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Winter 2018

Men and women serving and leading as equals

GENDER AND CHURCH PLANTING

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Feminized or Just Faithful? How Women Church Planters Point Us toward Jesus

If you've been around the evangelical world for long, you've probably heard people theorize about why more women than men go to church. One popular suggestion (and complaint) is that the church is too feminized, so men aren't interested. Too much talk about intimacy and community and lovey-dovey Jesus. Not enough talk about sports and trucks and strong, powerful Jesus.

Given the seemingly endless sports metaphors that rain down from American pulpits, one wonders what exactly is too feminine about church. The touchy-feely songs? Turns out a lot of them were actually written by men.¹ I believe the real issue is this: the very essence of Christianity is incompatible with our current culture of masculinity.

American masculinity, and its Christian form, "biblical manhood," are defined by power and entitlement. We are told that men have the final say, and women are to submit. Any challenge to a man's power is branded "disrespect" and justifies almost any response, even if violent. Men are entitled to sex. When they violate women and the law to get it, we excuse them, saying the woman is at least partly to blame, and it'd be a shame for one mistake to alter the man's bright future.

Men learn that manhood depends on avoiding "feminine" things. This is

the reason why men won't drink 'diet' soda and have had to have differently-named low-calorie versions marketed specially to them. It's the reason why men resist using lotions and moisturizers even if they have neutral, non-flowery scents, and why some companies advertise their products by denigrating competitors with such words as "precious" and "princess."²

No wonder so many men are so concerned about a feminized church.

Contrast this with what Jesus taught on a hill in Galilee (Matt. 5–7). He spoke of a new kingdom that belonged to the poor, the meek, the outsider, the peacemaker, the merciful—opposite of those who hold power in the world. Jewish and Roman power-brokers recognized Jesus' teachings as a threat

to the established order and executed him. But he defeated their power in resurrection and called us to carry on his work. Is it any surprise that the early church attracted the same kinds of people Jesus did—women, the poor, the sick, the outcast?

As the body of Christ and the earthly manifestation of God's kingdom, the church should be allied with the vulnerable and powerless. The very premise of the church is a community that values all people fully and invites them to experience full humanity in vulnerable relationship with God and each other. We are to be the antidote to sexism, racism, classism, and any other forces that elevate one group of people over another.

This isn't easy for those of us with power and privilege to accept. That's why Jesus said it was easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than to enter the kingdom of God. The same might be said for a man whose identity is built around power and entitlement. Jesus didn't revise the Sermon on the Mount to appeal to the powerful. He told them to lay down their power and follow him. Likewise, we don't need more men in pulpits saying and singing manlier things. We need communities where men have to lay down their privilege and follow Jesus.

We need churches planted and led by women and men who are devoted to rooting out patriarchy and all forms of oppression. Then we will see the church become more like Jesus. Women in church leadership are not in the business of feminizing the church, but being Christ in the world.

In this issue, we look at gender and church planting. As I read the submissions for this issue, I saw a vision of church as a radical alternative to the norm. Where the church is less about serving up theological formulations and more about serving people tangibly. Where men and women lead together, and where men lay down their power for the good of everyone. It's about winning people to Christ by being Christ to them.

If that's "feminized church," then so be it.

1. Jeffrey Miller, "Common Sense on 'The Feminization of The Church'" *Christian Standard*, Nov. 14, 2011, <http://christianstandard.com/2011/11/common-sense-on-%E2%80%99the-feminization-of-the-church%E2%80%99/>.

2. Kristen Rosser, "The 'Feminization' of the Church," *Wordgazers Words* (blog), March 1, 2014, <http://krwordgazer.blogspot.com/2014/03/the-feminization-of-church.html>.

GOD CALLS IN BLACK SHARPIE:

How Planting a Church Made Me Reconsider My Beliefs about Gender Roles

Kay Bonikowsky

"KAY SHOULD BE AN ELDER."

It was handwritten in black sharpie on a big white page—just one quote among many others on one of those big flip chart tripods. Some life moments sparkle with meaning and clarity, and this was one of those moments for me. I felt my face get hot and my insides went queasy. I hoped no one would notice that sentence, yet I also wanted everyone to see—and affirm—it.

Let me back up.

Seven years after we'd planted a church, our team was in crisis mode. The church needed something, but none of us could agree on what exactly that "something" was. We were a core team of eight, four married couples who lived and breathed church ministry. But now that we were settling in for the long haul, we found that the gifts and talents that made us a compatible and effective planting team were not the same gifts and talents we'd need to manage that church. We were cracking. We hired a strategic vision team to tell us what was wrong and how to fix it. That group was responsible for the suggestion that



made my stomach turn inside out. Someone in our church had said it, and the strategy group thought it important enough to write down for us to consider.

"Kay should be an elder."

My friends and co-workers chuckled good-naturedly at the sentiment, but the idea was disregarded without much thought. *Of course* Kay can't be an elder. Kay is a woman. And although Kay spends thirty plus hours a week ministering to our body of believers and studying the binding off of her Bible, *of course* she can't be an elder. Women can plant churches, but they can't have authority over men when those churches take off. *Of course*.

I was an unpaid pastor and untitled deacon for seven years as we planted and grew a church out of nothing. I counseled. I taught. I encouraged. I fed. I made decisions. I organized. I designed. I *led*. A title would have been nice, sure. But I was doing all of the things those with official titles did, and it was fulfilling at the time. Since no one was sure what to call me, "elder's wife" stuck. But I was always one step removed from a position of visible authority, or even the idea that I might be called to that role. Until someone noticed my gifts and call and wrote it down in black sharpie.

As I read my name on the board, I felt different. For the first time in all my years serving the church, I felt like I had a purpose and a place—even without proper recognition. Or a paycheck. They didn't make me an elder. Despite all my work and dedication as a church planter, the thought was never even considered because I was a woman.

The church we planted was vocally complementarian, but effectively egalitarian. All four of the founding couples had strong wives. We worked in partnership with our husbands, and our voices were respected and heard. We believed the men had the last word, but they never spoke it. I taught and counseled as a complementarian for a decade, teaching wives how to submit and husbands how to love.

an elder never sat easy with him. When we agreed that would be best for him, it became clear: I had no position without his. His official position lent credibility to my unofficial one. How could I now justify all the roles I'd filled before? I wasn't a pastor, although I counseled in the place of one. I wasn't a deacon, although I served in every function required of a deacon. I wasn't an elder, although my advice was sought at every level. Now, I wasn't even an elder's wife. I made no sense.

I know I'm not the only woman to be passed over for formal leadership after a church they worked hard to plant is established. Something shifts when a woman asks that her work and calling be formally recognized in these spaces. The leadership and direction she previously

the inconsistencies and arbitrary restrictions during my time as a church planter, I searched Scripture for a different understanding. As I blogged through my discoveries, I was helped along by many wise egalitarians. They walked alongside me, guided my steps, and answered my most challenging questions. It wasn't always easy, but God's Spirit comforted me as I revealed my new beliefs to my husband, family, and friends. And though I at first wore the label "Christian feminist" with shame and then with mild hesitation, I now claim it with pride.

That strategy meeting took place just a few months before my husband and I moved to another town. I would never lead in that church we'd worked so hard to plant, but the journey I began there

I wasn't a pastor, although I counseled in the place of one. I wasn't a deacon, although I served in every function required of a deacon. I wasn't an elder, although my advice was sought at every level.

I believed that as a woman, God had gifted me for ministry, but had limited me to certain roles. Once, my male co-worker who served as pastor mentioned putting me in the pulpit. I balked and said something funny about "liking that too much," with the unspoken implication that it would be a slippery slope for me. I thought it might tempt me to seek other leadership roles, outside of what I believed was God's design. My coworker never mentioned it again.

After that strategy meeting, my husband, a founding elder of the church plant for seven years, asked me if he could step down. He knew that my quasi title in the church depended on his position and how important that was to me, but being

provided (often for free) and without objection during the church planting phase becomes unacceptable and even "rebellious." These are just a few of the inconsistencies that drove me to reconsider my beliefs about gender roles.

"Kay should be an elder."

When I read those life-altering words, an idea was planted in my mind that couldn't be erased. Even though I'd never actually *preached* or actively defied complementarianism, I found myself sitting at the top of the slide into egalitarianism. I was propelled on a journey of personal exploration into the three problem passages barring the way for women in ministry. Seeing

continued. I realize now that God's call was always present in my life, but I misread it. He had to write it in black sharpie for me to figure it out.

"Kay should be an elder."

Yes. I should be.



Kay Bonikowsky and her husband team-planted a church in Washington state for seven years before moving away.

She is nearing completion of her MDiv in theological studies at Multnomah University. She blogs on women and the Bible at kbonikowsky.com.

