

Mutuality

Autumn 2018

Men and women serving and leading as equals

Boys Don't Cry A Crisis of Vulnerability

CONTENTS

4 Boy Stories: Teaching Our Sons to Share and Listen
A practical way to build empathy and emotional intelligence in boys.
Tyler and Jenny Billman

8 Boys DO Cry (And That's Okay): Raising Emotional Boys in a "Boys Don't Cry" Culture
Encouraging self-awareness and maturity in VERY emotional boys.
Rebecca Shimp Martin

12 Give Them Words: Helping Boys Name and Navigate Their Emotions
Boys need to learn to recognize and communicate their feelings.
Tatyana Claytor

14 When Gender Roles Don't Work: How One Couple and Their Sons Became Egalitarians
Raising sons, defying role expectations, and finding freedom.
Jodi and Dave Hansen

20 Teaching My Son Vulnerability through My Struggle with Depression: A Father's Reflection
A father's honesty about his mental illness is helping his son.
Michael Bain

23 Growing Pains: How Complementarianism Shames Boys and Isolates Men
A reflection on confusing complementarian standards for boys and men.
Jason Eden

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DEPARTMENTS

3 From the Editor
Let Them Cry: It's Good for Everyone When Boys Can Be Vulnerable

26 Ministry News

28 Reflect with Us
Without Expression

29 Giving Opportunities

30 President's Message
The Tears of Men: The Emotional Masculinity of Jesus and Saint Francis

31 Praise and Prayer

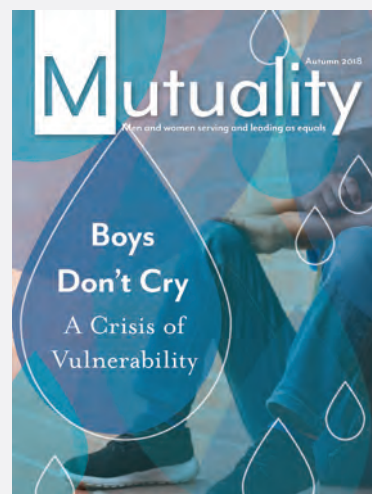
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Let Them Cry: It's Good for Everyone When Boys Can Be Vulnerable

I was the tallest kid in my middle school. I got good grades. I was athletic enough that I was never among the last picked for a team. These were enough to insulate my young and sensitive ego from most of the shame, embarrassment, and ridicule that define middle school for so many. But it wasn't enough.

I did everything I could to protect myself from any hint of humiliation. My drive for good grades was fueled at least in part by the need to adorn my desk with more stickers (earned for A's) than anyone else. I wrote in tiny letters, not so that my classmates couldn't copy my work, but for fear they might see my wrong answers. I found a way to win almost every argument I had, no matter how frivolous, even if I knew I was wrong. I avoided things I wasn't good at. The longer I kept this up, the more important it became to maintain the image I'd created. I was strong, smart, a winner.

I vividly remember the day I realized I wanted something different. A few friends and I were shooting hoops and discussing one of life's pressing mysteries—whether or not there really was an old sewer tank under that slab of concrete by our school. One friend, without a hint of embarrassment, asked, "What's a sewer?"

My first thought was "How does he not know what a sewer is?" My second thought was "Why would he admit to not knowing?" When I didn't know something in that pre-internet age, I played it cool until I could get to a dictionary or encyclopedia. But here he was, admitting ignorance, unashamed. I was jealous that he got to experience openness and honesty in his friendships. He got to learn from and with his community. I on the other hand was a prisoner behind the façade of strength I'd built.

I realized that façade was costing me closeness with my best friends. I didn't have the words for it at the time, but I longed to be vulnerable.

To an extent, things like this are just part of growing up. But I think especially for boys and men, they're more than that. Countless men share a common wound—an acute awareness of our failure to "be a man." When we fear admitting our so-called failures, the wound festers and infects our entire being, harming not just men but those around us. Men and boys account for the vast majority of US suicides (3.5 times the

rate of women), fatal heroin overdoses, and mass shootings. They are also less likely than women to seek mental health support when they need it. Experts routinely name the "boys don't cry" culture as a major factor.

The church has compounded the problem, claiming a biblical mandate for these cultural views. So-called "biblical manhood" fixates on leadership, strength, provision, and reason. Things like emotion, vulnerability, relationships, and nurture are designated "feminine." Some pastors fret about the church becoming "too feminine," but could it be that the church is simply reflecting our emotional, vulnerable, and nurturing savior? In our weakness we experience God's love, and in our vulnerability we are free to love as Jesus loves.

It is wrong that we label as
"feminine" things God designed *all*
humans to experience, and then
pressure boys not to be feminine.

It is wrong that we label as "feminine" things God designed *all* humans to experience, then pressure boys not to be feminine. When we tell boys that a man's exclusive "role" is to be strong, to protect, to provide, and to lead, we teach them that vulnerability is not for them. In doing so, we cripple their emotional and spiritual growth even as we give them power over their churches and families.

There is a better way, and it is the way of the Jesus who cried in front of his friends, who got overwhelmed and hid from crowds, and who depended on the money of women. It is the way of those who find their identity in Christ, not in gendered stereotypes.

In this issue, authors reflect on what this counter-cultural but deeply Christ-like approach looks like in day-to-day life.

In Christ,
Tim Krueger



Boy Stories:

Teaching Our Sons to Share and Listen

Tyler & Jenny Billman

Every night we gather with our four boys, ranging in age from one to nine years old, and read a Bible story that was specifically written for children. We go through the story, they ask questions, and we all learn something. At the end, we pray. Sometimes they pray, but mostly a grown up prays. They listen.

Our nightly routine doesn't just impart factual information about our faith (although it does that, too). It also harnesses the power of storytelling, something we've seen firsthand through years of coaching and teaching speech and debate. For us, this isn't just a cozy ritual. It's a special time of sharing that we believe is critical to our boys' development. Further, it's an intentional way to point them to God by connecting them to others. It's not complicated, and it's not glamorous. But it's very effective.

As parents, we understand that our sons live in a world where masculinity is conflated with isolation, stoicism, and pride. As believers, we reject such an interpretation of manhood. These attributes are extremely unhealthy for anyone—man or woman. More important, they are the opposite of the connection, emotion, and humility Jesus demonstrated.

Countering prevalent views on masculinity requires intentional action. While there are many ways to foster connection and emotional health, there's one tool that has worked especially for us: storytelling. Stories are accessible to everyone in a family, from very young children to their more seasoned parents. Moreover, they are more interesting than formal instruction. For kids captivated by Nintendo Switches and YouTube content, that's mission critical.

We love Bible stories, but almost every story can point people to the gospel. As the writer Paul noted, "Whatever is true, whatever is

honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worth of praise, think about these things" (Phil. 4:8). Intentionally sharing and listening to stories from everyone in the family accomplishes three things:

Stories connect us.

One of the lies of toxic masculinity is that real men can make it on their own. This encourages emotional isolation. On the contrary, emotionally healthy people (both men and women) are vulnerable and deeply connected to others. Stories do that.

