

Freda Lindsay, Christ for the Nations Co-Founder, Dies at 95

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Freda Lindsay, co-founder of Christ for the Nations Institute (CFNI) in Dallas, died at her home late Thursday night. She was 95.

Lindsay and her husband, Gordon, started the charismatic Bible school in 1970 to train Christians to “do exploits for God” around the world. She was named president after Gordon Lindsay’s death in 1973 and led the two-year school to train more than 32,000 graduates, including Colorado prayer leader Dutch Sheets, the late Nigerian pastor Benson Idahosa, contemporary Christian singer Russ Taff and Kevin Jonas Sr., father of the Jonas Brothers.

The ministry has planted more than 12,000 churches worldwide and established 48 associate Bible schools in 33 nations. The school also has become known for its music ministry, with songwriter Martin Nystrom penning the praise and worship classic “As the Deer” while a student at CFNI.

“I think she’s one of the most prominent Christian leaders in the last 100 years just because of the influence Christ for the Nations has had in missions,” said charismatic historian Eddie L. Hyatt, who is a CFNI graduate and former instructor.

In the 1970s, when the charismatic movement was at its height, Hyatt says CFNI became “the teaching center of the charismatic renewal.”

“[Lindsay’s] husband was a real giant in his own right, but I

think most people would agree that the ministry attained far greater success under her leadership than his," said *Charisma* publisher Steve Strang, who featured Lindsay on the magazine's cover in January 1984 and worked with her as part of the International Charismatic Bible Ministries fellowship founded by Oral Roberts. "She really rose to the occasion."

Referred to around campus as "Mom Lindsay," Freda Lindsay is described as a loving woman with a strong work ethic. Son Dennis Lindsay, who became president of CFNI in 1985, said an Israeli general who fought in the Six-Day War once said Lindsay led like a general but had "compassion and humility like an everyday person."

Known for her frugality, she lived in the same two-bedroom apartment on campus for more than 30 years, which she said kept her living expenses low and enabled her to give back to the ministry.

Born in Canada on April 18, 1914, Lindsay was one of 12 children born to Russian-speaking immigrants from Belarus. When she was still a young girl, her family moved to Oregon, where she began working in the fields at age 9 to help put food on the table.

In 1932, at age 18, she attended a revival meeting in Portland. As she was leaving, the evangelist, Gordon Lindsay, stopped her and said, "Freda, I thought this would be your night."

Convicted, she rushed to the altar. "I was no big sinner, but I knew I wasn't serving the Lord," she told *Charisma* in 2004. "That night, I felt the Lord spoke to me and said, 'Freda, if you follow Me, obey Me, walk faithfully in pureness, you will one day marry this evangelist.'"

She married Gordon Lindsay five years later and in 1948 the couple began an evangelistic ministry and publishing house called Voice of Healing, which was the precursor to Christ for

the Nations. In the 1940s and 1950s, the Lindsays helped publicize the ministries of early revivalists of such as Oral Roberts, T.L. Osborne, and Jack Coe through their *Voice of Healing* magazine.

Throughout the 1960s, the Lindsays traveled in missions around the world, distributing millions of copies of Gordon Lindsay's discipleship books. They opened CFNI in September 1970, and within three years the school had grown to 250 students. But in 1973, Gordon Lindsay died suddenly on the platform in the school's auditorium while preparing to speak.

Freda Lindsay reluctantly assumed leadership, being named president the day after her husband's funeral. In the early years she said she faced opposition from Christians who objected to a woman serving in such a leadership position. "I used to get a lot of letters from people chewing me out," she told *Charisma*. "I would write them back humbly and say, 'All of these men put me in this position, and I report to these men.'"

Hyatt said Lindsay used to joke that the ministry wouldn't last six months without her husband, but instead it expanded. CFNI now reaches 120 nations and has distributed more than 60 million evangelistic and discipleship books in 82 languages. It also provides food, clothing and medical aid to nations in need.

A strong supporter of Israel, Lindsay traveled to the Holy Land 34 times, and her daughter has lived there for more than 30 years. "If there is one reason Christ for the Nations has been blessed in the areas it has, it is because of our love for Israel," Lindsay said in 2004.

Lindsay was named "Christian Woman of the Year" by the Christian Broadcasting Network and in February 2009 was inducted into the International Christian Women's Hall of Fame, an organization Hyatt and his wife, Sue, operate in

Tulsa, Okla. Though Lindsay stepped down as CFNI president in 1985, she remained active in the ministry until she retired in April 2008.

“She was just a loving, wonderful person,” Strang said. “She’s just one more example of that generation dying, but she leaves a great, great legacy.”

A funeral service will be held at CFNI at 1:30 p.m. Thursday, April 1—the date Gordon Lindsay died in 1973. She is survived by sons Gilbert Lindsay and Dennis Lindsay, daughter Shira Sorko-Ram, eight grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.