

Temple Daily Telegram

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Religion Today

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We need a much less narrow view of the Bible. Christianity is not the only source of truth. Christianity has much in common with a variety of faiths, even minor faiths. Narrow views are a harmful influence today. We are seeing it right now with Islam.

~ Barbara Wendland

Daring to share



Barbara Wendland sorts through the 4,500 copies of the January 2007 edition of *Connections*, her monthly newsletter that contains religious commentary. She works out of her Temple home on Cherokee Drive. (Photos by Shaina Sullivan)

Woman's controversial newsletter in 14th year of publication

By TOMIE LUNSFORD

It's yellow. It's monthly. And it's not a phone book.

Some, outraged by its message, tear the strip of paper into shreds and call it junk mail.

Others are intrigued. They study every edition and enjoy discussing its contents.

To the Temple woman who writes it, "Connections: A Monthly Newsletter Calling the Church to Faithful New Life" is a tool for her to express her thoughts about church and religion.

Schooled in philosophy and history, newsletter author Barbara Wendland said she seeks to eradicate the narrow

views of the Christian church. The unofficial reformer holds a master's degree in theology from the United Methodist Seminary at Southern Methodist University in Dallas.

The newsletter is a one-person project. Mrs. Wendland writes all the copy in the newsletter, designs it on a computer and finances the costs of printing and postage. At intermittent occasions, she said some of her readers voluntarily con-

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Newsletter

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tribute money for production costs.

This January as the newsletter is in its 14th year of publication, Mrs. Wendland said the hard-copy circulation averages at 4,500.

"I send an additional 1,500 via e-mail," Mrs. Wendland said. "Some of the recipients represent bigger groups, so when they get the newsletter, they make more copies to distribute."

So her total readership, which encompasses both in-state and out-of-state recipients, outnumbers the 6,000 she identified.

When Mrs. Wendland start-

want to know more?

Barbara Wendland of Temple co-authored "Spiritual Family Trees: Finding Your Faith Community's Roots" with Larry W. Easterling in 2001.

The 112-page, soft-back book is available online at www.alban.org. It sells for \$10. With the advertised 40 percent discount, the cost is the cost \$6.

Based in both their own small group experiences and in years of workshop leadership, the authors demonstrate a broad understanding of how knowing and sharing our spiritual roots can contribute to a more dynamic congregational life. Employing a lively variety of personal stories, they provide clues and immediately useful tools to uncover your faith heritage and gift churches with a powerful instrument for building more intimate communities.

ON THE WEB: For all editions of Barbara Wendland's newsletter "Connections," see www.connectionsonline.org.

Mrs. Wendland does believe in Jesus and God. She is a member of the First United

woman," Mrs. Wendland said. "I thought I was done. But then my daughter grew

