



**Patricia
Burdette**

Cover: Rebekah Wingert stands in the midst of Bangladeshi women with whom she was a co-worker during her MCC assignment for the past three years. This experience had a transformative effect on Rebekah's thinking about women and discriminatory treatment. (see story pp. 8-9)

Courtesy photo

A few years ago, I was with my mother as she transitioned from life to death and a few months later with my daughter as she transitioned from womanhood to motherhood. As I listened to my daughter labor to give birth to her first child, I could not help but think how much her labor resembled my mother's labor to release this life and move to the next. Transitions, though different in so many ways, also share some significant similarities as well. Some require less labor than others, some produce joy while others produce loss, some are anticipated while others are not. Yet, we know that our lives are filled with transitions from the moment we are born.

In this issue of *timbrel*, writers discuss personal as well as social transitions. Dorothy Nickel Friesen discusses the transition in society that she, along with the rest of the over-forty crowd, has been experiencing for the past few decades as women have increasingly been called to freely exercise their gifts within the church. Rebekah Wingert, on the other hand, writes about a personal transition she experienced because of her work with Mennonite Central Committee Bangladesh. In another article, Evie Hertzler, now deceased, previously wrote about her diagnosis of ALS disease and what that transition called forth from her. Andrea Ressler writes about social transitions within the context of media representations of African American women within the past few decades. While the contexts of each one of these stories are dissimilar, they all express the hard work transitions elicit from us as a society and as individuals while we struggle through them.

As we negotiate life's transitions, we are sometimes tested beyond what we may think are the reasonable bounds of our ability to manage; yet, it is in these times of struggling with transitions, which sometimes seem so frequent, that our faith is strengthened. Like Jacob in Genesis 32, we can emerge from the struggle forever changed by God. 📖

Sister Question for November-December

In preparation for the November/December issue of *timbrel* which will focus on holiday traditions, consider the traditions your family practices. What tradition helps keep your family focused on God during the holidays? Be specific!

Send your answers to PattyB@MennoniteWomenUSA.org or mail to Patty at Mennonite Women USA, P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114-0347. We print a sampling of replies that include name, city and state.