

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



From the Sanctuary to the Streets

By Wendy McCaig

In this packet you will find questions about each chapter of *From the Sanctuary to the Streets*.

These questions can be used in Bible Studies, small groups or for individual reflection. They will challenge you to examine your church, your community and yourself. How will *you* respond to the needs of the “least of these?”

www.WendyMcCaig.com

Find *Sanctuary* at Amazon and Barnes and Noble.com

CHAPTER 1

Learning to Dream Again

- ◆ Have you ever felt like you are on a hamster wheel, running faster and faster but never reaching your destination? Have you ever had an experience that knocks you off that wheel for a season?
- ◆ Do you agree with Wendy that most people are secretly dreaming of a world different than the one they find themselves in? How would your dream world differ from your current reality?
- ◆ What do you think of Swanson's road map to community transformation? What would *you* discover at the intersection of the needs and dreams of a community, the calling and capacities of the church and mandates and desires of God for a community?

Discussion Notes:

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CHAPTER 2

Dreaming of a Different Kind of Family

- ◆ What experience do you have with foster parenting? What do you think would be the greatest challenges of being a foster parent?
- ◆ What most impressed you about Aileen and her relationship with Via?
- ◆ What most inspired you about Via and her journey out of addiction?
- ◆ What experience have you had with individuals who struggle with drug addiction?
- ◆ How should we as a society and a community of Christians treat women who give birth to drug addicted babies?
- ◆ How might God be leading you to address these issues in *your* community?

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CHAPTER 3

The Yada Yada's Dream

- ◆ Does your church challenge you to go beyond the walls of the church or the comfort of your own community?
- ◆ How would you answer Wendy's question, "If you could do anything for God and knew you would not fail, what would you do?" What would your picture look like?
- ◆ If you asked the people in your church or community to draw a picture that would reflect their answer to question #2, what kinds of pictures do you think people would draw?
- ◆ Karen helped Wendy create a small group that allowed their neighbors to dream God-sized dreams together. Have you ever been a part of a group like that?
- ◆ Do you know any "Karens"; people who just naturally create safe spaces for others to share life together?
- ◆ How might God be leading *you* to create such a space in your church or community?

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CHAPTER 4

Dreams of a Stranger

- ◆ Have you ever stepped out of your comfort zone as Wendy did in visiting the prison? What was that experience like for you? How did you overcome your fear and anxiety?
- ◆ Have you ever encountered Christ through a relationship with one of the “least of these?” Have you ever felt a supernatural connection to a stranger simply because of the shared love of Christ?
- ◆ Would Abigail “fit in” at your church? Does your church have individuals who struggle with addiction, convicted felons, homeless individuals or individuals trapped in generational poverty? Is your church racially diverse? If not, why do you think this is the case? Do you think churches should be more diverse?
- ◆ What challenged, inspired or disturbed you in Phyllis’s story?
- ◆ How do you think Christians should be involved in the criminal justice system?
- ◆ How might God be calling *you* to respond to the needs of people like Abigail, Frances and Phyllis?

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CHAPTER 5

Dreams of Work

- ◆ What experience if any have you had with group homes, mentally handicapped individuals, or disabled individuals?
- ◆ How would you have responded to William's desire to make beds? If you had been Wendy in this story, how might you have responded? What role do you think work plays in an individual's mental and emotional health?
- ◆ Have you ever allowed guilt or a feeling of not being able to "fix" a broken system cause you to give up? How might Christians seek to bring justice to broken social systems?
- ◆ What most inspired you or disturbed you about Bob and Kathy's story?
- ◆ How do you think Christians can support individuals with physical, emotional and mental disabilities? How might Christians support the families of these individuals?
- ◆ How might God be leading *you* to respond to the needs of individuals like William, John, Kathy and Bob?

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CHAPTER 6

Dreams of Giving Back

- ◆ What experience have you had with homelessness?
- ◆ Have you ever taken the time to learn the story behind why someone became homeless?
- ◆ What do think of the statement “The mystery of Christian Hospitality is this: it is always mutual. The guest becomes the host and the host becomes the guest and, and both are changed?”
- ◆ If you had met Stephanie how might you have responded?
- ◆ What inspired, disturbed or challenged you in Stephanie’s story?
- ◆ What did you learn from Martha’s insights into homelessness?
- ◆ What role do you think hope and dreams play in helping someone escape poverty?
- ◆ How might your church respond to the needs of the homeless in your community?
- ◆ What role is God calling *you* to play regarding the issue of homelessness?