WE'RE BETTER TOGETHER:

7 Words of Wisdom for Women Church Planters

Sarah Swartzendruber

When I was a little girl I dreamed of being many things. I rode my bike pretending it was a horse as I acted out scenes from *Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman*. I sang and danced like Amy Grant in our living room. I taught my classroom of stuffed animals with my overhead projector. Never did I ever consider being a pastor or, even worse, a church planter.

So, what changed?

My senior year of college I was approached about becoming a youth pastor at a large church. I accepted the job, telling my parents (who had just paid for me to get a degree in elementary education and Spanish) that this was “a fun job that would get me back closer to home.” While I think I believed that, I also think I knew deep inside that there was more to what was about to happen.

After being a youth pastor for four years, with a boss that was more wrapped up

in an abusive affair he was having than our ministry, I was approached by a trusted friend about planting a church. I will never forget the day I walked out of that friend’s office and told him my ideal job was to oversee ministry for kids through age eighteen. I knew that if we could pull this off, ministry would become much more than just “a fun job” for me. What I didn’t know was what it meant to be a church planter as a twenty-five-year-old woman.

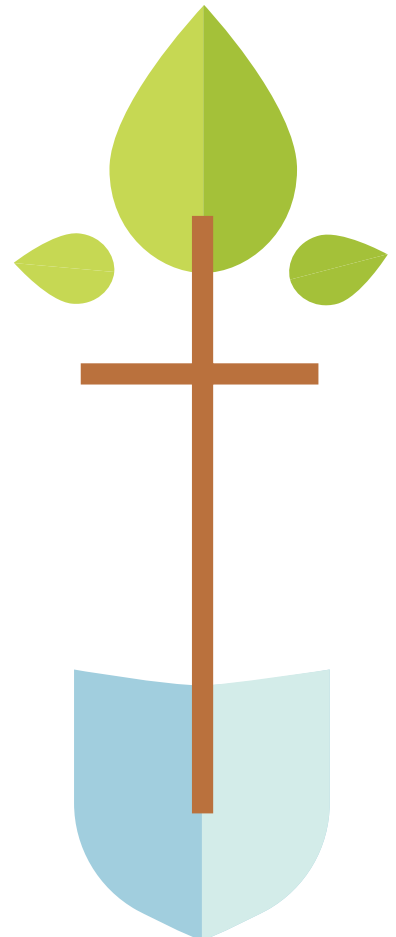
There were the transitions and instability of young adulthood. We started planting the church while still working other jobs. Within a few months, I quit one job, got married, and came back to my job at the church plant.

And there was the difficulty of church leadership dynamics. While our church was explicitly egalitarian, I wasn’t present for the first month of the church’s life. We realized in hindsight that during that short time,

my co-pastor had to make decisions that inadvertently created a power dynamic where he was the senior pastor and I was less senior. Not only were gender and age working against me, but the “normal” system of top-down church leadership. It is simple to say we are an egalitarian church, and that we equally value both pastors, regardless of gender. The reality of how that plays out, however, is endlessly complex.

I never had friends that were pastors, and I certainly don’t have female friends who are church planters. Planting a church as a woman not married to your co-pastor is even rarer. It’s complicated, hard work, and also incredibly rewarding. We’re better together.

Based on my experience, I offer these seven pieces of advice to other women church planters.



You belong, even if you're the only woman in the room.

The world of church planting is male-dominated, to say the least. Even in egalitarian settings, it's easy to feel out of place. I once attended a local Portland church planter organization where everyone in the room was male except for me. The well-known pastor leading the meeting knew I was there, and even pointed me out to the room. Yet, he used only male adjectives the entire meeting when referring to pastors! Most of the others didn't look me in the eyes until they could find some way to justify my presence to themselves. They first assumed I was my co-pastor's wife. After I corrected them, they only became comfortable with me when I mentioned that I worked with kids and students. It was that day I decided I would no longer introduce myself as a "family pastor" but simply a "co-pastor." I realized that I would need to be comfortable with the tensions of my role as a female co-pastor in a world of mostly male pastors.

When men are afraid to work with you, it's not your fault.

As a feminist, I'm proud of what the #MeToo movement has done to bring to light the epidemic of abuse in our world and to hold men accountable. But, for a lot of men, especially pastors, it has reinforced a fear of working alongside women. Plenty of pastors already avoided mentoring or working relationships with women, citing the Billy Graham Rule. Now, afraid of doing something wrong, they try to avoid working with women even more. My age, gender, pitch of voice, and blonde hair immediately work against me when I gather with other church leaders. I used to feel shame, but I've learned to be brave and know that God called me, as I am. I don't need to apologize for that.

See a counselor.

Being a church leader means carrying a heavy spiritual and emotional load. You work with co-leaders that are, well, people. That means you won't always get along or agree, and it will be hard to love them at times. When this happens, I know I can't simply talk to my best friends or my husband, because of course they'll be on "Team Sarah." They'll create an echo chamber. And, if those you confide in are also part of your church community, you can create conflict and tension where it doesn't need to exist. Don't let your solution be to simply carry the burden alone. Find a neutral party you can process with, ideally a counselor. Or at least a friend who lives somewhere else and can be a neutral party. You need someone you can talk to in order to be a better pastor and team player, and without





The support of my co-pastor, who advocates for me in all-male circles, and the support of my husband, who affirms me in every way, make it possible for us to show that it's healthy and good for women and men to lead together. It's my dream that the kids in our church will grow up confident that there's no reason women and men can't both lead in the church.

unduly influencing church members' opinions of your fellow leaders.

Be in community with people who respect your unique position.

As a pastor, you need community more than ever, but you also need to be discerning. You can't necessarily talk about everything going on at work like others can, and you need a group that affirms that. I've come to appreciate the people who ask me how I am and are prepared to hear me say the truth with as many or as few details as I can add. For me this has come through a women's small group that has held my hopes, dreams, prayers, and fears. They have shown up when I preach and been a smiling and nodding face. They have also been a voice of encouragement, although there are certain things we cannot talk about.

For those untouchable topics, find professional friends that can hold onto those life moments. For me, that looks like two women who are in parachurch organizations. We can talk about work, marriage, friendship and sexism. They hold me accountable to conflicts I don't

want to have at work, continue to help me find my voice, and remind me to be brave when I feel like I am drowning.

Consider co-pastoring.

Not everyone is called to co-pastor, and that's okay—we should do what God calls us to. But I urge women and men called to leadership to consider a co-pastor structure. It's not easy, but I'm glad to co-pastor my church with a male pastor. His advocacy for me when I'm the only woman in the room has been a huge encouragement, and so has his eagerness to work together as we navigate the daily complexities of a sexist culture and teaching the Bible from our different perspectives as male and female.

And, we get to show that male and female co-leading is possible and good. People question whether men and women can work together, and insist on the Billy Graham Rule. But guess what? My old church was big on the Billy Graham Rule, but it didn't stop my boss there from having an affair. We can rewrite the story when we model something better, with the support of our community.

The first time I got in a car alone with my co-pastor, I texted my husband to let

him know, because the Billy Graham Rule was so engrained in me. He's an engineer who rides to and from job sites with women all the time, and he encouraged me that he loves and trusts me. That if I'm going to be a pastor, I need to be able to do what the job requires—including being alone with my male colleagues—without texting him or feeling ashamed. The support of my co-pastor, who advocates for me in all-male circles, and the support of my husband, who affirms me in every way, make it possible for us to show that it's healthy and good for women and men to lead together. It's my dream that the kids in our church will grow up confident that there's no reason women and men can't both lead in the church and that, if they're called to co-pastor, they can do that, too.

Advocate for other women.

My co-pastor has advocated for me, and without that, I wouldn't be where I am. As much as it's in my power, I advocate for other women. We need each other for community, for mentorship, for encouragement. We are laying the groundwork for generations of women leaders to come.

Sexism hurts, but together, you and your church can fight it.

If you're a woman, you already know that sexism is everywhere, and even the kindest, most well-meaning people aren't immune. Sometimes people don't realize they're doing it. Sometimes they think they're doing you a favor, showing you "tough love" by speaking God's "truth" to you. Sometimes, they're just mean. No matter what, it's a difficult position to be in as a woman pastor. How should we respond? Why should it be our job to respond to these comments? How will this comment or my response impact my relationship with this person? How will my response be judged, and what emotions can I

show? The questions are endless, and I wish I had the answers.

I'm here to tell you that it's okay to be hurt, and it's okay to be angry. Let your anger be a fire in your belly to advocate for change and to challenge your community to be different from the world. If your instinct is to respond calmly and start a healthy conversation about women, ministry, and sexism, then do it. If not, that's okay. Maybe that's someone else's job, not yours.