At the dinner table every night we spend time telling the highlight and lowlight of our days. Everyone gets a turn, and the rest of us listen. It's a structured way to share and listen to stories. It's also a way for us to gain some insight into our sons' lives, which is especially important as they grow.

Telling stories can also help us bear each other's burdens. When my oldest son ran into friend issues at school, he told all of us each night during dinner story time. We didn't necessarily solve the problem, but we grieved together and entered his frustration with him. At the end of the day, just listening to him talk about his day reminded him that his family loves and cares for him unconditionally.

Stories of Women in the Bible

The Bible stories we hear shape us and what we think God's design is for women and men. In church, our kids mostly hear about male heroes and female sinners. We can do better.

Make sure your kids (and you) are getting the real stories of women in the Bible.

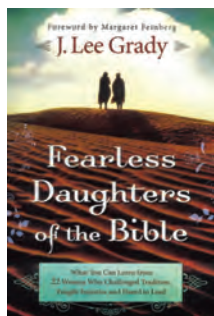
For kids



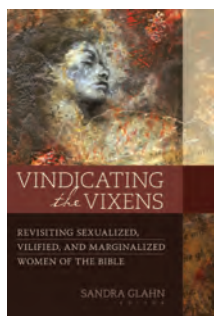
Grit and Grace tells the stories of 17 of the Bible's heroic women through creative first-person retellings. Ideal for kids 8–12 years old.

Gritty and Graceful, a companion picture book for 3–7-year-olds, is coming soon from Beaming Books.

For adults (or older kids)



Fearless Daughters of the Bible shares the stories of 23 mold-breaking biblical women, showing how God uses women to do amazing, even “impossible” things. Great for adults or older teens.



Vindicating the Vixens uncovers the true stories of women often cast as villains or sexually immoral. A diverse team of scholars reveals these women as heroes to be celebrated. Academic while readable, this book is best for adults.

This presents a clear picture of the gospel, as well. Healing from God follows repentance: Calling out to God and being honest about where we are in that moment. The family provides a tangible place to practice that kind of sharing and love.

On the church level, this type of sharing often takes the form of small groups. Our local body of believers has time set aside regularly on Sunday mornings where we just eat and talk to one another. This has led to all kinds of other connections: swapping baby clothes, play dates, and ministry opportunities. More important, these connections remind us that we aren't alone as we face the harshness and beauty of life.

Stories heal us.

One of the lies we've had to un-teach our sons is that boys don't cry. On the contrary, sometimes, trauma happens and people need to let it out. In these cases, telling a person's story can be cathartic and even therapeutic. And it doesn't have to have a neat and tidy ending. Simply sharing your personal experience can be a great way to work through it.

Teaching our boys to tell and listen to stories helps them express themselves in a healthy, meaningful way. It's a way to vent frustrations and hurts before these emotions manifest in less healthy ways. That's important. Society is riddled with examples in which men have failed to communicate adequately, and it has resulted in devastation.

Stories humble us.

American masculinity is too often linked with pride. However, humility is included as one of the fruits of the spirit in Galatians 5. Stories require people to listen, really listen. This is important because it helps us learn about other perspectives. For example, boys can learn a lot about women by listening to women. Equally important, listening to someone shows that you value them. So just listening to someone's story shows that you view them as important and worthy of your time.

In church, this means being intentional about deeply listening to the entire body of believers—not just the hired holy men. One of the saddest implications of complementarian theology is the idea that women should be quiet around men. The reality is that men, and our four boys specifically, stand to gain a wealth of knowledge and wisdom from listening to godly women. Their lives are impoverished when half the church is silent.

In the end, we aren't perfect parents. Raising sons who form their own faith is a product of God's grace. But we believe that stories connect us, heal us, and humble us. They teach our boys how to imitate Jesus, not the popular figures who fixate on men being "real men" as the answer to our problems. They prepare our boys to learn from the girls and women around them and respect them as equals. Stories are a significant part of rearing our boys in an emotionally healthy way. For us, this means to have hearts strong enough to withstand the risk of human connection and tender enough to recognize the infinite value of the other.

Tonight, God willing, we will send our boys off to bed with another story. It's been a busy day, and it's possible that someone might fall asleep. But, we will make time because it's that important. In the same way that Jesus influenced through the power of storytelling and listening to others share, we can influence our children and the world around us.



Tyler Billman has a PhD in higher education administration and serves as an academic advisor/disability coordinator at Southeastern Illinois College. Jenny Billman has master's degrees in English and communication and serves as an

English instructor at Southeastern Illinois College. They are the parents of four active boys and enjoy worshipping at Dorrisville Baptist Church, where Tyler serves as deacon and Jenny serves as pianist.



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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Boys DO Cry (And That's Okay):

Raising Emotional Boys in a “Boys Don’t Cry” Culture

Rebecca Shimp Martin

As a toddler, my son Jon* was politely referred to as “a handful.” There was no door he couldn’t open, no ladder he couldn’t climb, no boundary he would not push. We braced ourselves when he started school, but if one thing can be said of Jon, it is that he is constantly surprising us. Our rambunctious boy has been a model student since Pre-K. In first grade, he tested into the gifted program and was invited to apply to the local magnet schools.

My husband and I received this news with mixed emotions, because while Jon was excelling at school, at home he seemed to be constantly frustrated and upset. Most of it was centered around on his older brother, Charlie, and all of the things that he could do that Jon couldn’t. Charlie could run faster, he could build the big Lego sets, and when they played Super Mario Smash Brothers, Charlie usually won.

*The names of my children have been changed to protect their privacy.





I tried to console Jon. “He’s two years older.”

“Why did I have to be born second?” He sobbed. “Do you hate me? Do you think I’m stupid?”

“Of course not!”

“Then why can’t I WIN?”

“I just told—”

“This is the WORST DAY.”

“I swear,” I told my husband later. “It’s like we’re raising a 1980s stereotype of a teen girl.”

The word we were looking for was “emotional.” Jon is funny. Jon is smart. Jon has too much ear wax and a slight lactose intolerance, and Jon is emotional. One time he smashed his finger in a door while playing at my parents’ house. He didn’t just cry, he ran from one side of the room to the other for almost forty minutes screaming, “I’m RUUUUINED!”

No one prepared us for this. No one ever warned us that we might have a child whose response to every disappointment would be perpetually set to DEFCON ONE. We had one laid-back, happy son, and we thought we understood what little boys needed and how they behaved. Boys, we were always told, are resilient. They don’t express themselves verbally. Not only did Jon seem to feel every slight and stumble at a magnification of ten, he had absolutely no problem letting the world know about it. It was embarrassing.

“Don’t scream like that,” I heard my mother-in-law tell him once. “You sound like a little girl! You want to sound like a big man!” I thought about telling her that we don’t use “little girl” as an insult in our family, but I let it go, partially out of careful daughter-in-law politeness and partially because I hoped that maybe it would work. If social pressure could

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my mother-in-law tell him once.
“You sound like a little girl! You
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make Charlie stop picking his nose in public, why couldn't it teach Jon some self-control?

