

"One generation will commend your works to another; they will tell of your mighty acts... They will tell the power of your awesome works..."

Psalm 145: 4 & 6

✘ Real Women...Real Stories ✘

Patty Diliberto introduces an opportunity for women of all ages to share their stories at Espresso.

Stories, don't you love them? I do! I love to hear, read, and watch stories. Everywhere around us we see people engrossed in the real stories of other people. These are played out in reality TV shows, in magazines and on TV talk shows every day. People want to hear what's real.

Throughout the years, I have had the awesome privilege of hearing, reading and watching some of your stories unfold. Some of your stories have exposed a depth of sorrow you've endured that those of us around you watched and were amazed that you could ever make it through. Some of the stories have brought such joy that those around you had to weep for joy along with you. The stories vary in degrees of sorrow, joy and everywhere in between but the underlying theme in each one of them is the faithfulness of our God!

Because we all have stories, yes, some more dramatic than others, but stories of God's faithfulness none the less, Women's

Ministry has felt led by God to begin a new venue where our stories can be shared and heard. **Espresso**, the name of this new venue, will be a once a month fellowship and encouragement opportunity for all women. The atmosphere of a casual coffee house with a dessert bar will be the back drop for **Espresso**.

Each month a younger and older woman (for lack of a better way to say it) will be asked to share their story. "Story" doesn't just mean "how you came to Christ". Your story can be any way that you have seen God work in your life that has brought you to a deeper, better, or more authentic place of living.

It can be a terrifying thing to share your story, I know it is for me each time I share mine. Sharing my story usually brings me to tears as I recall how deeply and powerfully Jesus worked to bring me out of bondage into the place of freedom that I live in today. You may think you couldn't possibly make it

through your story, but, if God calls you to share it, He will give you the strength to tell it.

I don't know why but it seems that when we share our stories with others it somehow makes us more real. As someone shares we may realize that we aren't the only one who struggles in a particular area or we're encouraged that if that person could get through their difficulty, then so can we. Others' stories impact and encourage us to keep looking to our faithful God for the strength, wisdom and guidance we need to make it through.

Some stories are too private to share or jeopardize another person in the telling. Those are not the kind of stories we are looking to be shared at **Espresso**. We want the stories that will bring glory to our faithful God and will encourage another sister in her walk with Christ.

As you read this or think about it in the days to come and God puts a desire on your heart to share, we would love to (cont. on p.4)

**MARCH 27
WELCOME COFFEE**

See bulletin for more information.

**TBA
ERC SHOWHOUSE DINNER &
TOUR**

Watch for more details.

**MARCH 28
BIBLE STUDIES BEGIN**

See Welcome Center for information.

**APRIL 15, 22, 29
BETH MOORE CONFERENCE
REGISTRATION**

Go to the Welcome Center to sign up.

**APRIL 16-21
MISSION TRIP/NEW ORLEANS**

Pray for our women as they serve.

**MAY 6, 13, 20
SUMMER BIBLE STUDIES BEGIN**

Watch for more details.

**MAY 11 & 12
BETH MOORE CONFERENCE**

See page 3 for more information.

**JUNE 11
GARDEN TOUR**

See page 3
for more
information.



✘ Faithful Service ✘

Years ago when Sharon Meissner began to do volunteer work, she had no idea that someday her work would receive a “presidential” thank you!

That is just what happened, however, this past November when President George W. Bush flew into Topeka for a Republican party event. Sharon was awarded the President’s Volunteer Service Award and was one of the first to greet the President as he stepped off the plane.

Sharon said of the experience that she was thankful for the chance to meet the President. She found him to be a very warm and sincere individual. Sharon was excited and surprised for



this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Sharon’s volunteer service includes her work at the Rescue Mission as a nurse, leadership in various political campaigns, involvement in her kids’ school activities, church leadership and mission work in Guatemala. Her God-given gift of serving and also of mobilizing others to serve is an example for all women in our church.

Sharon’s humility and servant leadership is an example of God’s work through her. **-Rosie Williams**

✘ Real Stories...cont. ✘

know about it. Call us and tell us a little bit about yourself and your story. You can call Tracy Seitz 273-4781 or Patty Diliberto 234-5545.

I love how God weaves the stories of His people throughout His word. One favorite is the woman in Matthew 9:18-22

who had a disorder that had caused her to bleed for 12 long years. After touching the hem of Jesus’ robe she is healed and knows it instantly. Don’t you wish you could’ve sat with that woman and heard all the details? I’m sure those details would have included the absolute hopelessness of living with a chronic ailment, of going from Doctor to Doctor, receiving no

help. She could have told us how she felt being treated as unclean and unfit to live around others, and her desperation to live a normal life. She would describe her amazement as she touched the robe and felt healing flow through her disease-ravaged body, the great emotion and fear of the moment and the huge relief when Jesus gently tells her to “take, daughter...your faith has healed you”.



