

BELIEVERS

'God has priority in my life'

■ **My spiritual journey:** I was reared in a Christian Methodist home in a country community. At 10, I accepted Jesus Christ in my life, joined the United Methodist church and continued to grow in faith. God has priority in my life.

■ **What's usually misunderstood about my faith:** God's love is a gift which I can never earn. Through my church, I worship, give, serve and reach a helping hand to those around me. These things I do out of gratitude for God for all His blessings.

■ **My favorite passage of religious writing:** The Bible, especially the New Testament with Jesus' earthly life and teachings — particularly including the Sermon on the Mount and the parables. I continually find new inspiration and challenge in the scriptures.

■ **My favorite hymn or religious song:** "Great is Thy Faithfulness"

■ **Current spiritual leader I admire most:** My life has been greatly influenced by the dedicated pastors of my church. The United Methodist Church has itinerant ministry which has varied strong points. Each minister brought Christian leadership and spiritual guidance — pointing me to God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

■ **My spiritual practices:** I pray daily; in my devotional and meditation time, I read the Bible, "Upper Room" and "Daily Guidepost." Regularly, I read "Decision" magazine, "Response," "Interpreter," "The Christian Reader," and other Christian literature as I have the opportunity.

■ **Ways my faith makes me different from most people:** My motive for living is that my life shall be Christ-centered. This colors my thinking and my acting. I still commit sins of commission and omission, for which I regularly ask forgiveness. My motive could make me different from many people.

■ **My image of God:** Almighty, creator, master, ruler of everything; yet, He is my heavenly father. He is with me in sorrow, disappointment, adjustments and joys — always with me.

■ **How I put my faith into action:** I'm an active member of Bethel UMC Church. I have often been a teacher in church school; even now, I teach the adult Bible class each third Sunday. I'm a member of the Administrative Council, United Methodist Women, Mature Years and Vision 2000 Committee. Since 1980, I have been the leader of a Covenant Prayer Group, chartered by the Upper Room in Nashville. The purpose of this group is to be committed to disciplined spiritual growth, especially in the area of prayer, with particular emphasis upon intercession. Jesus was an intercessor. The witness of scripture, Christian history, in our lives is that something happens when we practice intercessory prayer. Our motto: The MOST we can do is pray.

"Believers" is compiled by Jennifer Graham. To nominate a layperson of any faith for this feature, write to Believers, c/o The State newsroom, P.O. Box 1333, Columbia, S.C. 29202. Include an address and telephone number for your nominee.



Miriam Atkinson Boulware

Occupation: Miriam Atkinson Boulware, 82, is a retired teacher and widow of a United Methodist minister. She is the mother of one and the grandmother of three. Since her husband's death 17 years ago, she has lived with her sister, who is also a widow. She is the oldest of 10 children, all living.

Because of
God's love,
mercy and
grace, I do
not walk
alone.

Miriam Atkinson Boulware