



## For Immediate Release

For more information contact:  
Christian Board of Publication  
314-231-8500 x1327  
Wes Buchek, [wbuchek@cbp21.com](mailto:wbuchek@cbp21.com)

January 11, 2008

Press Release



## Chalice Press Author to Direct Research in Effective Congregational Transformation

ST. LOUIS, MO - Martha Grace Reese, author of the highly acclaimed *Unbinding the Gospel: Real Life Evangelism*, will direct research to discover, evaluate, and work with the dynamic of congregational transformation through faith development and faith sharing. The Lilly Endowment has awarded a major new four-year grant to support this second phase of the Mainline Evangelism Project, which will be called the Unbinding the Gospel Project.

The purposes of the Unbinding the Gospel Project phase are

1. to provide coaching that will support 1000+ congregations to use the Real Life Evangelism Series (*Unbinding the Gospel*, *Unbinding Your Church*, and *Unbinding Your Heart*) in the most systematic and effective way possible, and
2. to encourage pastors and lay leaders in 1000 congregations to work together as "field researchers," in "Communities of inquiry," to help discover the dynamics of church transformation.

Reese is enthusiastic about what is happening in congregations: "Since *Unbinding the Gospel* was published a year ago, we have heard amazing stories from the congregations that are using it. Typical mainline churches - Presbyterian, UCC, Disciples, Methodist - are seeing true transformation, in lives and in their congregations. We are grateful that this new grant from Lilly Endowment will allow us to help creative lay people and pastors think through, talk

through, pray through issues of faith deepening, faith sharing and congregational transformation."

"The most important point of the Unbinding the Gospel Project will be to help churches and their leaders slow down and pray. We believe with all our hearts that if we will ask Jesus to use us, and if we follow humbly and simply, that Spirit can use us to reach tens of thousands of people who do not have a conscious relationship with Christ, or who are not part of a loving faith community. The gifted coaches who will be working with churches are praying. I'm praying. We are looking for pastors and leaders who yearn to be part of something new, something real, something powerful for God." Congregations interested in being a part of the study may contact Reese at [www.GraceNet.info](http://www.GraceNet.info).

In *Unbinding the Gospel*, Reese presents a clear-spoken, hopeful vision for a future and gives us a way to get there-without gimmicky formulas, but hand-in-hand with God. Based on a four-year project researching superb mainline evangelism, Reese interviewed more than 1,200 people in some of the most successful evangelistic congregations in the country. The book, released January 2007, became a surprise, national top-seller that is now in its fifth printing. *The Christian Century* selected it as one of its 2007 "Take and Read" books. *The Alban Institute* named it as a 2007 "Top Pick." Brian McLaren, George Hunter, Todd Hunter (Alpha, North America), eight heads of denominations enthusiastically endorse the book.

Reese has authored two additional resources, released January 2008, that expand and intensify the effect of *Unbinding the Gospel* so that its impact will saturate the entire congregation:

- *Unbinding Your Heart: 40 Days of Prayer & Faith Sharing* (All Church Study in the Real Life Evangelism Series) is a six-week, small group study that is perfect for Lenten, summer, or fall study for your entire church. The book includes forty days of individual prayer exercises coordinated with each chapter. *Unbinding Your Heart* will enrich the congregation's community life and help individuals risk face-to-face encounters with God.

- *Unbinding Your Church* (Pastor's Guide to the Real Life Evangelism Series): Includes chapters for leading groups, establishing intercessory prayer groups, and organizing both leaders' studies and the six-week, all church study of *Unbinding Your Heart*. Sample sermons, worship resources, and full music plans by four musicians, and step-by-step planning tools and worship resources to support pastors. The planning tools include calendars, checklists for church staff and organizers, scripture exegesis, church newsletter samples, diagrams, simple to elaborate E-vent planning suggestions, Web site ideas, specific lesson plans, and more. Sermons, prayers, and organizational forms have been placed on the Web for FREE and easy access and downloads.

Through February 27, 2008, Chalice Press is offering a special 35% discount to customers that order any of the *Real Life Evangelism Series* titles. Customers can take advantage of the sale by giving the special promotion code RLE2008 when placing an order. To order books in the *Real Life Evangelism Series*, please contact Chalice Press at 1-800-366-3383, or go to [www.ChalicePress.com](http://www.ChalicePress.com).

###

Christian Board of Publication publishes educational resources that support congregational ministries invite people into deeper relationship with God, equip them as disciples of Jesus Christ, and send them into ministries as they are called by the Holy Spirit. Through its Chalice Press imprint, CBP publishes a variety of resources for pastors, seminarians, and laypersons. CBP is a general ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).