

# CAMT WELLSRING RESOURCES FOR WOMEN'S MINISTRY

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## STRENGTH FOR THE JOURNEY

In a large church family, or even a fair-sized one, it is next to impossible to get to know very many other people. Small groups help. However, it takes a bunch of weekly meetings before anyone is willing to peel back some of the layers to reveal who he or she really is down under those protective coverings.

We in our congregation have been blessed with an effective way to facilitate intimacy among our church's women – through a Wednesday evening women's class. It came about so simply. One of the younger women shared that in a previous church she had been blessed by a wonderful ladies' class entitled "Strength for the Journey" in which various women in the congregation related their life stories. Do you ever hear about this or that occurrence being a "God thing"? Well, chalk up another one. Because this idea was definitely of the Lord!

We confiscated the idea from the other church, name and all, and began calling different sisters to

see if anyone would agree to share their journey with God. Yes, they would! Almost every woman we approached jumped at the idea; those who did not jump still agreed to try and do it. Before we could catch our breath, we had several months scheduled in advance.

It has been more than wonderful! Since last April, each lady has brought something different and unique in her telling of how our God has turned ashes into beauty, darkness into light, and bitterness into joy.

Some journeys have caused compassionate tears to stream from many eyes; others have moved us to cheer and praise God for the blessings He has poured out on that life; still others have inspired us by showing just what the Lord can accom-

plish with the life of a willing woman.

I am convinced most did not realize the extent of how God moved in their circumstances and those of their loved ones until they sat down to write out their story. What a revelation!

Others have been encouraged to face their own thorns (or in some instances, monsters) after listening to a woman very like themselves relate how she by God's mighty power is dealing with either abuse, death, disease, or a rupture in her family.

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An extremely important serendipity of these sessions is the growing awareness that this series is a terrific evangelism tool: what a witness to the lost trapped by the enemy – unaware of God's love and compassion for them, and worst of all, oblivious to His invitation to be redeemed through His blood!

(Cont. on page 4)

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

September 27-30, 2009  
"Eternity in Our Hearts:  
Studies in Ecclesiastes"  
Lectureship 2009

Offering Ladies &  
Preacher's Wives Tracks  
On Monday & Wednesday  
September 28th & 30th  
On the Campus  
of Harding University

Women's Program  
On Tuesday, September  
28th  
at the  
College Church of Christ



February 26-27, 2009  
WINGS 2010

Venue Change:  
Harding University Campus

For more information:  
wings@harding.edu



Submit your event to  
Wellspring@harding.edu

## EDITORIAL

Have you ever found yourself in a position consistently ministering in some small way? In some unexpected way that is not something that you would have ever chosen—probably because you never knew the need existed!

My husband and I served as Hungarian missionaries for eight years. During that time there were opportunities for me to help other people get set up in new homes, teach visitors and new missionaries how to shop in their new environment, and help Americans learn how to fit into their new culture. I always enjoyed this little niche of our mission work, but thought that when we returned to the United States that this part of my ministry was over. However, as God has sent a trickle of Hungarians to Harding for training this funny little niche ministry is active again as I am thinking through what needs to be gathered for a new household.

Sometimes we find ourselves very busy doing “the little things” and question if what we are doing is really worthwhile. I am reminded of Matthew 10:42. Here Jesus calls anyone a disciple certain of their heavenly future who will give just a cup of cold water to a little one. Think about it: We are only called to give a cup of water. If all we ever did was the little things, we would be pleasing God. And our churches would be all the better because of it. For those of you who struggle with the demands of children, work, or aging parents, this is particularly encouraging.

I have long thought that part of being a faithful servant of God, is just being faithful in the little things. Stop and think about someone you respect. Chances are this person is respected because they faithfully lived their Christian lives daily. He or she was faithful in the little things. In Matthew 25 we read about the parable of the talents. In this parable, Jesus praised the servants who had managed their talents wisely. He called them “faithful” and rewarded their faithfulness. We glorify God by being faithful in the little things.