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CHAPTER 7

A Community Dreams

- ◆ What surprised you about how Embrace Richmond got started?
- ◆ Have you ever been a part of a grass roots movement like Embrace Richmond?
- ◆ How has racial tension impacted your community? Does your community have areas that have been devastated by “white flight?”
- ◆ What role do you think the church should play in rebuilding the abandoned place within the kingdom?
- ◆ What inspired, challenged or disturbed you about Tony Brickhouse’s story?
- ◆ What assets have you seen within impoverished communities? What gifts might impoverished individuals have to give to their communities? How might those assets and gifts be unified for the greater good?
- ◆ Is God leading *you* into the abandoned places?

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CHAPTER 8

I Have a Dream of Reconciliation

- ◆ What thoughts did you have as you read Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech?
- ◆ Do you see race as an important issue as it relates to poverty in your community? If so, how does race factor into the discussion?
- ◆ Have you experienced or witnessed racial injustice either toward yourself or someone else you know?
- ◆ What role do you think fear plays in the ongoing racial tensions in our country?
- ◆ What inspired, challenged or disturbed you about Martha Rollins' story?
- ◆ How can Christians and congregations help advance the goal of racial reconciliation in your community?
- ◆ Is this an issue *you* personally feel called to address in your community?

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CHAPTER 9

Dreams Lost

- ◆ How would you have responded to the “shooting” if you were Wendy or one of her suburban volunteers?
- ◆ What experience have you had with individuals suffering from addiction?
- ◆ What experience or insights do you have regarding the issue of co-dependency?
- ◆ What inspired, challenged or disturbed you about Sharon’s story?
- ◆ What role do you think Christians and local congregations can play in helping those who suffer from addiction find healing and wholeness?
- ◆ Are addiction and/or co-dependency an issue *you* personally feel called to address in your own community?

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CHAPTER 10

Crazy Dreams

- ◆ Have you ever felt like giving up on your dreams?
- ◆ Have you ever witnessed God showing up in those moments and providing in miraculous ways?
- ◆ How important do you think peer support is to ministry leaders?
- ◆ What kind of support system do you have in place to keep you going when you want to give up?
- ◆ Does your congregation recognize the special needs of single mothers in your community? If so, in what way are single mothers supported?
- ◆ What inspired, challenged or disturbed you about Sylvia Stewart's story?
- ◆ How is God calling *you* to respond to your own need for support or that of others in your community?

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CHAPTER 11

Sacrificial Dreams

- ◆ How many truly impoverished individuals do you know personally?
- ◆ How have you been changed through your personal relationships with those trapped in poverty?
- ◆ Can you identify with the inner struggle Wendy felt regarding her own personal wealth and how she was using that wealth?
- ◆ Have you ever sacrificed personally in order to provide for the needs of the poor in your community?
- ◆ What inspired, challenged or disturbed you about Chris, Caitlin, Kristen and Caroline's story?
- ◆ How important do you think family unity is when it comes to making a significant sacrifice to help others?
- ◆ Do you believe that even small sacrifices can have significant impact?
- ◆ Is God calling *you* to make a sacrifice for others?

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CHAPTER 12

Dream Stealers

- ◆ Which of Rosalind's challenges (substandard housing, automotive repair, exploitative lending practices) most resonated or outraged you?
- ◆ How might Christians help to protect from or help low income families deal with these kinds of challenges?
- ◆ What are your thoughts regarding prosperity preaching? Do you see this kind of preaching as a positive message or a negative message within impoverished communities? In what ways does this message build up or harm impoverished communities?
- ◆ What inspired, challenged or disturbed you about Ellis Henderson's view of prosperity preaching?
- ◆ How should Christians who encounter spiritual teachings different than the teachings they are accustomed to address these issues in the context of urban ministry?
- ◆ How is God calling *you* to respond to the "Dream Stealers" in your community?

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CHAPTER 13

Dreams of Justice

- ◆ What experience have you had with sexual or domestic violence or victims of domestic violence?
- ◆ What about Maria's story most resonated with you?
- ◆ If you were Becky, would you have responded the same way to Maria's need?
- ◆ What about LaKisha's story most inspired, challenged or disturbed you?
- ◆ What role should Christians play in fighting for justice for people like Maria and LaKisha?
- ◆ Have you ever been an "encourager" to someone like LaKisha or Cynthia? How did that relationship shape you?
- ◆ Could God be leading *you* to become an "encourager" to someone in your community? If so, how might you respond?

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CHAPTER 14

Entitled to Dream

- ◆ What experience do you have with individuals receiving government support (TANF, SSI, SSDI)?
- ◆ What experience have you had with what Wendy calls “a spirit of entitlement?” How do you think we as a society have contributed to that “spirit?”
- ◆ What can we as Christians do to combat a spirit of entitlement in our own communities?
- ◆ Wendy identifies a shift in her ministry when she moved from being a community based “grass-roots” movement to being a defined non-profit driven program. What are your thoughts regarding this shift? How might an organization that desires community involvement guard against this shift?
- ◆ What role do you think community service should play in the lives of those receiving public support?
- ◆ What inspired, challenged or disturbed you about Georgiana’s and/or Rosalind’s stories?
- ◆ How might God be calling *you* to work with individuals who are currently dependent on public support?