I hope that in heaven we will get to hear each other’s stories - that will take forever! I’m glad that we won’t have to wait until then because we can tell them now at Expresso! We invite you to tell your story, we’re anxious to hear them!

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✧ Image is Everything...or is it? ✧

*Kim Borchers, Jill Crouch and Melody Congdon,
summarize, for readers, their messages from the Spring Retreat*

The World's Perspective Kim Borchers

According to the world, does image matter? Of course it does. So the question is what defines your image? Is it your physical attributes, your professional image, your family or economic status? All of these areas in and of themselves are not wrong or sinful. The problem we have is allowing a "sinful society" to define what makes these areas valuable to us as Christians.

Not withstanding the aphorism beauty is in the eye of the beholder, studies have shown that there are many universal or near-universal qualities which make women attractive. Those traits range from large, widely spaced eyes to tall height. But what is the big deal about being attractive? Many have asserted that certain advantages tend to come to those that are perceived as being more attractive, including the ability to get better jobs and promotions, receiving better treatment from authorities and the legal system, having more choices in romantic partners and, therefore, more power in relationships, and marrying into families with more money. Some even argue that the possession of a certain level of attractiveness should be considered a form of privilege, akin to that of social class.

The concept of beauty does not necessarily equate to a person's body image. Body image is defined as a person's perception of his or her physical appearance. Perceived body image is not necessarily related to any objective measure or the average opinion of other people; a person who has a poor body image may be rated as beautiful by others, and a person with a good body image may be rated as unattractive by others. Body image is most strongly affected during puberty. The desire to lose weight is highly correlated with poor body image.

How are we responding to this call of perfection? We pursue this call through surgical and non-surgical methods. We spent 60 billion dollars on dieting products in 2006 alone, and we spent almost 20 billion on cosmetics last year.

We have approximately 7 million girls and women currently with an eating disorder. Of those that battle anorexia, 10%-25% will die as a direct result of the eating disorder. For those that can't measure up, they just throw up their hands and decide to cope with a food addiction of a different sort—binge eating. One out of every five US adults is classified as obese and 300,000 Americans lost their life in this food war last year.

We battle the image war as women regarding the workplace or staying at home with our children. Many of us define ourselves through our homes, our spouses, and our children. We run the rat race to achieve a certain type of economic status because lifestyle is valued, wealth is evidence of character and you can do it all by borrowing for today.

We are in the midst of a materialistic storm today, and every Christian woman must decide whether to build upon the solid rock of God's Word or on the shifting sand of society. We as women might want to consider dignity, charm and allure based on our character rather than that which is superficial.

God's Perspective Jill Crouch

In a world where we are constantly bombarded with images of "picture perfect" women, it's hard to have a healthy self image. Our self image, positive or negative, is also greatly affected by events in our past which we carry around like old baggage. Perhaps your mother or father constantly pointed out your flaws by comparing you to a sibling or a friend, or maybe you were a victim of something very traumatic which has shaped your self image - sexual abuse, betrayal by a spouse or loved one, or an unplanned pregnancy.

I am so thankful that I lived in a home where I was always beautiful to my parents, even through that awkward girl stage. But, I did have one event which has always made me self conscious about my weight. When I was in the fifth grade, my very tiny teacher was weighing us to write on our report

cards. I stepped on the scale and she said, "You weigh more than I do," right in front of the whole class. How traumatic for a fifth grader! And I have carried that one event around for 20 years, allowing it to shape my self image.

So, regardless of what has shaped our image, we have to go to the only source of complete truth - God's word - to find out who we were created to be. We were not created by accident, nor is God surprised how we look. God created you to be exactly who He wants you to be. Psalm 139: 13-14 in The Message paints a beautiful picture of how God fashioned us. "Oh yes, you shaped me first inside, then out; you formed me in my mother's womb. I thank you, High God you're breathtaking! Body and soul, I am marvelously made! I worship in adoration—what a creation! You know me inside and out, you know every bone in my body; you know exactly how I was made, bit by bit, how I was sculpted from nothing into something. Like an open book, you watched me grow from conception to birth; all the stages of my life were spread out before you, the days of my life all prepared before I'd even lived one day."