Regardless of your response, you should not need to bear the weight of these comments alone. If your church believes in having a woman as a pastor, it needs to stand behind you and do what's necessary to cultivate a culture that recognizes sexism and patriarchy and works to root them out of every corner of our lives. If this means that someone who doesn't believe in your leadership

leaves the church, then that may simply need to happen.

Can women be church planters? Absolutely. I believe that the more we see models of males and females together, the more we see the kingdom. I read about a Jesus who sees women, touches them, goes to their homes, loves them deeply. If Jesus was willing to work against culture to interact with women, why can't we today in 2018?



Sarah Swartzendruber is a pastor in Portland, Oregon, where she loves everything active, sunshine, playing

games, coffee with friends, or snuggling puppies. She is passionate about empowering other female pastors and working with kids and students to find their place of belonging.



I am a dual degree student at North Park Theological Seminary- M.Div. & MBA. Combining these degrees has allowed me to polish my skills with people, and has equipped me with the skills necessary to lead well. God has made it clear and evident how I can utilize both degrees to serve.

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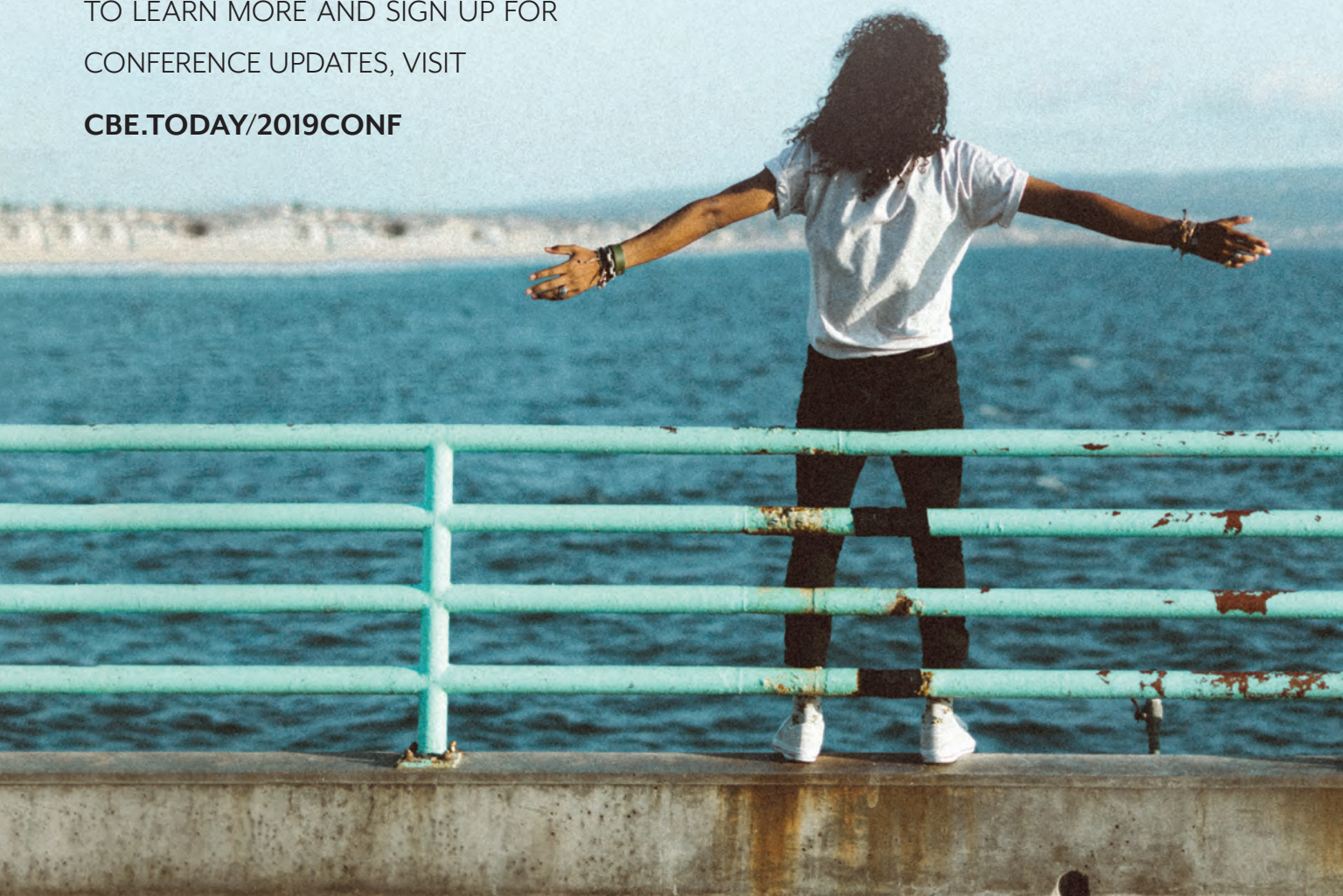
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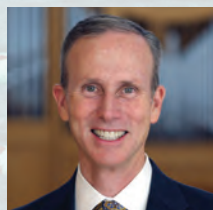
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Obstacles and Opportunities

for Women Planting Churches

Taeler Morgan

In July of 2015, someone asked if I'd ever thought about planting a church. That question changed my life.

I was thirty-four at the time—twenty years a Christian with seventeen years of paid ministry experience. I'd graduated seminary with an MDiv, been ordained in the PCUSA, served in five different churches as everything from a youth intern to a head of staff, and worked as a hospital chaplain.

Throughout my ministry journey as a woman leader, I've faced significant opposition. But I've also been ballasted by many professors, pastors, and colleagues who passionately championed women in leadership, and my giftings and call in particular.

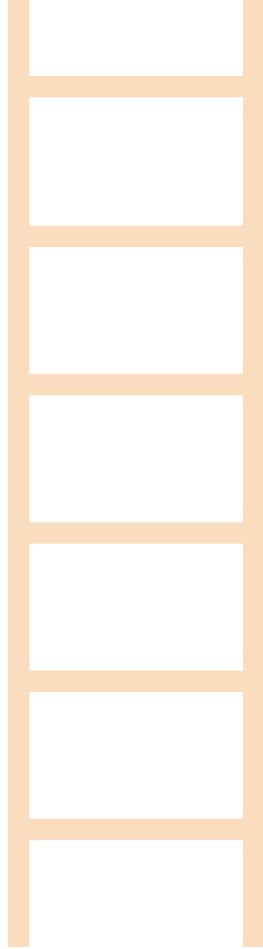
These amazing leaders helped me discern my call as a pastor. They used their influence and sponsorship to open relationships and doors, and were unfailing sources of encouragement and support. I couldn't be more grateful for each of them.

And so it was that in 2015, despite serving a wonderful church full of people I love, I started to experience some holy discontent. Like most established churches, our bread and butter was the Sunday morning service. We were highly programmatic and we functioned under the ever-present 80/20 rule: 20% of our people were highly invested—and doing 80% of the work.

We had a truly incarnational desire to move beyond the walls of the church to engage our community, and we put people and money into meaningful local and global causes. Still, much of the life of the church centered on the physical building: Sunday mornings; midweek programming for children, teens, and adults; midweek ministry team meetings; midweek elder/deacon meetings. Our goal of creating a strong discipleship environment continued to be elusive.

Over the next couple of years, I discerned a new call. With a desire to focus on making





For women who feel called to lead in denominations that don't welcome their gifts, church planting can be a great opportunity. It often happens outside of the established church, sometimes allowing women more freedom to lead and use their gifts.

disciples who, in turn, make disciples, I left the security of my established church and in the process, I began to rethink much of what it meant to be a pastor and leader. Together, my friends and I set out to explore a new way of *being the church*: church planting.

We imagined a community that welcomed people at different stages of the faith journey. A community that wasn't defined by a locally-rooted building but by the locally-rooted presence of its people. A community where transformational discipleship was the norm; where we lived on mission—together—for the good of others and the community; and where growth meant the multiplication of new communities instead of the enlargement of a single church body.

As we began talking about that vision, we sensed that God was already at work—fostering excitement and courage in the hearts of our families and friends. But we also encountered some difficulties. Our church was multi-denominational and as we looked for a church planter assessment, we found that many simply wouldn't even assess a woman lead planter, or they were willing to assess women planters in *theory* but were hostile toward us in practice.

Well before fundraising began, it became clear that it would be difficult to execute our vision for a multiplication of micro-churches. It was one thing to be a young, white man with a vision for a church. It was entirely different to be a woman with a bold church-planting vision. We learned we would have to show the proof in the pudding if we wanted to secure stable financing.