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CHAPTER 15

Dreams of Hope

- ◆ What experience have you had with suicide or survivors of suicide?
- ◆ What role do you think depression and mental illness play in the lives of impoverished individuals?
- ◆ What impact do you think traumatic experiences like attempted, completed suicide, or severe mental illness have on the caregivers of these individuals?
- ◆ How can your congregation support individuals who suffer from mental illness? How can you support the caregivers of these individuals?
- ◆ What mental health providers serve the indigent population in your community? How might your church partner with these service providers?
- ◆ What inspired, challenged or disturbed you about Charles Fitzgerald's story?
- ◆ How might God be leading *you* to respond to the needs of the mentally ill in your community?

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CHAPTER 16

When Dreams Collide

- ◆ How important do you think collaboration is when working with impoverished populations?

- ◆ What agencies address the following issues in your community?
 - a. Homelessness
 - b. Substance Abuse
 - c. Domestic Violence
 - d. Mental Health for the indigent
 - e. Affordable Permanent Housing

- ◆ How does your congregation collaborate with other service providers in your community?

- ◆ What barriers exist in establishing greater collaboration between congregations and non-profits in your community?

- ◆ What most inspired, challenged or disturbed you about Karen Stanley's story?

- ◆ How might God be calling *you* to help increase collaboration in your community?

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CHAPTER 17

Little Dreamers With Big Visions

- ◆ What experience do you have with grass roots community development efforts?
- ◆ Do you think Christians and/or congregations should be involved in community development efforts in impoverished communities?
- ◆ What low-income communities are within a thirty-minute drive of your congregation or home? What issues do these communities face?
- ◆ Do you think community based leadership is important in community development? If so, why?
- ◆ How might you or your congregation identify potential community based leaders within impoverished neighborhoods in your community?
- ◆ What inspired, challenged or disturbed you about Tammy McClure's story?
- ◆ How might your church support and encourage community-based leaders?
- ◆ Is God calling *you* to invest in impoverished communities and community based leaders? If so, in what way?

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CHAPTER 18

Dreams for the Church

- ◆ Do you believe Christians are called to actively engage in the fight against poverty?
- ◆ How is your congregation responding to this call?
- ◆ How would you like to see your congregation respond?
- ◆ How might you help bridge the gap between what is currently being done and what you would like to see happen?
- ◆ Do you see “care of the poor” as a spiritual practice? If so, how might it contribute to the spiritual growth of Christians who engage in this practice? How might this practice impact your congregation as a whole?
- ◆ What do you think the church of the future looks like?
- ◆ How might God be calling *you* to shape the church of the future?

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CHAPTER 19

The Wounded Dreamer

- ◆ When you look back at your journey so far, what significant events have shaped you as a person and as a minister to others?

- ◆ How has your own personal trail in life prepared you to serve others?

- ◆ How are *you* currently using your own painful experiences to help others? How might you do so in the future?

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CHAPTER 20

Lessons From a Dreamer

- ◆ What lessons will you take away from the stories shared in *From the Sanctuary to the Streets*?

- ◆ What lessons will you share with your congregation or community?

- ◆ How will *you* integrate these lessons in your own life, family, ministry or congregation?

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THANK YOU!

A note from Wendy...

Dear Reader,

Thank you for reading *From the Sanctuary to the Streets!* My hope is that your journey does not end here but that you seek out the intersection of the needs of your community and your God-given dreams. This book is not just my story but the story of many dreamers who are changing the world one person, one community, one church at a time. As this unending story continues to unfold we will be sharing our collective stories at www.WendyMcCaig.com. I welcome your feedback and invite you to share your response, questions, stories, or concerns regarding the Discussion Questions or any other issues raised by the book.

I hope you enjoyed reading the book and will share how God uses these stories to transform you and your community. Together we can love God and our neighbors by putting our faith to work in the world.

Thank you,
Wendy McCaig



Wendy McCaig is an author, speaker, Executive Director and founder of Embrace Richmond. Wendy holds a Masters of Divinity from Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond and has worked more than ten years in the local church and six with homeless and at-risk individuals. Wendy is married to her high school sweetheart, Chris. They have three wonderful teenage daughters and reside in Midlothian, Virginia. Find Wendy online at www.WendyMcCaig.com.



Embrace Richmond is a faith-based nonprofit seeking to unite greater Richmond and strengthen impoverished communities. Learn more about Embrace at www.EmbraceRichmond.org, on Facebook (Embrace Richmond) and Twitter (@EmbraceRichmond). All proceeds from the book sales support Embrace.