

WESTERN CANADIAN  
DISTRICT OFFICE

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# Ministry Spouses Network Newsletter

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Life, Church and World Transformation



Dear Friends:

Lately, I've been contemplating how I can cultivate a more "resilient" attitude in my daily life. The dictionary defines this word: as "springing back", "returning to the original form", and "being buoyant."

I found some terrifically inspirational lessons on the subject during my search. I just finished reading a great book called Forgotten Voices, by Barbara L. Howe. This book documents the lives of several Alliance women who served our movement during its early days. It's an absolutely amazing book filled with the stories of the lives of women who lived each day of their lives with one purpose: to love their Lord and to make Him known. We owe these women much. Many of the churches across the prairies found their beginnings because these women decided to come work in communities that did not have a Christian church in their town. Most had very little training, very little money, no transportation and were placed in isolated locations. How did they stay resilient?

The one common principal that guided their life was a

dedication to studying the word of God and sharing what they had with others. It sounds so simple, but that's it. Many of you probably know some of these women personally. They began to build up a community of believers by visiting the people in the communities around them. Often they began Sunday schools and mid week



*Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord, rather than for men; knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve."*

~Colossians 3:23

clubs for children. From there, a church community would begin to meet for regular services. All through the trials and struggles these ladies prayed and loved those around them. They sought their Saviour and asked Him to give them the skills they needed to serve their communities; many, many people accepted Christ through their ministry. Often

these workers would go for months on end without any outside oversight from their supervisors. They were dedicated to carrying out their work just as we read in *Colossians 3:23* "Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord, rather than for men; knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve."

I know you will be inspired to read this book; it's available at the District office and through Global Vault of the C&MA.

I had the opportunity to spend an afternoon with Marilyn Woodruff at the end of January. If you want to learn about how to remain resilient as a follower of Christ, spend a few hours with Marilyn; she much to teach us all. Howard and Marilyn retired from formal ministry with the C&MA in December 2010. Together they served a wide variety of ministry situations for 53 years. (Howard actually served 55 years...Marilyn was completing bible school for 2 years during his first ministry assignment.)

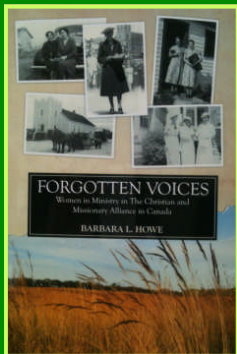
TRANSFORM

join the movement!

## MINISTRY SPOUSES



Marilyn Woodruff

Book by :  
Barbara Howe

The Woodruff's served in a wide variety of situations in Saskatchewan, British Columbia and Alberta. They also served in Devon, Alberta when it was beginning to be a bedroom community on the edge of Edmonton. Finally, Howard completed his ministry as the Chaplain at the Fort Saskatchewan Correctional Facility. Over fifty years Marilyn has seen and experienced enormous shifts in Canadian culture, both in society and church. For example, at the beginning of their marriage it was not acceptable for the wife of a pastor to work outside of the home. Now, it's the norm for ministry families that both partners are engaged in the workforce. It's interesting that Marilyn quoted the same scripture from Colossians that was present in the stories of the women recorded in Forgotten Voices. Marilyn is a servant of her Saviour. Once a person described her as one who was always willing to "fill in the cracks" and serve wherever there was a need in their church communities. The Woodruff's have lived their lives dedicated to aligning their life to the word of God. Marilyn shared that when they faced challenging

situations in their churches she often prayed Hebrews 12:14, "Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord."

Today retirement for the Woodruff's doesn't look much different than their work life of the last 5 decades. They are engaged in making the love of Christ known through their daily lives as they meet with others each week for coffee at A& W. Marilyn says that this group of people is really their small group. People share their lives, they are cared for and they encourage one another in their faith. Howard continues to be asked to lead bible studies and they are both active in the Senior's ministries at Beulah Alliance in Edmonton.

So, what have I learned about resiliency over the last couple of months? It's not that complicated, really. When I fill my mind with His empowering Word found in scripture, He builds up resilient attitudes within me. Let's pray for each other this month and ask the Lord to fill us with His encouragement so that we can live out Colossians 3:23 wherever we

find ourselves. Keep cultivating a resilient spirit and allow the Lord to transform you into His image.

Sincerely, *Elizabeth Chotka*

*Did you receive your invitation to our Spring Retreat? We are looking forward to having you come! Mark Saturday April 30<sup>th</sup> on your calendar....we're meeting at Airdrie Alliance! (See attached invitation!)*