Can you apply this truth to your life? God loves you and created you to be exactly who He wants you to be. And, you know what? Claim it! Have confidence in who you are in Christ. If you belong to Him, He looks upon your heart as your source of beauty. In the Bible, the word heart is mentioned 1,000 times. I love the verse in 1 Samuel 16: 7b "The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

In the Bible, there are many stories about women who have suffered much and have serious image issues. If you haven't thought about the self image issues some of these women might have had, think about it as you read the stories of Leah recorded in Genesis 29, Dina recorded in Genesis 33 and the mother of our Lord and Savior recorded in the Gospels. I am so thankful God chose to record their stories to give us

✧ Image is Everything...or is it? ✧

continued from page 2

hope and encouragement. If He could use these women in extraordinary ways, image issues and all, don't you think He can use you in extraordinary ways?

A Personal Perspective Melody Congdon

Have you ever studied a mosaic? Like that cruise ship commercial where the last scene becomes many little pictures that make up one big picture. If you look close, you can see small pieces, individual pictures that come together and make one beautiful image. Aren't we like that? It's many pieces, not just one picture, that come together to make up one's personal image. Here are some "pieces" of your personal image to consider.

Let's start first with your *family of origin*. For example, I am the firstborn, the oldest of two daughters. As I grew up, I was a tomboy, the son my father never had. That's where I got my love to paint. And, why you can find me at WalMart in my grungy clothes without a second thought. We all have a history with our families and one that influences who we are and how we see ourselves. Think about your family of origin. What did your family always tell you? Wish you were more like your sister? Smarter like your brother? Maybe that you'd never

amount to anything? Or did someone in your family wish you would get a real job? Whatever it was your family said, you probably constantly replay that in your mind. We all have this kind of self-talk.

Then, there is always the issue of your *age*? We all know that as we get older everything seems to "go south." Or maybe you find yourself looking back and thinking you just don't have as much energy as you did back then.

Or what about your *stage in life*? You might have started out as a young, hip, career woman. Then found yourself being a stay-at-home-mom caring for toddlers. Dressed in an old sweatshirt that smells like spit-up and jeans that don't fit as good as they used to, you wonder when you'll ever get beyond poop pants. Just when you get comfortable with staying at home, you find yourself faced with the agonizing teenage years along with a return to the workforce. Time passed so quickly you hardly had time to recognize that you were moving into yet another stage. Staring at four walls you wonder, "how did I become an "empty nester" so fast?" So you get to work on learning how to care for grown kids, aging parents and rekindling your own marriage. Pretty soon, retirement is a word that conjures up more than

monthly installments into your retirement fund. Now you can travel or maybe you decide to volunteer or enjoy the grandkids and take up a new hobby. Or maybe you find yourself too tired to do anything. Your personal image is affected at each stage of your life. What stage are you in?

And, last, but not least, what haunts you? What *failures or mistakes* do you replay in your mind? Were you physically/sexually abused? Are you finding it hard to forgive yourself for something in the past? Do you feel unworthy? Do you have demons that raise their ugly heads regularly?

With all of these pieces making up the mosaic of our personal image, what's a girl to do? "Don't Go There!" When you stand at the mirror in the morning inspecting the wrinkles under your eyes, "Don't Go There!" When you face that monumental birthday and wonder where the time went, "Don't Go There!" When you think back and you see failure or mistakes, "Don't Go There!" Instead, remember God's standard is not the world's. We'll never measure up to the world's standards (besides that's not reality). Take what God has given you, use your gifts to their fullest! Fight the pressure to conform. Let's become "imagebreakers" together! And, "Don't Go There!"

WOMEN'S MINISTRY

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COMING TO A GARDEN NEAR YOU

Our 2007 summer evangelistic event will be a great opportunity for us to invite our friends and family to a casual and fun, non-threatening time of fellowship where they will hear the Gospel. Due to the success of last year's garden tour we are repeating that event on June 11. A trolley will take us to the beautiful gardens of TBCers Joyce Keys and Debbie Nigus as well as Ward-Meade Park Historic Gardens & The Garden by the Lake. The event will culminate at Lake Shawnee where refreshments will be served and a gospel message presented. More information and sign-ups will come in the future. Be praying about whom you should invite to this enjoyable evening where they will hear the life-changing message of Jesus Christ.



Beth Moore Conference

Omaha, Nebraska
May 11 & 12, 2007

Join other TBC women and friends for a girls road trip to Omaha to hear Beth's inspiring message and to sing praise music along with Travis Cottrell. It will be a wonderful weekend you won't soon forget.

\$55 Conference ticket
Hotel Rooms Reserved
Prices Vary
Ask at the Welcome Center

Additional expenses include money for gas and your food.

Contact Sandy Ruelle at 379-5667 for additional information, to request a conference ticket or reserve a hotel spot.

