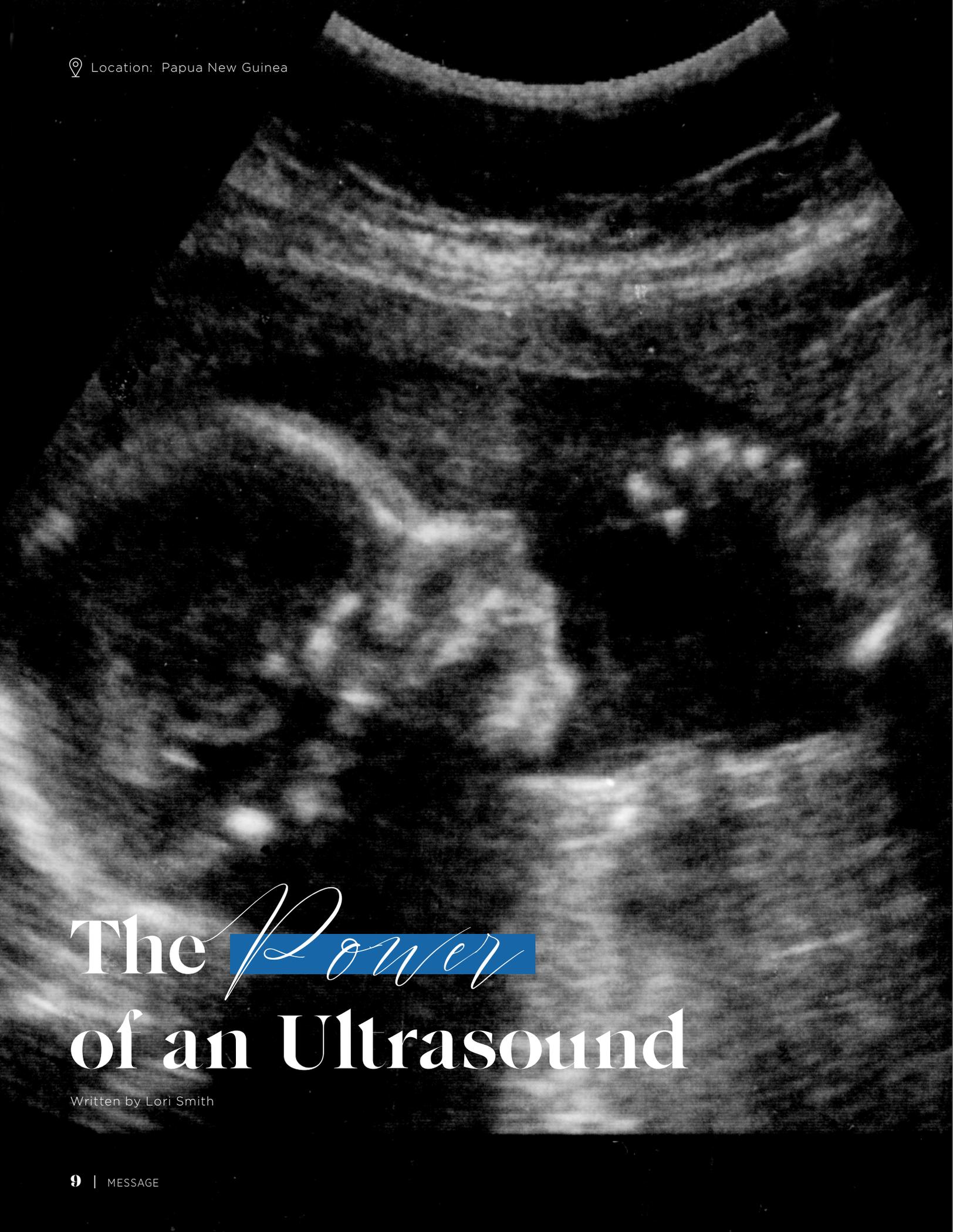
Immediately, everyone in the family, including her mother, fell in love with her little baby boy. Although their lives were changed forever, they were better for it. □

Retreating to her room, her mother’s words repeated in her mind: “You need to get an abortion.”



LEARNMORE about New Life Prenatal Center at abwe.org/NewLife.

📍 Location: Papua New Guinea



The *Power* of an Ultrasound

Written by Lori Smith

I WISH I COULD REMEMBER HER NAME. HER FACE IS STILL CLEARLY ETCHED IN MY MIND.

It was an ordinary day at the clinic when she walked in, but the outcome was one I will never forget.

The young woman had scheduled an appointment to discuss removing a large, protruding hernia. During the examination, I realized there was some rather unexpected news that I needed to share with her. Like many women who walked through the clinic's doors, she was pregnant.

Hearing this, shock clouded her face. She walked out of the clinic, distraught and unsure of her next steps. She already had four kids and wasn't sure if she could handle another. And on top of that, this pregnancy meant her surgical procedure would need to wait. Her condition was not life-threatening, and it didn't merit the risk of anesthesia during a pregnancy.

The next day, looking up from some paperwork I saw her marching into the clinic—a woman on a mission. She planted herself in front of me and stated, rather forcefully, “I want this pregnancy terminated.”

I paused and considered her statement. As a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, I couldn't destroy the precious life he was forming inside her.

As I began to explain this, I guided the young woman into the ultrasound room. I told her that I couldn't terminate the pregnancy but that I would examine her and present her with some helpful next steps.

On one wall of the ultrasound room hung a poster outlining early fetal development. On another, a poster said, “Take my hand not my life.” An educated woman, my patient read the information, silently processing it as I prepped her for an ultrasound. And God began softening her heart.