If there's one thing I've noticed it is that children learn from the people around them. A two-year old gets results from screaming, a four-year old will be reprimanded for the same behavior. They learn from this, and the more extreme reactions usually subside.

Three years after Jon we had a daughter. She was two the first time I painted her toenails, and Jon came over to watch. "Can you do mine?" he asked.

"Sure," I answered, figuring it would be hidden by his shoes at school anyway. He picked out a sparkly midnight blue polish, and I started painting. Charlie wandered over to observe.

"Boys don't do that," he announced. "Kids will laugh at you."

Jon immediately scrubbed his thumb through the wet polish on his big toe. "Get it off. I don't want it."

They have it all sorted out by kindergarten. This is for boys and this is for girls. Boys do this, girls do that. Boys don't wear nail polish. Boys don't scream. Boys don't cry. So what can boys do? Boys can get angry. Those around them adapt.

"JON." I said, forcing his shoes onto his feet. "I can't stop time. I can't keep the school bus from coming."

"But it's NOT FAIR," he screamed back at me. "I didn't get a turn on the tablet! You didn't tell me it was almost time! This is YOUR FAULT."

"We'll talk about it later. You have to go to school!"

"I HATE YOU! You're the meanest mommy!"

We're very big on talking in our family. Use your words, talk it out with your brother, come downstairs when you're ready to talk. But once Jon was in full tsunami mode, there

was nothing I could say. Talking only seemed to amplify his outrage.

So like women often do, I tried to manage his environment. I carefully planned every social event and family outing to avoid conflict and potential meltdowns. It helped, but I resented every second of it. I'm all too aware of how women are expected to manage not only our own emotional states, but the emotional wellbeing of everyone around us.

Our daughter Ella is only three and already I see her trying to soothe Jon when he's upset. I want to praise her compassion, and at the same time I want to carry her away, sit her down, and tell her that she does not have to do that.

Even Charlie, with his easy-going personality, often gives up what he wants when a meltdown is approaching, and too many times I let him. "Thank you, Charlie," I'll say, relieved that peace has been preserved and ashamed of how helpless I feel in the face of a seven-year old's anger.

I've often wondered why this struggle seems to be absent at school. His teachers have



They have it all sorted out by kindergarten. This is for boys and this is for girls. Boys do this, girls do that. Boys don't wear nail polish. Boys don't scream. Boys don't cry. So what can boys do? Boys can get angry. Those around them adapt.



I know I can't handle Jon's emotions for him. I can't remove all of the conflict from his environment. I can't hand him off to all of the other women that will inhabit and fill his life and expect them to do it. Jon needs to learn to handle his own feelings, and I need to let him.

never said anything to me about it. Behavior in elementary school is marked by the colors green, yellow, and red. Jon's chart for first grade was a solid line of green. He's reading above his grade level and absorbing math concepts that Charlie didn't get until second grade. Maybe school is a frustration-free zone because the material is so easy for him, and his classmates fight over who gets to sit next to him at lunch.

But as he grows, school will become more challenging, and the social dynamics will become more complex. I worry about how he'll manage his frustrations then. There is no shortage of men in this world who have learned to process emotion as aggression and combat their disappointments with a desire to control others.

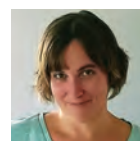
I know I can't handle Jon's emotions for him. I can't remove all of the conflict from his environment. I can't hand him off to all of the other women that will inhabit and fill his life and expect them to do it. Jon needs to learn to handle his own feelings, and I need to let him. We need to make sure he knows it's okay to have emotions, and we need to coach him to handle them in a healthy way.

So we keep working at it, even through our exasperation and fears. It starts with assuring Jon that he's allowed to be mad, or upset, or frustrated. "It's okay to be angry," I say over and over again like a mantra, "it's not okay to lash out."

This year we bought him a diary with a lock, a place to write all of his feelings down. Keeping a diary might not seem manly, but it could help a lot of men. We offer as much encouragement and positive reinforcement as possible. And when he makes an effort to explain why he's upset we pay careful attention, even when it makes no sense to us.

No matter how many times we feel utterly confounded by our son, we wouldn't change a hair on his head or a fragment of his sensitive soul. And while we look forward to the day that Jon has better control of his emotions, we pray that the world around him won't teach him to hide his emotions or trade vulnerability for aggression.

God gave us this amazing child, and we believe that Jon's life is full of potential to serve God and to help others with his gifts. Jon is funny. Jon is smart. He has too much ear wax and a slight lactose intolerance and Jon is emotional. We will keep treasuring him for who he is and rest safe in the knowledge that those sharp-edged emotions can also yield a tender heart.



Rebecca Shimp Martin is a church office manager, foster parent, and Mennonite convert who will someday finish the quilt she started six years ago.



I'll never forget the moment I found out that I was having a boy. This was my first child, and, I must admit, I had been looking longingly at the lovely, frilly dresses for girls in the baby section.

During my ultrasound, though, when I heard the words, "It's a boy!" I was just filled with gratitude that he was healthy and doing well. Little did I know that as powerful as those three little words were that day, parenting my son would teach me even more about how words change lives.

My son is now thirteen years old, making me an unwilling parent of a teenager. My family likes to joke that my son is my mini-me—he loves to read, is inquisitive by nature, enjoys my “punny” humor, and delves into impromptu philosophical discussions with me. He also likes to stack the bowls in the cupboards in even numbers or else it bothers him. I totally understand.

Growing up, he was always especially aware of routine. If any part of the routine went awry, he was a mess. He would fall apart emotionally. This was especially evident in transitions from one task to another (particularly if the next task was not as enjoyable). As he transitioned from nonverbal to verbal, the most powerful moments for him were when I could verbalize his frustration.

I remember one time he was angry about dirt on his shoe (yes, he was that child). He was crying vehemently, and it took me awhile to figure out what his problem was. When I said, “Are you sad because you got dirty?” He yelled, “Yes!” and hugged me so tightly. This was a learning moment for me. He needed me, at his point in his life, to give him words.

The topics have now changed, but I still see myself providing a vital role in helping my son find his words. With hormones raging, he struggles to identify the cause of all the anguish and to find his way out of it. My daughter, on the other hand, has many words. She doesn't need my help, only my patience. My son though still needs me to help him uncover what is hidden to him. My

GIVE THEM WORDS:

HELPING BOYS NAME AND NAVIGATE THEIR EMOTIONS

Tatyana Claytor

hope is that as I model how to find the hurt and fear behind the rage that my son will learn how to stop and listen to his heart. And, once he can hear it, I am praying that he will learn the power of speaking truth to his woundedness—without me.

This I cannot control, but I can patiently lead him again and again along the timeworn path, trusting that God is also walking with us, teaching my son to hear God's voice. "Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart" (Psalm 51:6, ESV).