Finally, in July of 2017, Gather Tacoma was born. We eventually settled into a rhythm of open Friday night gatherings—where any and all are welcome to eat, pray, sing, learn, and practice faith together. As we lived into

our call to gather around a shared table, on a shared journey, and for a shared purpose, the roots we planted took.

As I reflect on my journey as a woman church planter, I'm reminded of what it took to get here. We face many barriers and obstacles. In addressing them, I hope to equip and encourage women who feel a call toward church planting. I also hope that churches and denominations will note these hurdles and make institutional changes. Here are four obstacles for women church planters and how we can begin to address them.

Obstacle #1: Not Invited

For women who feel called to lead in denominations that don't welcome their gifts, church planting can be a great opportunity. It often happens outside of the established church, sometimes allowing women more freedom to lead and use their gifts.

Additionally, Christians who are called to plant churches may have very different gifts than Christians who lead in the established church. Shepherding and teaching gifts are valued and elevated in traditional contexts, while evangelism, a prophetic ability to “embody a countercultural community,”¹ and a pioneering spirit are often prized in planting contexts. It's a grassroots effort that is, in some ways, very unlike pastoring a traditional church. But if our understanding of ministry leadership is limited to the role of pastor in an established church—and particularly one that excludes women from leadership—we may never consider church planting. There's also a general sense that church planters should be young, aggressive men, making it even more difficult for women to enter into and succeed in those spaces.

I never expected to be a church planter. In seminary and in my denomination, I was trained to pastor the established

church. I never took a class on church planting and I never visited a church plant. No one had ever even said the words “church planting” to me until seventeen years into ministry. For many women, planting is never presented as an option—even in denominations that affirm women in ministry.

We should ask ourselves if trained women are being overlooked because they don’t fit a leadership type that we associate with planters. Or are they being redirected to more conventional roles in the established church? Either way, we must ask the question, denominationally and at the seminary level, are we not inviting women to consider church planting because our imagination for the ministry of our women leaders is too small?

Obstacle #2: Lack of Imagination

I’m grateful for educators and mentors who affirmed my leadership gifts and encouraged me to pursue the highest levels of leadership in the established church. But I wasn’t encouraged to consider less orthodox leadership opportunities, or the benefits and challenges for women called to plant churches. I knew little about church planting, but it conjured up notions of fifteen-hour days with little sleep and even less pay. The ideal church planter also appeared to be a dynamic young man (preferably with a wife and kids) with an authoritative leadership style, who could draw a crowd to his platform and cast a vision compelling enough to convince people to buy-in with their time and money. I didn’t fit that ideal and nothing about that model appealed to me. In other words, my own imagination for church planting was limited by a caricature of both the process and the kind of leadership required to succeed.

We need more imagination about what it means to plant a church. As a woman, wife, and mother, I now see church planting as a beautiful intersection of the most important parts of my life: my faith, my family, and my community. We also need to expand our picture of what church planting leadership should look like to include women and people with less authoritative leadership styles.

As a person with catalyzing and teaching gifts, church planting allows me to step more fully into my entrepreneurial abilities. But instead of starting

programs, I’m starting relationships and equipping everyday people to lead in their everyday lives. What if we invited people to consider a new/old way of church planting? What if we lifted up the values of the early church: “tight-knit community, life-forming discipleship, locally-rooted presence, and boundary-crossing mission”?² If these became a defining set of characteristics and practices for church planting, perhaps we would see more women step into this opportunity.

Obstacle #3: Fear of Failure

As with any experiment or new venture, women church planters risk failure. As I stepped out of the known and into the unknown of planting, I was terrified of failing. Failure is tricky. It’s something we all experience and it’s a necessary part of our growth. But as a woman in ministry, I’ve found that my sisters and I experience failure differently than our brothers.

I was recently reading an article in a research journal on the referral effects of a surgeon losing a patient on their operating table. The research showed that when a male surgeon unexpectedly lost a patient, there was minimal change to the rate at which other doctors referred patients to them. But when a female surgeon had a patient unexpectedly die, her direct referral rate diminished by fifty-four percent, and so did the referral rates for every woman surgeon in the same specialty in her geographic area.³ When women fail, there is always a chance that our failure will be used not just as reason to question our own competence but to undermine other women as well. There is always a chance that *my* failure will inhibit the opportunities of women that are right behind me, and that some people will use my failure to call into question the leadership of women in general.

Failure is one of our best learning tools. Even though I know that to be true, failure still comes hard for me. Like me, many women feel pressure to perform perfectly in their professions. Failure is not just a sign of weakness; it feels like a mark of gendered incompetence. But knowing that women have tried, failed, and tried again gives me the courage to risk failure. If we are going to cultivate hospitable environments for women to experiment with church planting, we need to create a culture of vulnerability and transparency that acknowledges

and pushes back against the implicit bias women encounter when facing failure. We must portray failure as the natural repercussion of testing a bold hypothesis, not a risk that could derail a woman's ministry.

Obstacle #4: Loneliness

Finally, we must begin to build a community of women church planters, a space in which women can access each other and find mentors and resources. Church planting can be exhausting and isolating—all the more so for women. As I began my church plant, I quickly realized that planting was different from pastoring. I retained all my local pastor connections and thought they'd be a sufficient ministry community, but I quickly felt the yearning to know other women who were living into this unique ministry. I was lonely. A year into planting, I only knew two other women church planters. That's not enough. If women planters are going to start and sustain communities, they need to see plenty of other women at the table. And not just *see* them but have avenues to create relationships, hear stories, commiserate as needed, and celebrate as often as possible!

I want to see more women planting churches because I believe that it is necessary for the flourishing of the church. I believe that as women step into church planting in greater numbers, we will see more creative expressions of what it means to be the church, we will demonstrate more sustainable ways to equip the body of Christ, and we will cultivate environments that welcome a wider variety of people into the life of the community as a whole.

As women step into church planting in greater numbers, we will see more creative expressions of what it means to be the church.

We all have a part to play in making this dream a reality.

Seminaries and denominations:

Ask yourselves if your imagination for the leadership gifts of women is big enough. Are you training toward holistic or authoritative styles of leadership? You can make a point to ask the women under your influence if they would seriously consider a vision for church-planting that values their unique skills and gifts.

Church planting networks and organizations:

Ask yourselves if you're creating hospitable places for women to experiment with church-planting. Have you created learning environments where women can access other women? Is there mentoring, from both women and men, available? Does your training take into account the unique experience of women planters? And are you intentionally creating space to talk about the experiences of those on the margins?

Local churches:

Invite women to be equipped as leaders and disciple-makers. Question your implicit bias, learn to be honest with yourselves when you're championing predominantly authoritative, CEO styles

of leadership. Instead, cultivate leadership environments that emphasize leading from vulnerability and transparency.

Individuals:

Invite others to consider a call to church planting. When you meet, gifted, Spirit-filled women, both "lay-leaders" and clergy, ask if they've ever considered planting and what their hopes and dreams are for the future of the church.

As I look to the future, my hopes and dreams for the church are more wild and imaginative than when I started ministry. I see a new church on the horizon, a church where men and women are equally invited, equipped, nurtured, and sustained to live freely and completely into their unique gifts as sent people.

My life changed when someone asked if I'd ever thought about planting a church. So if you're a woman and unsure about stepping into your calling, I have a question for you too: have you ever thought about planting a church?



Taeler Morgan (PCUSA, MDiv Bethel Seminary) is planter/pastor of Gather Tacoma, church planting coach with the V3 Church Planting Movement, and co-host of the Women Planters Connection Facebook community. She and her family love hanging out in their neighborhood, exploring the Pacific Northwest, and finding adventure in the ordinary!

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1. JR Woodward and Dan White, Jr., *The Church as Movement* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 44.
 2. Dan White, Jr., "Church As Movement Not Industrial Complex," *The V3 Movement* (blog), <http://thev3movement.org/2016/08/church-as-movement-not-industrial-complex>.
 3. Heather Sarsons, "Interpreting Signals in the Labor Market: Evidence from Medical Referrals," Working Paper, https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/sarsons/files/sarsons_jmp_01.pdf.

The Egalitarian Church Hiding in Plain Sight: What Church Planters Can Learn from the Salvation Army

Kristi McKenney

As a woman called to ministry, I have served in many different churches in many different ministry settings. It's not overdramatic to say that "hopeless" describes many of my ministry experiences. I had given up hope that I could be involved in a church where I wasn't second class. Where my voice mattered as much as the men's voices. Where I would be treated as an equal partner in ministry.