I hope that you enjoy the new formatting that we are beginning in this 8<sup>th</sup> issue of CAMT Wellspring! We have added three additional sections: one for smaller churches, a book review, and also a full page of tips and ideas for your women’s ministry. If you are interested in submitting something for our review, please contact me at [wellspring@harding.edu](mailto:wellspring@harding.edu). With our longer format, we need you! I also have updated submission guidelines available.

*Anessa Westbrook, Managing Editor*

## WOMEN’S MINISTRY IN SMALLER CHURCHES

Small churches (250 or less members) may not have the resources and budget of a large church. Because of this, Wellspring is adding a special column just for you! Women’s ministries come in all sizes and organizational formats, with each one having their own strengths. However, as with any church, the ideas need to be redesigned into something that you can use. To help meet this need, Wellspring has decided to add a new column dedicated to small church women’s ministries.

We plan to provide you with ideas, tips, and activities that have been successful in a small church setting. We hope they will help enhance your women’s ministry without placing undue strain on your budget. Here is one to get you started.

### WWW.God (Working Women Walking with God)

This program is a devotional style class that provides working women in the church an opportunity to meet together and to have a study time that they normally miss during the day. We meet on the first Thursday evening of every month and a different woman provides the lesson. Topics generally focus on the problems and issues of working women, such as balancing time schedules, our working life, our family life, and our spiritual life.

This class gives us the chance to discuss any issue or problem that may arise in our everyday life. We spend much needed time edifying and giving advice to each other. Through God’s Word and guidance we find help for anything that life may throw at us.

One of the great things about this class is the wide variety of ages that attend, ranging from early 20s to mid-50s. What a wonderful way to gain strength, knowledge and to know that someone else may be struggling with the same issues as you.

We have a snack type of meal and fellowship after the devotional. We cherish this time together. And we know that with God’s help this class will continue to grow.

*Suzie Waldroup*  
*Scenic Hills Church of Christ (Pensacola, FL)*

# UPREACH, INREACH, OUTREACH

## REACHING UP

“WE HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO USE THESE GIFTS WISELY, AND WE WILL BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR HOW WE HAVE USED THEM.”

Perhaps one of the most overlooked concepts by many is that we individually have spiritual gifts. When reading Romans 12:1-8, I Corinthians 12-14, Ephesians 4:1-16, and I Peter 4:8-11 we see gifts listed as well as their purposes.

While teaching a lesson on gifts, Anessa Westbrook (College Church, Searcy, AR)

wrote to her Women's Ministry class in the Spring of 2009, "Spiritual gifts are to glorify God, which is done by using them in His service. Although we can use natural talents in God's service and use them for His glory, our spiritual gifts point directly to God's power. We have the responsibility to use these gifts wisely, and we will be

held accountable for how we have used them."

What is God's purpose for you? How has He gifted you for service in His kingdom? Free spiritual gifts inventories are available at: [www.churchgrowth.org](http://www.churchgrowth.org) and [mintools.com](http://mintools.com). Complete these and consider the feedback you are given on ways you can serve the kingdom!

## REACHING OUT

“A PHONE CALL, INVITATION FOR COFFEE, OR CARD MAY OPEN THE DOOR TO RECONNECT HER WITH THE BODY OF CHRIST”

Suzanne Dillard (Levy Church of Christ, North Little Rock, AR) says "How do I love this part of women's ministries, let me see if I can count the ways. I think not, there are so many! But how do we choose [get ideas]? If you go to magazine racks in grocery stores, bookstores and pharmacies you can see what the felt needs seem to

be in our communities. Look at the front covers of the women's magazines: Budget Savers, Eating Healthy, Want to Be Clutter Free?, Learn to Knit, Looking for Peace?, Stressed Out?, Finding Your Best Colors, on and on the titles go. Can you see all of the possible felt needs women's ministries could use? These can be advertised

events to give our neighbors perhaps their first taste of the love of God's people."

**Editor's Note:** This column shares ideas for strengthening our relationship with God (upward), each other (inward) and those outside the body (outward). Contributions may be sent to [well-spring.nancy@gmail.com](mailto:well-spring.nancy@gmail.com).

