

Billy Graham Raising Up Internet Evangelists

Miriam gets out of the house about twice a week—once for the grocery store and once for church. With arthritis, joint pain and degenerated discs, she relies on a walker or cane.

But that's not all she leans on. Her eagerness to share God's love with others motivates her to keep going.

"I have a great desire in my heart to see people being led to Christ," she said.

At 87, Miriam spends most of the day caring for her husband, 89, who battles Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. Her constant pain makes it especially difficult to put on her caretaker hat every morning, but she says God keeps her upbeat.

"Many days I have to rely on Jesus, who is my strength, to give me the ability to even place one foot in front of the other," she said. "He is faithful!"

Earlier this year, Miriam, who lives in Pennsylvania, heard about Search for Jesus in *Decision* magazine. Search for Jesus (SFJ), BGEA's Internet evangelism ministry, connects volunteers across the country to people around the world who are seeking answers to their desperate questions.

Volunteers can chat with people who find SFJ's evangelistic website, , and counsel new believers through one-on-one mentoring. Miriam is one of those mentors, or discipleship coaches.

"I love the Lord and love people," she said.

Internet evangelism is a perfect fit for Miriam, who has to be home to care for her husband. Through SFJ, she can disciple people without leaving her doorstep.

"I have been wanting so much to serve the Lord in some fashion," she said. "I really want to tell people about Jesus."

Miriam once signed up to be a counselor at a Billy Graham event decades ago. It was held in a local high school where she met several people she kept in touch with for years. Now, as a SFJ discipleship coach, she's more likely to meet a new Christian online. Although she wishes she could meet them in person, she said meeting online is better than nothing.

"These people would not reach out to a church or to an advertised evangelistic service," she said.

Online evangelism also gives people like her a chance to share the gospel when doing so face to face isn't practical. She appreciates that SFJ can "change with the times but not change the message."

Miriam attributes her Internet savvy to trial and error. She retired from the insurance business just as the company was getting computers, then took a job as a church librarian where her co-workers suggested she start using a computer.

"I decided, well, I should try this at home," she said. Her two daughters offer tech support when needed.

"How else would I reach people from another country at my age and my health?" she said. "It just throws me to think that I would be able to encourage someone from another country. ... I feel it's the same as being a missionary."

To learn more about SFJ or to volunteer, visit .