This is my gift to my son, a gift many men do not grow up with. Instead, they are taught that emotions are silly or effeminate and should therefore be ignored (or at least restrained). These men now struggle with anger and health issues that don't seem to

have any clear causes. They struggle to connect with spouses or significant others, not understanding the value of conversation to solve problems. Simply put, they struggle without their words.

Scripturally, we know that words are powerful. God spoke the world into creation (Genesis 1). Jesus is called the Word (John 1). Saving faith comes by the hearing of the Word (Romans 10:17). In Isaiah 55:11 (ESV), God testifies to this when he says, "so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it."

Our words do not transform the fabric of the universe, but they can transform the fabrics of our hearts,

particularly when the words spoken are truth. For those of us who are parents of sons, start now to teach them the value of the spoken word. We can start with God's transcendent Word, then their own inner voice, and, finally, we can show them how words are a means of building connections with those around them. For me, giving my son love means giving him words to express it.



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She has a master's degree in education from Nova Southeastern University and a master's degree in professional writing from Liberty University.

When Gender Roles Don't Work: How One Couple and Their Sons Became Egalitarians

Jodi & Dave Hansen

We asked Jodi and Dave Hansen (Dave is a CBE board member) to reflect on their journey raising two sons, defying role expectations, and discovering the freedom of egalitarianism.

Jodi

“Push, Jodi, push!” the midwife encouraged as I struggled to deliver our baby’s big shoulders. So, I gathered all the strength left in my being, took a deep, fortifying breath, and pushed.

“It’s a boy!” the midwife announced as our child emerged into the world, and our lives were changed forever.

Though we’d anticipated this arrival for months, we were unprepared for the overwhelming love we felt when they placed that little, screaming person into our arms. Eighteen months later, another son was born and our family was complete. Now the parents of two boys, our lives, our hopes, and our prayers evolved accordingly. We wanted our sons to be loving and kind and gentle (Gal. 5:22–23). We prayed they’d become faithful, eager ambassadors for Jesus Christ in the world.

Dave

It didn’t matter to me whether our babies were male or female. Like most new parents, I was overwhelmed with love for each of my newborn sons, and I set out to show them my affection. I grew up in a very traditional, complementarian family and my parents practiced very traditional roles. I don’t believe that I was pushed into becoming a hyper-masculine “man’s man,” but, my family was rather stoic and rarely physically affectionate.

In early adulthood, I realized that I wanted something different for my boys. I didn’t care how big they got; I wanted to be a dad that hugged them. Moreover, I wanted our sons to always know that our family was a safe place emotionally; that they could express the wide gamut of human emotion without judgment.

Jodi

As excited as we were about our precious sons, their births couldn't have been more poorly timed. Dave was attending graduate law school, and we would have preferred to wait until after he finished to start a family. But that was not God's plan. Fortunately, I had a well-paying job as a nurse manager that kept the bills paid while Dave was in school.

The plan was always for me to eventually stay home with the children. The Bible was clear on that. Or at least, the interpretation of the Bible in our complementarian church was clear: women should be workers at home while men were to be good providers for their families. Our situation was not the ideal, so we labored to put "the better way" into motion as soon as possible. But despite our best intentions, plan B quickly evolved into plan C and then D.

Dave entered the legal field, working long hours for less pay than I was making in healthcare. After a year of juggling two demanding professions while raising a toddler and a preschooler, we decided Dave would scale back to assume the role of primary parent, allowing me to take advantage of the opportunities for advancement that kept falling into my lap. It just seemed the best course for our family.

The only problem was that our church made it clear in sermons, Bible studies, passive aggressive comments, and even direct emails to us, that the wife was responsible for the home and children and should not be the primary breadwinner. We were conflicted, but the boys were thriving; our work/life balance was sustainable; the household was in order; and our income was good. We reasoned that if one of us was home, that was what mattered. But, we always faced some scrutiny as the only family in church who was financially supported by a woman.

Dave

I enjoyed my years as the primary parent. I liked spending so much time with our children. I worked hard to teach them good manners and did my best to demonstrate respect for their mother and other women with whom they saw me interact. I never excused or celebrated their propensity to wrestle each other in public by saying, "boys will be boys."

Though our chosen home situation worked for us, our church found it troubling and my masculinity questionable. We often became the subject of hushed criticisms because I didn't "lead" my family in the expected way of our subculture.

I was supposed to be the breadwinner, the spiritual leader, the resident theologian, a man's man. The pressure was tremendous! Some of the more common subtle, and not to



subtle, criticisms I heard over the years were:

“You and your wife are engaging in role reversals, which is very difficult.” (Stated with deep concern for how hard it must be for me to live this way.)

“Why does he drive that p**sy car?” (referring to our family’s Mini Cooper).

“You’re such a metro-sexual!” (always said in a joking way to hide the degrading intent).

“You need to get your wife under control!” (Often stated after a church meeting if Jodi asked questions about church budgets or leadership initiatives).

Jodi

When the boys entered school, Dave became the full-time administrator of the Christian school they attended and I continued to ride wave after wave of good career opportunities. Now that we were both working full-time outside the home, I doubled down on homemaking responsibilities. Dave shared in many of the household duties, but I took ownership of this aspect of our lives. I made sure the staff at the school saw my kids and husband eating nutritious and creative lunches lovingly prepared by me—before I left on a business trip.

On Sunday afternoons, we would often invite other families over after church to eat and talk theology and I was careful to demonstrate to our church and Christian school friends that my house was clean and my cooking was delicious.

Yeah, I was bringing home the bacon (and wrapping it around blue cheese stuffed dates!) but the head of our household had *delegated* that role to me, I reassured our church friends. I remember one Sunday afternoon, a church elder looked up from his honored seat at our table as I served him a sumptuous plate of food to comment, “I know you have a job and all, but you really do *get* submission.”

Dave

Over time, the disconnect between our lives and the complementarian framework of our church and Christian school led me to engage in dysfunctional behaviors. Instead of being a father who made it safe for my sons to express all kinds of emotions like I’d always hoped, I checked out emotionally in my marriage and family. Unbelievably, our church judged my emotional distance and dysfunctional behavior to be positive! Most of our friends still didn’t understand our non-traditional lifestyle, but I became known as a level-headed asset to the community—even if I didn’t drive a truck or muscle car.

Despite the approval of our friends, I was miserable inside. But, all our close relationships were tied to our church and Christian school, and to question the very rigid male and female roles was simply not possible. Jodi and I both knew the social cost would be too great to our family.

In 2008, the male privilege driving so much dysfunction in our lives hit home. Our marriage unraveled. Jodi had known for years that the dysfunction was rooted in a patriarchal system that forced people into roles that often made no sense. She recognized that complementarianism didn’t foster true love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control in our most intimate relationships. It took me a little longer to catch on.