That changed the day I walked into a Salvation Army church and interviewed for a youth pastor position. From the very beginning, everything about it felt right, even comfortable. During my time there I was in awe of how differently I was treated compared to my past experiences. I was not "given" a voice there, but I was allowed—no, encouraged!—to use the one I had. My ideas were given weight, my experiences were validated, and my personal relationship with Jesus was trusted and celebrated. I was given the freedom to teach, to lead, and even to preach. I was never shamed for my clothing or how I looked; it was never even a conversation unless I asked something specific. Experiencing equality in this church was everything I needed during this season of my life. Finally, I was a part of a church where I felt safe and free to be who God created me to be.

Most people have heard of the Salvation Army. We see the stores, we see the donation trucks, and every year during the holiday season, we see the red kettles and the volunteer bell ringers in front of stores.

Not many people realize that the Salvation Army is also a denomination. From its small start, the Salvation Army has grown to a membership of 1.7 million people and counting, in thousands of churches, across 131 countries. It could be called one of history's most successful egalitarian church plants. Admittedly, it hasn't been as egalitarian as it could be in many places, including the US. Still, it is a testament to the potential of egalitarian ministry and leadership. Church planters and leaders would be wise to learn from its example.

The Salvation Army was founded by William and Catherine Booth in 1865. Their marriage by all accounts was egalitarian. With a love, admiration and respect for each other, William and Catherine worked tirelessly to serve the poor and unchurched people of London. William preached to and served the poor in the East end of London, but it was Catherine's name that became well-known among the middle and upper class of the West End of London.

Her preaching grew in popularity, despite the fact that she was very hard on the people she was most beloved by. She didn't mince words and called out the upper class for their horrific treatment of the poor, many of whom worked in terrible conditions in their factories. William's role working in the East end of London did not earn him an income, so it was Catherine and her preaching who fed the family and funded the mission. She preached through pregnancies, through child rearing, and through sickness. In many

ways, Catherine was far ahead of her time. Believing that women had full equality with men in ministry may have been her most radical conviction.

The Salvation Army we know and love today is best known for their charity stores, homeless shelters, disaster relief, and humanitarian aid in developing countries. They show up and minister during the worst times in people's lives. In addition to these most well-known programs, they also have senior programs, programs to help break addictions, domestic abuse programs, food banks, youth programs and much more. This social justice, community-minded ministry is the bedrock of how and why the Salvation Army came into existence, and what it still stands for today. The inclusion of women in the organization is, in large part, what has made it what it is.

In the season that I worked for the Salvation Army, I noticed a vast difference in the spirit of this church, compared to any other church I have been a part of. While not everything can or should be copied, there are things we can learn from the Salvation Army that can help us plant and grow healthier churches. Churches that are safe for girls and women. Here are a few:

Model Equality in Youth Programs

The youth programs at the Salvation Army are subtly but distinctly different than the youth programs I saw as a kid. Growing up in the church, I remember Esther and Jezebel being the only Bible women I had ever heard of. I learned that Esther taught us that a “godly woman” was brave, quiet, and submissive, while Jezebel taught us that powerful women were evil. I never saw women on stage leading anything; it was always exclusively men.

In any given Salvation Army youth event, you will see men and women on stage. Speaking, running programs, leading worship, leading prayer, sharing testimonies, and making announcements;

there is nothing that a woman cannot do. From the very beginning of their Sunday School and youth groups, the Salvation Army teaches implicitly and explicitly that girls are just as valuable as boys. Sunday School curricula include Bible stories that highlight the many women in the Bible, with non-shaming messages. They teach that women can be called to anything a man can be called to. That God calls women in the same way as men. This speaks volumes to the girls *and boys* being brought up in the church.

Put Women in Leadership

Women are included at every level of leadership in the Salvation Army organization. There is nothing that is off-limits to a woman. Women go all the way to the top and their voices and experiences are valuable at every level. Single women are often times even sent to a church to be the one and only corps officer and run the entire church. No one bats an eye at this, because they've been taught from the beginning that women can do anything. To create a church that is safe for women, women must be included in the leadership and have an equal voice in decisions. Women experience the world differently than men. As loving and empathetic as a man might be, there are things he will never understand about living as a woman. Women need the counsel and support of other women in church leadership. Likewise, the voice of a woman is pivotal to planning the mission and vision of a church.

Do Social Justice

The main mission of every other church I have been a part of has been somehow or another about growing the church body. This can create a “get on board or out of my way” sort of feeling within the church. The core mission of the Salvation Army is about serving the community. This creates a welcoming environment full of love, acceptance, and grace. It opens space for people to be who they are, and does not try to force a person into some sort of “Christian” box. It takes the focus off of

From the very beginning of their Sunday School and youth groups, the Salvation Army teaches implicitly and explicitly that girls are just as valuable as boys.

It is easy to say that you believe in the full equality of women in ministry. But if you say that and there are no women pastors listed in your staff, we don't believe that you are truly willing to make the effort to include women in leadership.

the church itself and instead of asking the question, “how do we get more people to attend?” it asks, “how can we better help the people in our community?” This creates a much healthier church environment.

Keep Fresh Faces in Leadership

A unique feature of the Salvation Army model is that the corps officers for each church are reassigned every three to five years. Sometimes they are moved to another church, other times they are moved to administration, or other branches of leadership. Granted, this isn't a model most churches will pursue, and there are definitely downsides. But, new churches can strive to replicate the idea of bringing in new faces. It's often unhealthy when the same group of leaders (often men) stay in power for decades at a time. They become too powerful and there is little time of space for other voices. By cycling people in and out of leadership, or into different positions, you put them in the position of having to listen and learn. They grow in humility instead of power and pride. This is a good thing for every church.

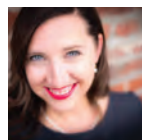
Commit to Gender Equality

Despite its egalitarian roots, women's equality in the Salvation Army hasn't always been a given. Cultural and societal norms have had their influence within the organization. Only recently, for example, have women here in the US been given their own ranks and their own pay, separate from their husbands. Countries such as Australia, where progress in women's equality is ahead of America, are paving the way across the international organization.

While equality isn't quite as it ought to be, there is an ongoing commitment to keep the conversation going, and make changes where they need to be better. Men and women together are working towards better equality for all. For women to feel safe and valued within the walls of a church, we need to see men actively advocating for women. Your commitment is reflected in your actions. It is easy to say that you believe in the full equality of women in ministry. It is easy to write that manifesto about women and the value they bring to the life and community of the church. But if you say that and there are no women pastors listed in your staff, we don't believe that you are truly willing to make the effort to include women in leadership.

The Salvation Army is a unique ministry. While not everything is perfect, you would be hard pressed to find anyone who hates the Salvation Army or what it represents. And that's not something you can say about the church as a whole. When people think of the Salvation Army, they think of charity and of caring for people. I am certain that the voice of women throughout the ranks and throughout the years is key to their success.

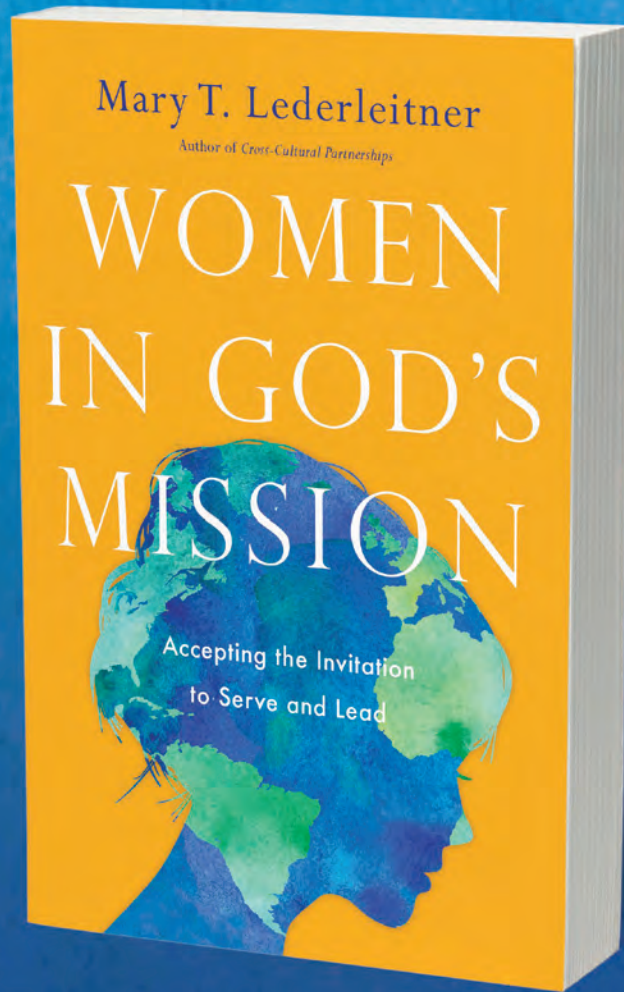
As our society moves forward and changes in the next decades, the churches that will thrive are the ones that value the voices and agency of women and work at making their church leadership inclusive. It is sometimes said that gender equality is a secular movement, and that the church should catch up. But the history of the Salvation Army shows otherwise. It has been egalitarian (even if imperfectly) for 150 years and has faithfully served God and communities worldwide. It is long past time the rest of the church caught up with what Christ is doing.



