

# GLORIA WHITE-HAMMOND

PHYSICIAN AND MISSIONARY

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**W**hen Gloria White-Hammond and her husband first married, they considered becoming missionaries in Africa. Events — and children — intervened, and the two stayed in Boston, founding Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church and ministering to their flock and needy neighbors. But the lean, elegant pediatrician still had a burden for Africa, and she periodically found her way there on humanitarian missions. In 2001, she traveled to the Sudan to help redeem more than 2,000 women and girls taken as slaves during that country’s civil war. The stories she heard there — of beatings, killings, and almost unimaginable sexual abuse —sickened her. But so did the grinding, dead-end lives the liberated women returned to do. “You bring them back to their communities,” White-Hammond says, “but then what?” In 2004, the doctor’s answer to that question was realized when she helped to provide them with diesel-powered mills to relieve the women’s traditional, all-day task of grinding grain—and to support a new school for girls called My Sister’s Keeper School. Her next stop: bloody Darfur in western Sudan, to learn what women there need.—*Meg Guroff*

# ALICE COLES

COMMUNITY ACTIVIST

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**U**ntil 2003, most of the 114 residents of Bayview, Virginia, lived in the kind of abject poverty that is difficult to grasp: two- and three-room shacks with no running water and no heat, and the constant threat of fires from faulty electrical wiring. In the last year, most of those people have moved into modern housing, thanks largely to the efforts of Alice Coles, 53. In 1994, this single mother of two learned that the state of Virginia was planning to build a maximum-security prison on land that her ancestors had farmed for more than 300 years. “We decided to fight it,” Coles recalls, “because we didn’t have anywhere to go and we didn’t have anything to lose.” Coles, who at the time was making \$5,000 a year handpicking the meat out of crabs, educated herself about how the Department of Corrections worked, and traveled to Richmond to testify against building a prison less than a mile from where her children attended school. “I didn’t have two pennies to rub together, but I told them about our dedication to our land and our children. And they listened.” Flush from that victory, Coles organized her neighbors and began applying for federal and state housing grants to turn the eyesore that was her community into a jewel. Today, 42 of a planned 132 homes are built, as are a greenhouse and a community technology center. “We have to look within ourselves for that one gift God has given us and use it,” Coles says. “We just need to look around and see how we can make this world a better place to live.” —*Gabrielle Redford*

**WOMEN TRAILBLAZERS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH**  
**GLORIA WHITE-HAMMOND — PHYSICIAN/PASTOR/MISSIONARY**  
**ALICE COLES — COMMUNITY ACTIVIST AND BUILDER**  
**THE MAKING OF A LEADER — WOMEN’S DISCIPLESHIP GROUP**  
**Terri McFaddin Series #5-9**

**Scripture Focus:** *“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”( Joshua 1:9)*

**Opening Statement:** This morning I asked the Lord what it takes to be a good leader. His reply came in three simple words: **Courage – Humility – Faith**. I use to think of leaders as people who were especially gifted with charisma, strength, and flawless character. But if we take a closer look at the men and women who God used to change the world, we will find that leaders can be housewives, factory workers, students, and ordinary people like you and me. Some of them felt inadequate, afraid, and unprepared. Yet history tells us that the Lord uses all kinds of people to accomplish His will.

**Alice Coles** was a factory worker who made \$5,000.00 a year working in a seafood plant picking crabmeat out of the shells. Up until 2003, most of the people in her community of Bayview, Virginia lived without electricity and plumbing. Today because of her leadership, 132 new homes valued at 6.5 million dollars have been built to help the people of Bayview.

**Dr. Gloria White-Hammond** was invited to take a summer missionary trip to Sudan, North Africa. She says that she was more surprised than anyone that the Lord used her to raise the money to buy back hundreds of enslaved women and children and open a mill to provide work for these newly liberated people.

To you these feats might sound like “Mission-Impossible.” But if each of us would purpose in our hearts to change just one small injustice or to meet one small need of the poor and defenseless, then we will be leaving our place as a follower and stepping into the position of God’s leader for a time such as this.

**Observation:** What connection do Alice Coles and Gloria White-Hammond have to Joshua 1:9? How did the Lord use their circumstance to guide them into His purpose?

**Interpretation:** Find scriptures that describe the courage, humility or faith of the three names listed below. What weaknesses and strengths do you see in each of these leaders? What do these three people have in common concerning the call of God on their lives?

Esther - Courage:

Gideon - Humility:

Moses - Faith:

**Personalization:** Have you ever been faced with a circumstance that required you to help or rescue others? How did you deal with the challenge?

**Application:** Take the time to look at what is going in the world. Identify the needs of some special group of people. Begin to pray and ask the Lord what you can do to help.