Jodi

By 2008, I was done. I was tired of serving in a church that minimized the God-ordained gifts of women and instead pitted us against each other in a twisted game of who was the best wife and mother. I was tired of living in a sub-culture that rubber-stamped the broader culture’s

She recognized that complementarianism didn’t foster true love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control in our most intimate relationships. It took me a little longer to catch on.

toxic views about male privilege and masculinity with a Bible verse. I was tired of being married to an entitled husband who took the benefits of my striving for granted. I was tired of working so hard to make our messed-up marriage look good to people who incessantly promoted male headship. I was done! So I wrestled with God for the next year and then did what any reasonable woman in crisis would do: I went to seminary.

Seminary was the lifeboat that saved our family when I was ready to jump ship from all that our marriage had become. Seminary was where I came to understand the biblical view of God's design for men and women to serve together in church and the home. It's where I found the courage to leave the complementarian church tradition where we had always worshipped and fellowshiped. Thankfully, Dave joined me in finding a new church with a long history of affirming equality between men and women. Seminary, and that season of deconstruction, changed everything for our family—including for the boys. But, radical change is never easy.

Dave

Initially, I left our old church not because I had become a committed egalitarian (I wasn't) but because I knew down deep that our marriage couldn't possibly survive in that context. As we had suspected, the cost was great. We lost our best friends and the tight-knit community in which our boys were raised. Despite its dysfunctions, the church community was our family, and leaving was painful. When I finally announced to a close friend and fellow elder that we were leaving our church, he angrily retorted, "So you're just going to throw away 2,000 years of church history?!", as if I was now the opposition and not the friend with whom he had spent hours laboring for the sake of our church and school.

It took getting away from that culture to see how damaging patriarchy really was. For the first time in my life, I examined the massive disconnect between our professed belief in male headship and our functionally egalitarian family life. Eventually, I came to believe that equality among the sexes—from a theological and biblical perspective—was really God's design all along.

Biblical equality finally made sense in my head. And then, about a year after leaving our old church, the truth hit my heart. . . hard.

Jodi and I returned to the church for a special service presided over by multiple pastors and leaders from the

*I was tired of living
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local region. I watched, grief-stricken, as a line of men and no women filed ceremoniously to the front. In that moment, I grasped the pain Jodi must have felt for all those years. I began to weep for all the harm I had unwittingly caused my wife and the women in our community.

And, what about my boys? They had been raised seeing male dominance normalized, and I was just now recognizing that message as dangerous to them. I had been blind to the hurt I caused their mother and other women in our community. Were they also blind to the power they held in our male-dominated families and churches? Would they abuse that power and harm the women in their lives too?

Jodi

At seventeen and nineteen, our boys witnessed their parents reject what they had been always taught about men and women by our church, their Christian school, and even our closest friends. Our desire for them to be ambassadors for Christ to the world took on a whole new dimension with our desire to see them embrace biblical gender equality.

But, our oldest was already off to college and our youngest on the way out the door. Right at the moment when the influence of parents often diminishes, we desired to teach our sons something new and life-altering. Could they embrace God's design for men and women to co-serve and co-lead in church and home when they had been taught they were to be the heads of their households and leaders over women?

In those early years after such a radical shift in our understanding of marriage and gender roles, we would reflect on how we had raised our sons and often lament, "I wish we had a do-over."

Dave

But, God is good and as Jodi and I began to share our changing views, we were relieved to see the boys embrace them. Recently, we had conversations with each of them to ask how and why—despite the Christian culture in which they were raised—they came to their own belief in biblical gender equality.

Both of them noted that what they observed at home was foundational to their thinking. They saw their mother working (quite successfully!) in a "man's world" and their father taking on many of the homemaking responsibilities. To them, this counter-cultural model was not only normal, it was logical. They recognized easily that a man or a woman can clean the house and cook a meal. Why should those responsibilities fall only on women? Likewise, they observed a woman who was just as capable in the business world as any man. So why would that role and sphere be relegated to men?

Neither openly questioned the more "traditional" roles prescribed by our churches when they were growing up. Yet, as adults they expressed that the stereotypes just weren't consistent with their experience.

Both also observed that the married couples who had the most positive and healthy relationships were the couples that didn't follow the prescribed roles taught in their church. Our youngest son, Cole, rightly stated, "The intention of complementarian ideology is not to thwart emotional vulnerability, it just does. Because any ideology that asserts authority as its primary goal is going to thwart vulnerability."

I was surprised—and saddened—to hear our oldest, Chase, say, "I saw church and theology compartmentalized from the rest of life. There was always a tension between church and life. Mom was only able to live into her gifting outside of church."

Jodi

When Dave and I had left our church over the issue of gender roles, Chase had already moved out of the home. However, he noted that seeing his parents question the rigid teachings of his upbringing made it acceptable for him to question it as well. He shared that he wasn't sure if his faith would have survived had we not made it okay to search and question.

But, what most encouraged us was to hear our sons articulate—in separate conversations and almost verbatim—that their biggest problem with complementarian theology was that they did not witness it promoting the Fruit of the Spirit or Christ-like character in its practitioners.

The intention of complementarian ideology is not to thwart emotional vulnerability, it just does. Because any ideology that asserts authority as its primary goal is going to thwart vulnerability.

Dave

Both of our sons wound up marrying fiercely feminist women who are gifted in leadership. Both are committed to gender equality in their marriages, their community, their work, and their church. I was blown away when Chase and his wife, Andrea, chose to wash each other's feet as part of their wedding ceremony while Cole and his wife, Jennifer, were adamant that their wedding ceremony would be officiated by a male and a female pastor together. And, both couples insisted that their parents—together—walk them down the aisle rather than having the bride's father "give" the bride to her groom.

Now, when our family gathers, we are full of hugs, boisterous laughter, and sometimes even tears. All emotions are allowed. No one needs to suppress any part of their humanity in this family.

Jodi

We spent many years of our marriage and raised our sons in a church that sought to form men into manly Christian leaders and women into submissive followers. Thankfully, we realized that model didn't make sense for our marriage or for our sons. God's grace prevailed and we realized our hopes to raise men who are not only kind, gentle, and loving but who affirm strong women and God's design of equality for us all.



Dave and Jodi Hansen live in the beautiful northern Willamette Valley of Oregon where they enjoy loving their neighbors and hosting parties and community organizing events in their home. They are passionate about biblical equality, criminal justice reform, and sharing the gospel in word and deed. Find them at zoticuslaw.com and remnantinitiatives.org.

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Teaching My Son Emotional Vulnerability through My Struggle with Depression: A Father's Reflection

Michael Bain

Four years ago, I was diagnosed with depression. It was scary. I had no safe place, no castle to retreat to and regroup. That's the thing with depression. It consumes every part of your life, sucking the joy out of everything. Six months after that diagnosis, my marriage ended.

Today, my choices are driven by one question: what is best for my son (eleven) and daughter (nine). Regardless of what happens between me and my ex-wife, my kids deserve to have a mother and a father investing in them, teaching them, supporting them, and being there for them when things go pear-shaped.