Kristi McKenney is a writer and speaker living in Northern California. She is a wife of twenty years and mother to six children. She is passionate about her family, theology, justice, dogs and chocolate. In her spare time, you can find her writing and researching for her first book, or watching murder mystery shows on Netflix.

WOMEN *and* MEN LEADING TOGETHER

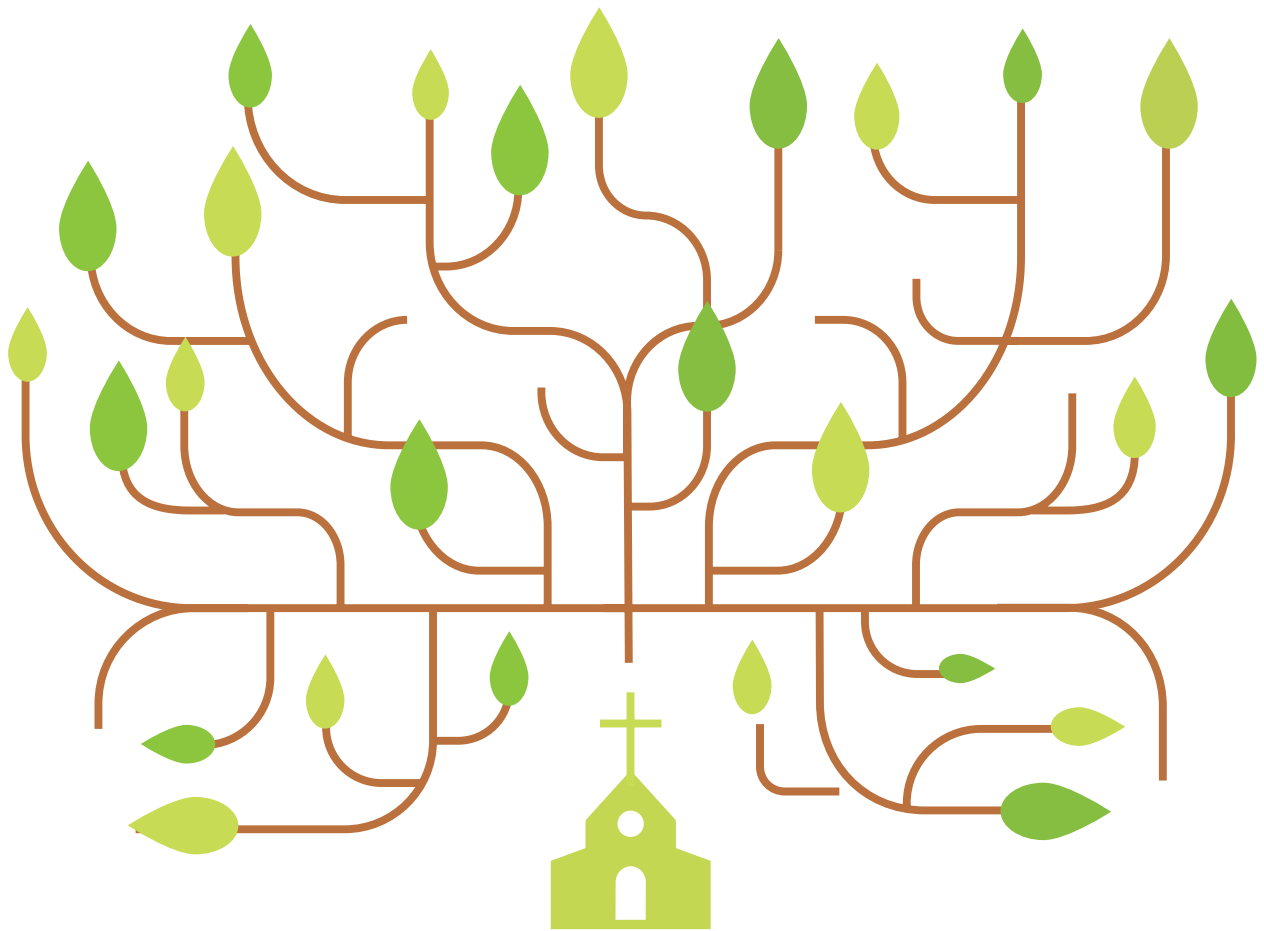
Stories from Respected Female Leaders



"Women in God's Mission honors the wisdom and experience of women and men who share different understandings of women in ministry. . . . Let's continue the conversation so men and women heal and serve together for the glory of God."

—ADELE AHLBERG CALHOUN

copastor of spiritual formation, Highrock Arlington



Being Egalitarian Isn't Enough:

3 Strategies to Cultivate an Egalitarian Church

Jonathan Schut

“Hey fellas. I have an opportunity for you to meet with a church planting coach later this week. It includes a free lunch. Let me know if you're interested.” As a cash-strapped student, how could I refuse the offer of a free lunch? Plus, I met the criteria of being interested in church planting. I went to the lunch meeting, took in the information, ate a lot of free food, and went home without considering the events much further.

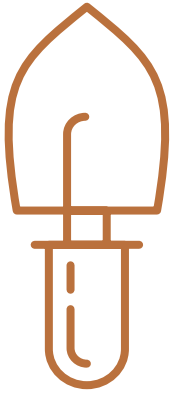
As I have reflected on that event, and even looked at the recipient list, one thing stands out to me—none of the

women in my program were invited. And this isn't for lack of capable women. There were plenty of women in my program who would make excellent church planters, yet they were not even offered a seat at the table. As I think about this, I am struck by how much complementarian theology permeates every part of church life. And, if we fail to do anything about it, we cannot expect that to ever change. If we hope to see opportunities for women in positions of church leadership, we must be intentional about creating them.

Understanding Culture

When I started as a pastor, I was advised to learn the culture of the church before making any major decisions or changes. The culture of a congregation sets the tone for how ministry will be carried out and what changes will be deemed acceptable over the course of time. It's true—it's difficult to move a church in a direction that contradicts its culture.

In a new church plant, an intentional pastor can, to some extent, craft the culture that he or she desires. However,



No matter how much we strive for a clean slate in church planting, people will arrive with their own ideas about how the church should be run. These preconceived opinions are the foundation upon which the church's culture will ultimately be built. Therefore, it is paramount that church plants consciously foster a culture of egalitarianism from the very beginning.

there are limitations to this idealistic hope. The primary one is that people are not influenced only by the culture within the church, but also by the broader cultures they're part of. Yours won't be the only Christian teachings they hear, and they'll also be shaped by the broader, secular culture as well. If one thing has become abundantly clear over the last several years, it is that patriarchy is alive and well in church and secular culture alike.

No matter how much we strive for a clean slate in church planting, people will arrive with their own ideas about how the church should be run. These preconceived opinions are the foundation upon which the church's culture will ultimately be built. Therefore, it is paramount that church plants consciously foster a culture of egalitarianism from the very beginning. In order to do this effectively, there are some basic steps we can take as our new church plants get off the ground.

1. Empower Women to Lead

Mentorship is an important aspect of Christian leadership. The relationship between Paul and Timothy demonstrates just how meaningful a mentor can be in the life of a young leader. In Paul's final letter to Timothy, he encourages Timothy to take up a similar exercise with those whom he teaches. Paul writes, "And the things

you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others" (2 Timothy 2:2). In some (hopefully many) instances, a woman will be responsible for leading a new church plant. These women should be intentional about empowering other women to lead however they are able, just like Paul encourages the believers in Ephesus, "As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received" (Ephesians 4:1). In addition to empowering all to serve in the areas in which they have been called to serve, the female pastor will be uniquely positioned to mentor young women in her congregation who are gifted for leadership.

Male church planters must be even more intentional in fostering women's leadership and egalitarian culture. Because the church is being led by a man, many preconceived notions about male leadership and dominance will be affirmed before anyone steps foot through the door. In order to protect the congregation from these ideas permeating the church's culture, the male pastor must invite women to visible positions of leadership. This could include the deacon and/or elder board depending on how the church is structured. It could also include vision-casting committees or boards entrusted with the discipleship of other members of the congregation. In addition, sharing the pulpit with women provides

yet another opportunity to promote and reinforce an egalitarian culture.

It's also critical that male pastors mentor women who are gifted for leadership. Too often, Christians shy away from male-female friendship and mentorship for fear of sexual sin. The truth is, it's entirely possible to have friendships and professional relationships with people of the opposite gender. Men and women don't need to avoid each other, but can interact responsibly as adults.

