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Liberty alumna creates Christian doll, book line

December 01, 2008 | Teresa Dunham

On first glance, it might appear that Liberty University alumna Pam Davis ('85) and fashion dolls have a few things in common — blonde hair, blue eyes, an early modeling career — but, ultimately, Davis decided to step away from the stilettos in favor of a serious relationship with Christ.

She came to Liberty University in 1984 to pursue Biblical studies and crosscultural ministries.

“I was looking for a place that would give me a rational defense for believing the Bible and the person that the Bible reveals, who is Jesus Christ,” said Davis, who recently created a line of Christian dolls.

Davis, 43, calls her time at Liberty a catalyst, equipping her for a larger ministry. Not long after leaving LU, Davis planned on entering the missions field — but she met a handsome man at church in her home state of Texas.

“We immediately talked about getting married. It was one of those love-at-firstsight deals where I didn't know what he did for a living,” Davis recalled.

Two weeks later, the man requested that Davis and her family fly to meet his parents, and he enclosed tickets to a major league baseball game. She'd never been to a baseball stadium before, so she was excited — then nervous — when the National Anthem started playing and her future husband still wasn't there. For a second, she wondered if she was being stood up in front of her parents. Then the announcer exclaimed, “Pitching for the Cleveland Indians ... Steve Davis.”

Her future husband rushed across the field to take his position, and they got married at the end of the season. A fashion doll might have trouble topping that romantic twist.

Real life, not plastic

Davis settled into a blessed life with her husband and three children, working as a spiritual life coordinator for a Christian school and serving as the American Girl fashion show coordinator in Fort Worth.

The American Girl dolls and accompanying storybooks follow tenacious female characters through adventures in different historical periods. Davis' experience at the October 2005 fashion show was a frenzy — but it wasn't because of the new American Girl outfits.

“The weekend of our show, American Girl got caught in a huge controversy with conservatives. It was not just Christians, but certainly Christians were in that controversy, and it was over an alliance that they had made with an organization that didn't support Biblical values,” Davis said.

In addition to its alliance with the secular organization Girls Inc., Davis said American Girl also introduced a self-empowering mantra of “I Can.” That motto runs counter to the Christian view, she said, because the Bible teaches that believers can do all things through Christ.

When interviewed on television, Davis spoke boldly against American Girl's decision. Since that time, American Girl has ended its ties with Girls Inc., and the “I Can” pledge that went with the empowerment campaign ran its course. A spokeswoman for American Girl said the inspirational message behind the pledge is similar to American Girl's ongoing mission of celebrating girls and all that they can be.

A few years have passed since the 2005 media interest — but Davis' experience spurred her to create a Christian doll and book line, Girls 'n Grace. The first two characters of the series are Sydney Clair, a 10-year-old girl caught up in the social changes of 1965, and an African girl named Mesi who discovers God's grace in bleak circumstances.

Davis teamed up with world-renowned doll designer Dianna Effner to offer beautiful dolls that correspond to both stories. The collection also includes a third component — Girls 'n Grace Like Me —that allows girls to mix and match features such as hair color and skin tone to create a doll that looks like them.



“Girls 'n Grace is a vehicle to educate girls, to entertain girls, to connect moms and daughters in the saving truth of God's grace,” Davis said. “We want to give [girls] an opportunity to pretend play with these characters so they can actually embrace a new role model — a girl that lives very much in step with the times and in step with the Lord Jesus Christ.”

For more information, visit the interactive website www.girlsngrace.com.