As the 12-week baby came into view, she stared at the screen. For the first time since she'd learned of her pregnancy, she saw that there was a baby. In an instant, she fell in love with the tiny baby.

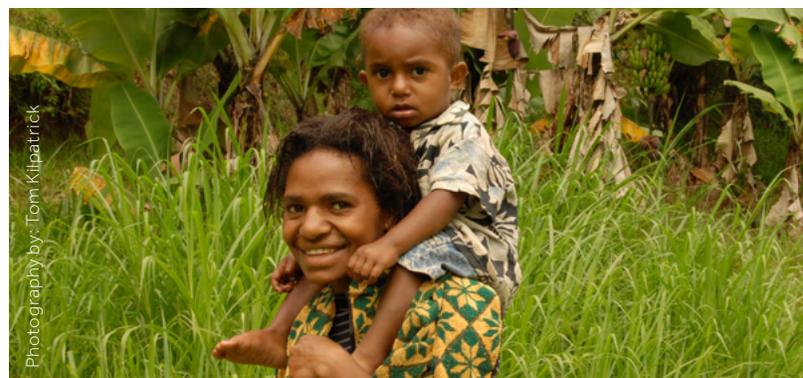
During the examination, I realized there was some rather unexpected news that I needed to share with her.

Knowing her fears, I assured her that our clinic would care for her and love her through the delivery. No questions asked. No obligation for her to raise the child. If she wanted, she could even leave the baby with us to find a loving, adoptive home.

She left with tears in her eyes, a different kind of determination written across her face—her mission had changed.

A couple months later, I had the joy of delivering her healthy, pink, chubby girl, dressing her in brand new clothes, wrapping her in a blanket, and placing her into the smiling woman's arms.

With tears in her eyes, once again, the mother turned to me and said the minute that she saw her baby during the ultrasound, she fell in love. □

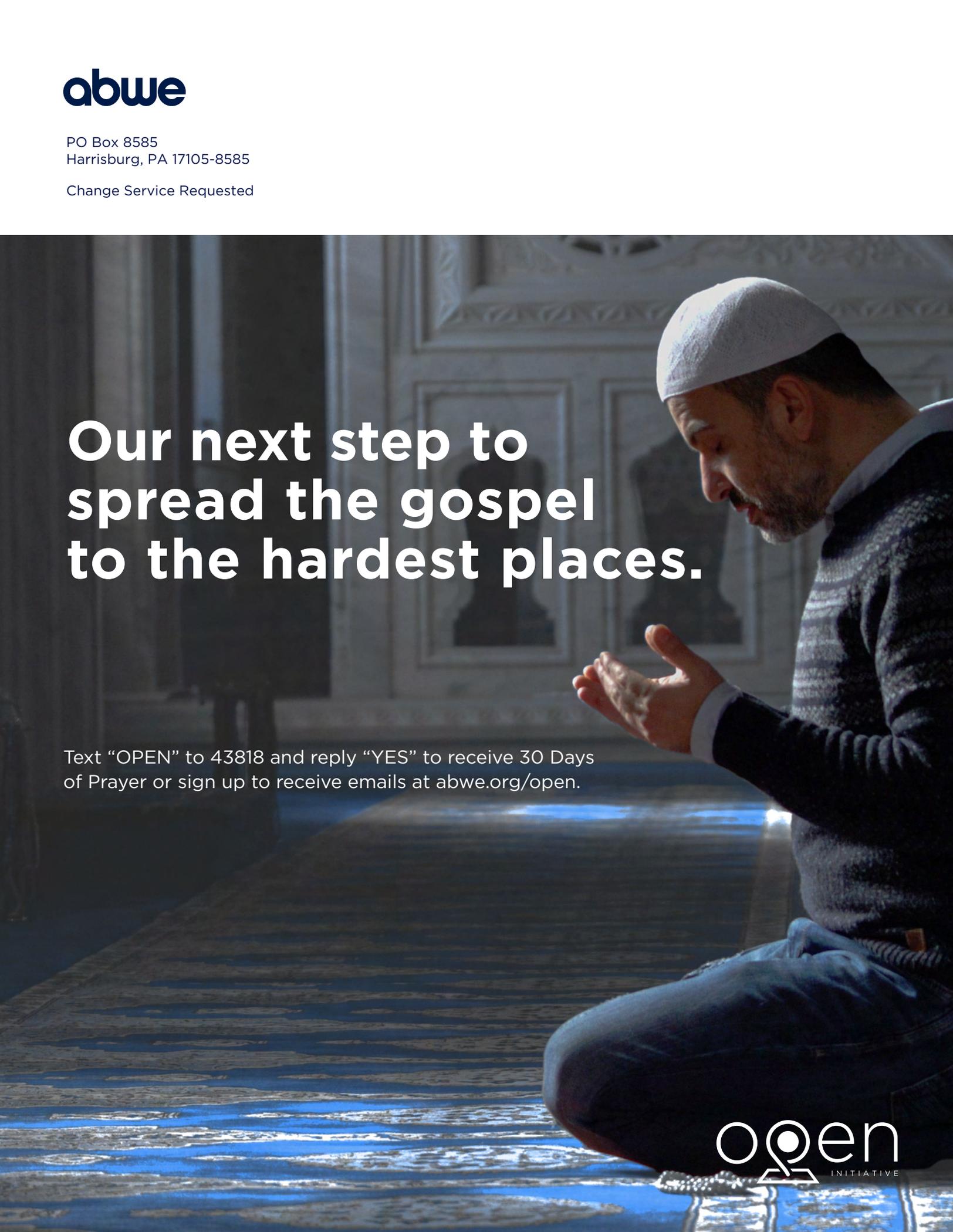


LEARN MORE about Lori and her ministry at abwe.org/life.

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