2. Teach about Women in Scripture

One of my responsibilities as a pastor of a small church is to review the curriculum for our children's program. Recently, the lesson was focused on the story of Josiah and the discovery of the scrolls. In this particular presentation of the story, the narrative moved immediately from the discovery of the scrolls to the recommitment of the nation of Israel to following the Torah. What it failed to mention is that the



only reason the people ever knew what the scrolls contained and what they meant is that a *woman* named Huldah taught the men in leadership about the texts.

Now, I must confess that even I was not aware of Huldah's role in this story until recently. This experience has led me to lament the fact that so many pastors, teachers, and curriculum developers omit her from their teaching about Josiah. This story is just one example of how pastors can do a better job of ensuring that women who play a prominent role in Scripture are afforded a prominent place in our teaching.

3. Be a Practical Egalitarian

In the first chapter of his epistle, James writes, "But be doers of the word and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like" (James 1:22–24 NRSV). Here, James makes

clear that the person who has heard the truth of Christianity must go beyond merely hearing that truth and progress toward actively living it out in daily life. This same admonition should be applied in the life of one who seeks to advance the egalitarian movement in a patriarchal world.

If we are going to say that women are equal, then we have to live in such a way that this is demonstrated. As was mentioned before, this means providing opportunities for women to lead in our church plants, mentoring women for leadership, and teaching about women. But it means more than that. If you're married, it means modeling egalitarian marriage. If you're a man, it means not participating in degrading jokes about women—and even calling it out when others do it. It means thinking critically about the ways patriarchy manifests itself in things like politics, entertainment, economics, and more, and helping others do so as well. It means reflecting on the things we say and do unintentionally. If you're a man, do you describe assertive women as "bossy" where you'd call a man doing the same thing "confident"? It's easy

to believe in egalitarianism. It's a lot harder to discern how patriarchal cultural norms are shaping us, our churches, and our communities.

Church planting provides a unique opportunity for the promotion of egalitarian theology. In many ways, it is a clean slate and a fresh start. It is important, however, that church planters remain aware of the broader culture, and work to combat the falsehoods that are so prevalent in a patriarchal world. Church plants that truly hope to be egalitarian and make a difference in the world must make egalitarianism a foundational part of their church's culture. Perhaps a good place to start would be by addressing our emails about church planting to "ladies and gentlemen," instead of "fellas."



Jonathan Schut is the senior pastor of Tryon Baptist Church in Tryon, PEI, Canada. He is currently working on a master of theological studies at Tyndale Seminary. He and his wife live in Charlottetown, PEI, where they spend their time together hiking, finding great new restaurants, and binge-watching Netflix.

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THE GIRL NEXTDOOR

A Christmas Reflection

My mama allows it could've been rape
and it might've, you know, unsettled her mind.

Grandma, who's lived with us since grandpa died,
declares she's just a little whore,
probably with some low-ranking Roman,
who's trying to hide her dirty skirts behind blasphemy.

Either way, my mama says, I should watch and
remember
how easy a girl becomes trash and has to leave town,
probably for good,
and you can bet her little bastard won't be around
to take care of her when she's old.

Changing the Tone, Encouraging Women at ETS



Female scholars gathered at the women's fellowship event, hosted by CBE.

This year, CBE's participation at the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) was marked by dynamic conversation across the divide of gender theology. Staff noted a significant change of tone from previous years: rather than walking by or avoiding eye contact, many men who held different views from CBE stopped to talk and engage. Students remarked they'd never heard the conversation discussed with such civility and wisdom. Multiple pastors from complementarian denominations shared that their eyes were opening to the connections between theologies of dominance and unhealthy church leadership.

Eager for connection and encouragement, female scholars flocked to a women's fellowship hosted by CBE. It was so well-attended that we ran out of space and refreshments and needed to bring in extra tables. Even so, women lingered until the room closed and then gathered elsewhere to continue conversations about staying connected via social media, plans for partnering and engaging across institutions, and a shared commitment to seeing more women in leadership in ETS. In the words of CBE's president, Dr. Mimi Haddad, the scene was like "thirsty people finding water."

There was just as much energy in other conference events, too. In a Gender and Evangelicals panel, four speakers (including Dr. Haddad and Rachael Denhollander) addressed abuse, theology, and the church, but each discussed different aspects, creating an in-depth, comprehensive, and grace-filled afternoon. At the CBE community dinner, Dr. Ingrid Faro's talk provided a Bible-based and very personal perspective on how we treat each other as image bearers. CBE distributed over 200 copies of *Eyes to See and Ears to Hear Women*, our short book examining evangelical Christianity's engagement with women, gender, sexuality, and abuse. The scholars featured in the book reveal startling connections between popular teachings on gender and the abuse crisis that has plagued society for centuries.

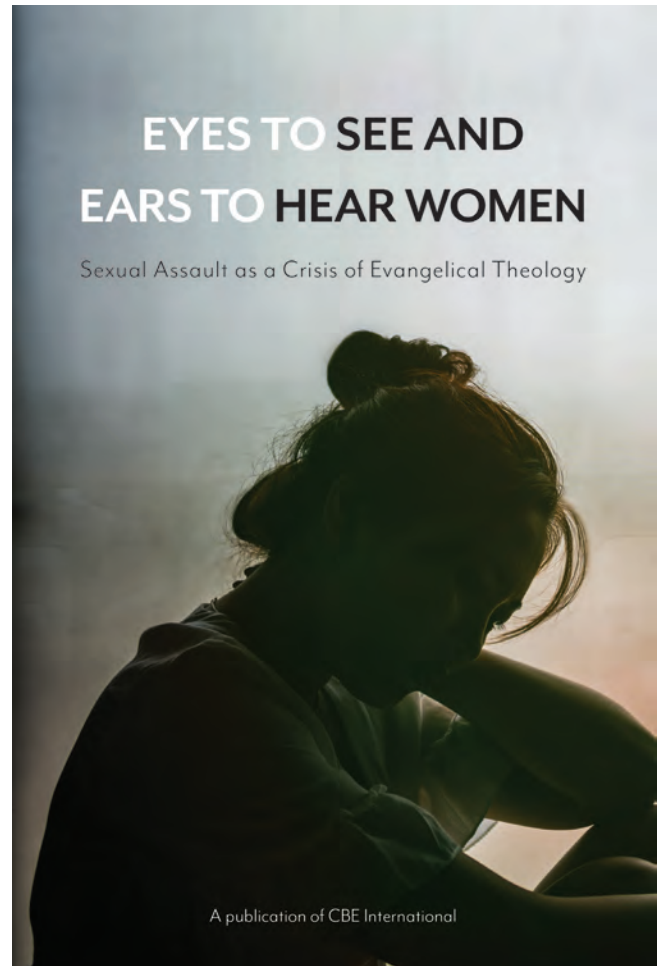
Read or download *Eyes to See and Ears to Hear Women* for free at cbe.today/ETSr8.

Help CBE end the year strong!

As 2018 fades, CBE is encouraged by a light on the horizon. We're hearing from scholars in institutions hostile to biblical gender equality, leaders in complementarian NGOs, and people feeling isolated in patriarchal communities. But the news is good: commitment to biblical equality is strong, despite operating in environments where their single candle feels small and insignificant. From our vantage point, looking over the span of the movement, we see those flickering flames glowing brighter. In your separate spaces, you may sometimes feel alone, but you are not.

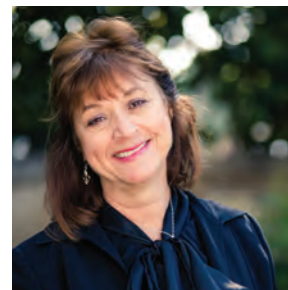
CBE remains dedicated to mobilizing egalitarians at the forefront of the theological debate, advancing the conversation among Christians worldwide, building community through conferences and global partnerships, and providing tools to equip churches, seminaries, and para-church organizations. You can join us by helping CBE end the year strong!

Donate \$150 or more by January 31, 2019, and you'll get *Eyes to See and Ears to Hear Women: Sexual Assault as a Crisis of Evangelical Theology*, CBE's latest book examining evangelical Christianity's engagement with women, gender, sexuality, and abuse. Featured scholars reveal startling connections between popular teachings on gender and the abuse crisis that has plagued society for centuries.



Donate \$150 or more by January 31, 2019, and you'll get *Eyes to See and Ears to Hear Women: Sexual Assault as a Crisis of Evangelical Theology*!

Give securely online at **cbe.today/eyes**, by mail (note "book" on your check), or by phone (612-872-6898) by January 31. This book is not available for sale.