One of the choices I've made is not to shy away from telling my kids about my depression. As I deal with my ghosts and work toward healing, I am open and honest with my kids about my journey. I want them to know that when they face grief, anxiety, or disappointment, they don't have to hide it. The apostle Paul told us that love in action includes rejoicing with those who rejoice and mourning with those who mourn (Rom. 12:15). But for this to happen, we have to tell each other what we're going through.

In our society, men especially are expected to be strong and unemotional. But this cuts us off from relationships and healing. It causes us to hold things in and lash out at others, verbally and physically. It's

As I deal with my ghosts and work toward healing, I am open and honest with my kids about my journey. I want them to know that when they face grief, anxiety, or disappointment, they don't have to hide it.

especially important for me, as a father and a Christian, to flip the script. I want my kids to know that Jesus freed us from patriarchal norms. He cried, he depended on women's charity, he invited women to step out of traditional roles, and he was stripped naked and humiliated publicly on the cross. He called on those with power to surrender it for the sake of others. My son, especially, needs to know that there is a better way to be a man than what he sees at school and in the media. So I model openness and honesty.

I share when I'm not doing well. I ask for hugs, and I tell them why. Often I'll simply say: "Can I have a hug? I'm feeling really sad at the moment." I also apologize to both my son and daughter when I mess up. Maybe I growl too much, maybe I get too firm, maybe it's as simple as not listening properly and making assumptions or interrupting them when they are talking. So I apologize. I say sorry

and I ask for their forgiveness. I even apologize when the frustrations of dealing with their mom overwhelm me and I criticize her in front of them.

I check in with them. How are things for them? Is there anything that is worrying them? Anything they feel unsafe about? Concerned about? How are they doing emotionally? I want to create an atmosphere where they feel safe talking to me about anything, especially as my son approaches his teenage years.

Finally, I tell them that I love them. A lot. On the phone. In the car. Dropping them off to school. While I make dinner. Even after growling at them. For me, that is key. It's so important for kids to know they are loved by their dads. And I don't just say it. I show it. I blow kisses at them. I wink at them. I hug them.

This year, I've begun to see the first fruits of all that hard work.

At the beginning of the year, my ex-wife told me that she had an irreversible, degenerative condition. The kids have been in her primary care since the separation, but I will likely have to eventually be their primary caregiver. For my son, I had to step into that role sooner than either of us expected.

He struggled with what was happening to his mom. Her condition was visibly upsetting for him and he was not coping at all. He would get angry easily, yell, hit, and throw things and break other things. A couple of times, my ex-wife called and asked me to take him away for a few hours because she and my daughter were feeling unsafe. It was scary.

We took him to counseling and learned that he was holding a lot of anger in—with a considerable amount targeted at me. It hurt to see my son so consumed with anger and fear.

With the counselor's help, we decided that my son would come into my primary care. I've sought to be consistently real and vulnerable with him and show him how that vulnerability positively impacts my life.

The change in my son's life has been dramatic. People have commented on how much happier he is, and how relaxed he seems to be. He laughs more. We have more fun together and he shares more with me.

At our final session with the counselor, my son said that a previous incident that had been a flashpoint for his anger towards me was no longer that. He said his relationship with me is better. I almost burst into tears of joy and relief.

I won't say it's been a bed of roses since. He's struggled with being bullied at school. He tried to hide it from me for a while, but he learned quickly that I had his back. He still has tantrums and I am firm about dealing with those, but we always reconnect, talk about what happened and how he could handle it better, and finish with hugs.

I don't profess to have all the answers. But my journey toward openness and vulnerability has taught me and my children some lessons. Lessons that can be imparted to the next generation and which may benefit other families and individuals.

I urge parents, grandparents, uncles and aunts, teachers, coaches, youth workers, pastors etc. who work with kids, and particularly boys, to encourage emotional expression and vulnerability by practicing these six principles:

1 Be real with your sons. If you're struggling with something, be honest and up front with your boys. If they see you being vulnerable and in touch with your emotions, it normalizes it and lets them see that sharing how you are feeling is good and healthy.

2 Have the courage to say "sorry" to your kids when you mess up. It could be a small thing (that promise to grab an ice cream on the way home) or it could be big (being grumpy with your kids). It not only shows that everyone can and does make mistakes, but it shows them that making amends is important. It also lets you off the guilt hook of being the "perfect parent."

3 Check in with your boys. Ask them open-ended questions about what they're feeling. But also make it safe for them to say "no, mom/dad, I don't want to talk about it." Knowing that you aren't going to try to interrogate them will build trust and will show your boys that you are a safe person to open up to.

4 Tell your sons you love them, and show it too. Hugs and kisses are good. Winks across the room are nice non-verbal connections to let them know you're there for them.

5 Allow them to ask you hard questions. It's not being truly vulnerable if the questions are only one way.

6 As you raise your sons (and daughters) in the faith, remind them that their role model is Jesus. They don't have to be what the world around them expects.

Using these six rules, I've sought to show my son the importance of embracing vulnerability and emotion. I hope that he will grow up to become an emotionally healthy man who isn't afraid to be vulnerable or to say that he's hurting. I pray that in being transparent about my own struggle with depression, my son will know first-hand that boys do, in fact, cry.



Michael Bain is from New Zealand. A former missionary who has spent twenty years in television and video production, he is currently completing a master's of communication studies as he moves into public relations. Michael is passionate about social justice in all aspects of life.

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Growing Pains:

How Complementarianism Shames Boys and Isolates Men

Jason Eden

With vivid emotional clarity, I can remember standing helplessly before the chalkboard, crying in front the entire fourth grade class as I struggled to overcome the enigma of a long division problem. My teacher, a middle-aged woman who had apparently come to expect great things from me, was clearly frustrated with my lack of progress. Her verbal corrections did not help, and I felt a keen sense of embarrassment and shame. It was partly because of my inability to solve the formula, but also in part, I believe due to something else.

Although any student would find my experience at the front of the chalkboard upsetting, one reason I found it so hurtful as a boy was because a woman was making me cry. As a boy who was just learning the chauvinistic norms of my school, somewhere deep inside I knew it was especially embarrassing when a woman made you cry. This wasn't supposed to happen. I was supposed to be stronger than her, even though I was only eight or nine years old at the time. In this case, my gender was supposed to trump my age, even though I lacked emotional strength and maturity to understand or cope with the situation.

I was a victim of one of the many contradictions of complementarian Christianity. Complementarians say that men teach and lead while women learn and submit. Yet, at my school, most of the teachers were women. In fact, in Christian churches and schools throughout the world, females teach and lead while male students learn and submit. At some point (no one seems to know or agree about when), males are to stop learning from and submitting to women. In other words, age and gender seem to determine whether or not a woman is able to lead



or teach, but the rules about this are foggy, at best. This creates confusion and emotional isolation for boys.

Before going further, let me acknowledge that girls face a tougher set of circumstances and challenges than boys as they grow older. Girls face a higher likelihood of being sexually abused and they must deal with all of the double-standards, objectification of female bodies, and other challenges that accompany sexism in the world. At the same time, it is worth exploring the challenges faced by boys as they grow older, particularly those that stem from complementarian theology and sexist policies within Christian institutions. Both sexes pay a price for arbitrary and restrictive gender norms, and although boys might pay less of a price, they are no exception to this rule.

