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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **AGLOW INTERNATIONAL ADDS IRAQ AND MADAGASCAR TO ITS GLOBAL OUTREACH: Seattle Based Women's Organization Has Affiliate Groups in 168 Countries, Many Traditionally Closed to Christianity**

**SEATTLE, September 17, 2007** – Aglow International, one of the world's largest Christian organizations, is announcing their integration into Iraq and Madagascar, bringing the total number of countries where the women's group operates to 168.

On May 2, Aglow launched an affiliate group in Douhuk, Iraq, after Abby Abildness, an Aglow member from Hershey, Pennsylvania, traveled there with a medical mission team. While on the field, Abildness shared the vision of Aglow International with some Kurdish women who were eager to form a cell group in their home country. "They appreciate the good works that Christians do to help and rebuild their community," she said.

According to Aglow International President Jane Hansen, this story is very similar to how the Seattle based Christian women's organization has started in nations around the world. "In just 40 years, Aglow is operating in more than 4,000 cities and towns in 168 nations," Hansen said. "We are especially encouraged that women from Iraq have invited Aglow to establish a presence there. Iraqi women hold a special place our hearts because of the decades of suffering they have endured," she added.

Iraq, a country of about 27.5 million, is 97 percent Muslim. Although freedom of religion is protected under the constitution, Christian and Muslim women alike risk their lives just walking the streets without a veil.

Aglow integrated into Madagascar, the world's fourth largest island, on Aug. 2. Madagascar has 19.5 million inhabitants, 45 percent of which are Christian. The new president and vice president of the fellowship in Madagascar will attend Aglow's Worldwide Conference in Seattle, the organization's founding city, on Sept. 20 – 23, as the international group celebrates 40 years of ministry. About 6,000 women from 100 nations are expected to attend the celebrations.

What began in 1967 as four women desiring to meet together as Christians across denominational boundaries has grown into a worldwide network of women who pray, teach and reach out to their communities – serving an estimated 17 million people each year. Today, 200,000 women participate in more than 4,300 indigenous Aglow groups in 168 countries. Aglow can be found in every U.S. state and Canadian province. Learn more at [www.aglow.org](http://www.aglow.org).