Women Church Planters: A Proud Tradition

Our families shape us. That's why good premarital counseling asks couples to think about the patterns they experienced in their families of origin. Our families shape how we communicate, resolve conflict, what topics are off-limits, and more. We grow up believing these patterns are normal, even if they're not. The sooner we learn that our family's patterns aren't necessarily right (and may even be harmful), the better equipped we are to have strong and healthy relationships of our own.

In the same way, our Christian "families of origin" shape our attitudes and practices, especially where power and gender are concerned. Suppressing facts concerning the history of women limits our theological imagination and our courage in responding to God's call and gifting.

Last summer, CBE's intern, Chesna Hinkley, researched how fifteen complementarian seminaries included women's legacy as leaders in the required coursework for pastors. She concludes:

Across all fifteen seminaries, history makes up only 10% of the course content, just over half the figure for theology and less than a fourth of that for practical courses. Women's history makes up only 0.28% of all courses. *Women's* history is far more varied and interesting than are the roles women are "supposed" to play. Yet without courses on it or content within survey courses, the men who will produce the next generation of complementarian theology and practice are never asked to interact with the ways in which women have always stepped outside of those roles.¹

Is it any wonder that for many Christians, the idea of women planting and leading churches seems new and unbiblical? Yet, when we examine history, we find that nothing could be further from the truth. Women were planting and leading churches right alongside Paul and Timothy. No matter the obstacles, they haven't stopped. Consider just a few examples from over the years.

Priscilla

Priscilla and Aquila are perhaps best known for correcting Apollos (Acts 18:26). But did you know they were also church planters? The couple met Paul in Corinth and then moved with him to Ephesus, where they started a church that met in their home. Paul referred to them as "co-workers," the same

word he used for male church leaders. Other female co-workers of Paul's included Lydia (Acts 16:14–15, 40), Chloe (1 Cor. 1:11), Nympha (Col. 4:15), Phoebe (Rom. 16:1–2), and Mark's mother (Acts 12:12). Clearly, women planting and leading churches was not a problem for Paul or the early church.

Early Evangelical Missionaries

In the evangelical fervor of the 1800s, people believed that their goal was to win souls to Christ, regardless of who preached. Fredrik Franson, founder of TEAM, wrote, "If a sister can more easily bring souls to the Savior . . . then she sins if she does not use those gifts that God has given her."²

Franson was not alone. Many institutions that are now complementarian once trained and sent out women to preach, evangelize, and plant and lead churches! Moody Bible Institute and the Prairie Bible Institute are just two examples. Strikingly, Lottie Moon—a prominent Southern Baptist church planter whose legacy is used to raise funds for a complementarian denomination—was part of a movement where women dominated evangelical missions, outnumbering men two-to-one. In time, and alongside the rise of fundamentalism, institutions began enforcing what they saw as biblical restrictions on women.

Catherine Booth and the Salvation Army

If you've seen Salvation Army volunteers ringing bells for donations outside your grocery store around the holidays, then you've seen the result of egalitarian church planting. Famous as a humanitarian organization, the Salvation Army is actually a worldwide church as well. Its founders were Catherine and William Booth, both of whom led and taught. In fact, Catherine was recognized as the better preacher of the two! The Salvation Army is an egalitarian success story that has lasted over 150 years.

Today, women continue to plant and lead churches as God calls them. Sometimes as solo pastors, sometimes alongside men, sometimes alongside other women. Following in the footsteps of Priscilla, Lottie Moon, Catherine Booth, and the thousands of missionaries who followed God's call, these women persist, no matter the opposition. We do well to learn their stories and celebrate the mighty ways that God moves through women.

1. Chesna Hinkley, "Acknowledge Those Who Work Hard among You": The Absence of Women's Work in Complementarian Seminary Curricula" in *Eyes to See and Ears to Hear Women* (Minneapolis: CBE International, 2018).

2. Fredrik Franson, "Prophesying Daughters," *The Covenant Quarterly* 34, no. 4 (November, 1976): 39.

Praise

- We're giving thanks for an impactful presence at this year's Evangelical Theological Society meeting. Read more on p. 24.
- Thanks to our generous supporters, we met our Giving Tuesday fundraising goal!
- CBE is building relationships with a growing number of influential organizations who are waking up to the need for biblical mutuality. We see great partnership potential!

Prayer

- Our 2019 conference in Houston is approaching, and we're excited to be opening registration in January! Pray that God would bring the right speakers and attendees together at this event. We're thrilled about what's coming together!
- We're in the midst of a big upgrade of our website, and are entering the development phase. This is when we encounter the most obstacles, so pray for minimal glitches and easy decision-making as we proceed.

CBE INTERNATIONAL

Mission Statement

CBE International (CBE) exists to promote biblical justice and community by educating Christians that the Bible calls women and men to share authority equally in service and leadership in the home, church, and world.

Statement of Faith

- We believe in one God, creator and sustainer of the universe, eternally existing as three persons in equal power and glory.
- We believe in the full deity and the full humanity of Jesus Christ.
- We believe that eternal salvation and restored relationships are only possible through faith in Jesus Christ who died for us, rose from the dead, and is coming again. This salvation is offered to all people.
- We believe the Holy Spirit equips us for service and sanctifies us from sin.
- We believe the Bible is the inspired word of God, is reliable, and is the final authority for faith and practice.
- We believe that women and men are equally created in God's image and given equal authority and stewardship of God's creation.
- We believe that men and women are equally responsible for and distorted by sin, resulting in shattered relationships with God, self, and others.

Core Values

- Scripture is our authoritative guide for faith, life, and practice.
- Patriarchy (male dominance) is not a biblical ideal but a result of sin.
- Patriarchy is an abuse of power, taking from females what God has given them: their dignity, and freedom, their leadership, and often their very lives.
- While the Bible reflects patriarchal culture, the Bible does not teach patriarchy in human relationships.
- Christ's redemptive work frees all people from patriarchy, calling women and men to share authority equally in service and leadership.
- God's design for relationships includes faithful marriage between a man and a woman, celibate singleness and mutual submission in Christian community.
- The unrestricted use of women's gifts is integral to the work of the Holy Spirit and essential for the advancement of the gospel in the world.
- Followers of Christ are to oppose injustice and patriarchal teachings and practices that marginalize and abuse females and males.

To learn more about CBE's values, history, and ministry, visit cbe.today/info.

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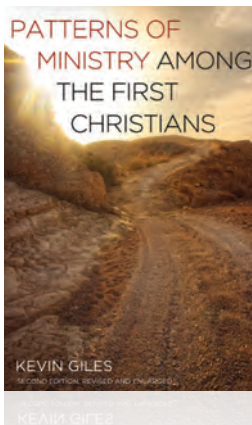
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Patterns of Ministry Among the First Christians

Second Edition
Kevin Giles

"With engaging and sometimes witty prose, Giles explores Scripture honestly to discern patterns of church leadership. Giles shows how Scripture challenges many assumptions about ministry in most churches today. I have learned from this work, and I find his conclusions eminently fair, balanced, and reasonable, and most of them persuasive."

—Craig S. Keener, Asbury Theological Seminary



Unveiling Paul's Women

Making Sense of 1 Corinthians 11:2–16
Lucy Peppiatt

The ideas in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 have had a huge impact on the role of Christian women in the church through the centuries. In this little book, Peppiatt not only highlights the problems associated with using this text to justify the subordination of women, but offers a clear and plausible re-reading of the text that paints the apostle Paul as a radical, visionary, church planter who championed women in all forms of leadership.

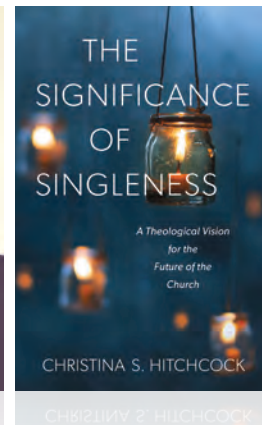


The Pastor Wears a Skirt

Stories of Gender and Ministry
Dorothy Nickel Friesen

"The vignettes in this book capture the personal experiences of one of the first women to serve as a lead pastor in the Mennonite church. They are enlightening on multiple levels—describing this woman's clear call to ministry, as a first-person account of the church's struggle in coming to terms with women in leadership roles, and for the many real-life examples of the joys, challenges, and impacts of the pastoral vocation."

—James M. Harder, Bluffton University



The Significance of Singleness

A Theological Vision for the Future of the Church
Christina S. Hitchcock

Challenging prevailing assumptions about "the problem" of singleness, this book explains why the church needs single people and offers a contemporary theology of singleness relevant to all members of the church. Drawing on the examples of three important figures from the history of Christianity, the book helps today's church form a vision of life in the kingdom of God that is as theologically significant for single people as it is for those who are married.