## REACHING IN

“IF YOU GO TO MAGAZINE RACKS IN GROCERY STORES, BOOKSTORES AND PHARMACIES YOU CAN SEE WHAT THE FELT NEEDS SEEM TO BE IN OUR COMMUNITIES.”

Brenda Johnston (Naperville Church, Naperville, IL) gives the following advice on how to engage the unengaged or frustrated with our local church. "The most important way to help those in this group is to notice what is happening and then with a humble heart and listening ear, try to find out why it is happening. What is frustrating them? Why is it so frus-

trating? This requires showing personal concern, long listening, empathy, and gentle help. It also takes multiple efforts, especially when the person may put you off for the first several times you initiate contact with them. It takes expressing love and appreciation for them, even when it is somewhat difficult to find what to say."

This group needs to

know that someone cares about them and wants to respond to their concerns in a quiet non-threatening way. She says, "They need to hear, "You are important to this church body. We love you, and we want you with us. Please tell us what we can do to help." A phone call, invitation for coffee, or card may open the door to reconnect her with the body of Christ.

## BOOK REVIEW: A THOUSAND SPLENDID SUNS

The state of the modern world is full of boundaries and divisions; concepts such as equality and freedom are thought to have been widely established in history. To view our world as entirely free and equal for all is a gross misrepresentation. *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini explores shocking bondage and mistreatments as a very real condition for many humans worldwide. Delving deep into the uncharted territories of Afghanistan culture, readers find their eyes forced open to an environment nearly unthinkable to the modern mind.

The author spins the story of two Afgani women, Mariam and Laila, fictional characters with unsettlingly real situations set in a culture most modern American women could not fathom. He provides us with a timeframe set between 1959 and traveling towards 2003. The novel contains numerous themes, two of which are the treatment of women in modern society and the cultural divisions that exist between America and the Middle East. It is not written from a Christian perspective, yet it reveals several applications that can be taken and used to reach out to the modern generation.

The novel's standpoint on the treatment of women strongly contradicts the concept of women and equality thought of by most as a granted-way of life. Women of the modern generation [in America] think nothing of attending college, worshipping freely, and generally embracing independence. In sharp contrast to this thinking, Hosseini provides a very different lifestyle of Mariam and Laila as they suffer abuse. This unequal comparison raises the question of how exactly do women of today's time fit into their cultures and relationships? Should we be completely self-sufficient and equal with men? Or, should we be forced into subservient marriages, made to endure whatever our husbands determine for us? In order to answer this, we turn to the Bible for an answer. Today we can find our answers by beginning with the scriptures, in particular with Colossians 3:18-19.

This novel also discusses the very prevalent cultural divisions that exist today between America and the Middle East. From the book we find the Middle East believes the Americans do not care and it may be that our modern generation's ignorance is most likely a legitimate assertion. Though we Christians try to reach out to the world and share the gospel, how many of us unknowingly let ourselves be limited by the stereotypes. This novel asks its readers difficult questions and forces them to view modern life through a different set of eyes.

*Caitlin Garfield*  
*Dessert Church of Christ (Kingman, AZ)*

**Editor's Note:** To enhance the effectiveness of women's ministry, resources should be used to provide new ideas and thoughts for use in our ministries. This section of Wellspring will provide reviews of books and other resources to assist you in developing and expanding your own women's ministry. Some of the reviews will be from the editors, some written by students, and others will be submitted by women from around the country. These reviews will include fiction and non-fiction books which we think will provide some thought into the present state of ministries. The reviews have been edited for length. (Janice Hurd)

## STRENGTH FOR THE JOURNEY

(CONT. FROM PAGE 1)

We emphasize to the regular class members to bring their friends, neighbors, and relatives who do not know Jesus Christ. He can use all our stories to compel them to come in.

Every church family is different, of course. But we have one thing in common: Each one of us has a story. Through our story, the power of Jesus Christ is shown in our lives. Our God can work through each story to bring healing, hope, and encouragement to those in the body, and lovingly compel those outside Christ to listen to the life-saving message of the gospel.

*Geraldine Woodell*  
*Downtown (Searcy, AR)*

Wellspring is published ten times per year by the Center for Advanced Ministry Training at Harding University.

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