The misguided and conflicting complementarian norms make growing into manhood a challenging prospect for boys. Boys often try to mimic the men around them. At the chalkboard, I felt shame, in part because I was not acting like other men in the church, who were leaders and teachers. Men were strong. Men were in charge of their emotions and of the people around them. But, the truth of the matter was, I was a boy, not a man, and so my role, at least for the time being, was a submissive one.

As boys become young men, their relationship with girls and women fundamentally changes. Instead of being surrounded by equals or leaders who enrich their lives, they are often isolated and burdened with expectations of leadership that may not align with their individual capabilities, giftings, or callings. Years of learning to project strength leave young men emotionally alone and ill-equipped for leadership. Only other boys and men (many of them also emotionally immature and afraid to be vulnerable) can speak wisdom into their lives. The consequences sometimes turn outward, taking the form of aggression, abuse, and violence.

In addition to being perplexing and harmful, the view that leadership is based on gender and age is not found in Scripture. In the Bible, neither age nor gender determines whether someone teaches, commands, submits, or obeys. Abraham submitted to Sarah, even though he was an older man and she was a younger woman (Gen. 21:12). Josiah and other political leaders in Judah submitted to the guidance of Huldah, who was likely an older woman while Josiah was a younger man (2 Kings 22:14–23:25). Mordecai, an older man, submitted to Esther, a younger woman

Years of learning to project strength leave young men emotionally alone and ill-equipped for leadership. Only other boys and men (many of them also emotionally immature and afraid to be vulnerable) can speak wisdom into their lives. The consequences sometimes turn outward, taking the form of aggression, abuse, and violence.



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(Esther 4:17). In the New Testament, Jesus submitted to his mother and father when he was a young man (Luke 2:51) and he submitted to his mother at the wedding at Cana (John 2:1-11). Finally, Apollos learned from Priscilla (Acts 18:24-28).

Clearly, the Bible does not restrict leadership or teaching based upon either age or gender. Ability, character, wisdom, and the needs of a particular situation were much more important in determining who led or submitted to whom in Scripture.* This approach not only better serves the needs of humanity, but it would also likely spare boys much of the confusion and heartache they face as they grow older. If boys grew up knowing that

we can all teach and learn in different situations, they could experience a Christian world that made more sense and exposed them to less social stigma and shame.

My own episode at the chalkboard would have been much less upsetting without the additional gender baggage I carried. If it were normal for men to submit to women in my school and church, I would not have felt as much shame. Yes, my teacher probably could have been more sensitive, but my emotional reaction was certainly heightened by the gender dynamics.

It would be better for all of us if leadership roles in Christian organizations were uniformly based

on talent and character. Boys and girls would grow up in a more logically consistent and emotionally sensible space. They could discover and help each other cultivate the gifts and personalities God gave them. They could mature as individuals into the persons God has called them to be.



Jason Eden is a professor in the history department at St. Cloud State University. His wife, Naomi, is a licensed marriage and

family therapist. Together, they recently co-authored a book, titled *Age Norms and Intercultural Interaction in Colonial North America* (Lexington, 2017).

*In an upcoming article in *Priscilla Papers*, my wife and I address the theological and historical aspects of these age norms in greater detail. This includes addressing the interpretive challenges related to age issues found within biblical passages such as 1 Timothy 2:11-12.

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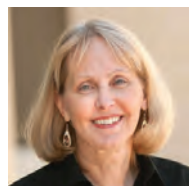
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Fiscal Year 2018 Annual Report

Thanks to the generosity and prayerful support of donors, CBE's impact continued to increase through the 2018 fiscal year (April 1, 2017—March 31, 2018). We expanded national and international outreach, printed and distributed over 2,000 books, and launched a new marriage resource, all cultivating an even stronger biblical challenge to patriarchy. CBE also exceeded FY2018 financial goals. Thank you to an ever-growing community that is passionate about our mission!

Here are a few highlights. **Find the full report online at cbe.today/fy2018report.**

CBE SPREAD THE EGALITARIAN MESSAGE

CBE launched the post-graduate Alvera Mickelsen Memorial Scholarship for women studying in ministry-related fields. Two \$6,000 scholarships will be awarded in 2018.

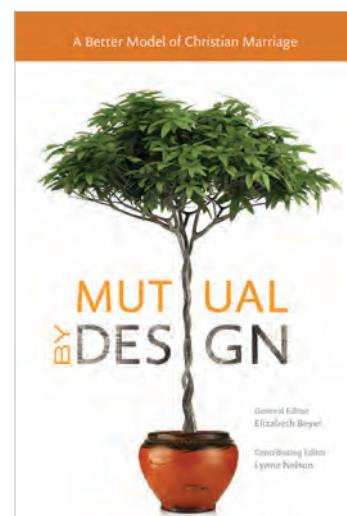
Mutual by Design: A Better Model of Christian Marriage was published to positive reviews.

"Mutual by Design: Building God's Church Together," CBE's 2017 conference in Orlando, FL, brought together more than 200 Christians to connect and share in lectures on biblical gender equality and its impact on the church and families.

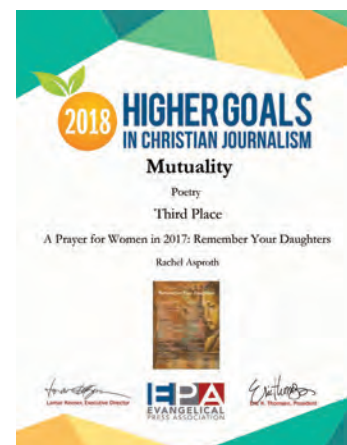
Three new CBE chapters were launched:

- Washington DC
- Colorado Springs
- Perth, Australia

Year of Jubilee, CBE's 30th anniversary celebration, was made permanent. Online resources are now available free to everyone! That means we're reaching more people than ever online.



Mutual by Design, CBE's new book on marriage.



CBE won 3 Evangelical Press Association awards in 2018.

CBE's Online Growth by the Numbers

470,000

visitors to CBE's website

127%

growth in visitors to CBE's website

111%

growth in views of *Mutuality* articles

948,000

pages viewed

100%

growth in *Arise* readership

89%

growth in views of *Priscilla Papers* articles

CBE WORKED FOR CHANGE

CBE collaborated with African ministries to promote the Bible's call for equality and oppose patriarchy.

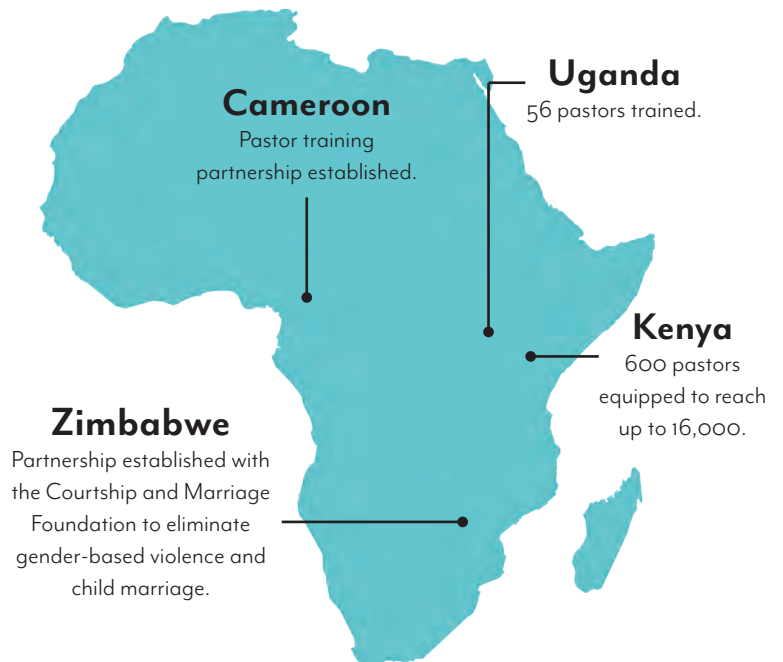
CBE responded to a growing recognition among Christian humanitarian agencies that advancing gender equality is essential to development work:

- Became a gender consultant for World Relief
- Established a relationship with the Wheaton Consortium for Christianity, Gender, and Development
- Joined the Accord and Side by Side networks, making free resources available to 136 international nonprofit development organizations

In response to the crisis revealed by #MeToo and #ChurchToo, CBE participated in a panel on sexual harassment at the 2018 Evangelical Press Association convention.

At the Evangelical Theological Society's annual meeting, CBE distributed resources, promoted new biblical research, hosted a mixer event, and presented on gender and Bible translation.

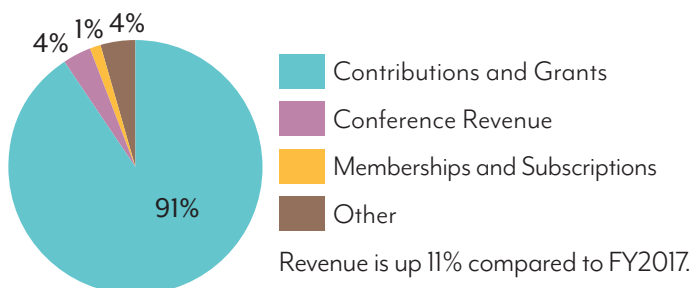
CBE's Partnerships in Africa



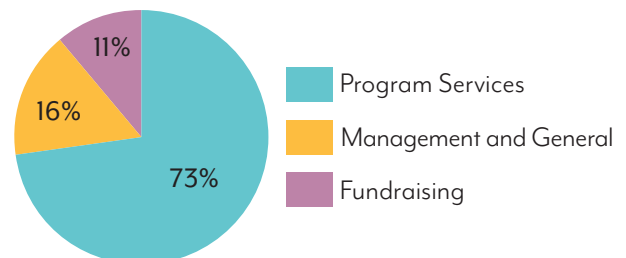
Pastors and nonprofits across Africa are changing lives with the egalitarian message. CBE is supporting their work with funding, resources, and training.

CBE'S FISCAL YEAR 2018 REVENUE AND EXPENSES

FY2018 Revenue \$1,129,947



FY2018 Expenses \$1,075,991

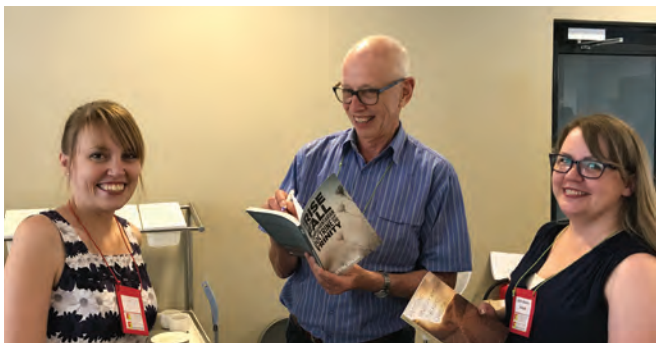


FIND THE FULL REPORT ONLINE AT CBE.TODAY/FY2018REPORT

Finland Conference Report

The “Created for Partnership” international conference, held August 3-4 in Helsinki, Finland, was a wonderful success. CBE co-hosted with our Finnish partner, RaTas. It blessed and inspired pastors, educators, and lay leaders. It was a catalyst to advocate more strongly for women’s leadership in Finnish churches:

- A significant number of attendees asked for the presentations given by Mimi Haddad, CBE’s president, to use in church Bible studies.
- While some expected “secular feminists clothed as biblical lambs,” guests learned that Scripture is our authoritative guide for faith, life, and practice.
- RaTas tied into Finland’s current conversation on how gender equality impacts men, a perspective that was very well received.
- A Christian radio station invited RaTas leaders to speak, further expanding the mission of biblical gender equality.
- RaTas was so encouraged by conference attendance and the enthusiastic response, they feel empowered to host more regional meetings and establish a network for that purpose.
- RaTas felt God working, and is truly thankful the event inspired so many, especially those beleaguered by patriarchy.



Reflect with Us by H. Edgar Hix

Without Expression

Without expression, endurance cannot be shared.

Without sharing, how can we serve him who shares?

Congratulations to CBE's 2018 Alvera Mickelsen Memorial Scholarship recipients!



Emma Riley

Palm Beach Atlantic University



Charity Sandstrom

Portland Seminary

CBE awarded the first-ever Alvera Mickelsen Memorial Scholarship to Emma Riley and Charity Sandstrom. Each is pursuing a master's of divinity and each will receive \$6,000 toward tuition for the upcoming academic year. Congratulations!

Emma is studying at Palm Beach Atlantic University and serves with the family ministries department at her church. Charity is a Friends minister pursuing her degree at Portland Seminary.

Both women are committed to honoring Alvera's example of gracious leadership, and grateful to the generous CBE donors who made these scholarships possible. In the words of one recipient, "Thank you to those who have contributed to funding this scholarship. I know it will bring dividends for generations to come!"

The Alvera Mickelsen Memorial Scholarship is funded by CBE and made possible through the generosity of Alvera's family. Each year for the life of the fund, CBE will award at least \$5,000 in tuition assistance to women pursuing a graduate or post-graduate degree in a ministry field related to writing, preaching, youth work, communications, or pastoral or nonprofit work (must be a US accredited program).

CBE would love to support more women called to ministry in 2019.

If you would too, please make a gift today.

cbe.today/ammsfund



The Tears of Men: The Emotional Masculinity of Jesus and Saint Francis

In his classic book *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis observed: “Sameness is to be found most among the most ‘natural’ men, not among those who surrender to Christ. How monotonously alike all the great tyrants and conquerors have been; how gloriously different are the saints.”

Reading these words, I can’t help but think of the Christian leaders who claim that God designed specific “roles” for us based on gender. For men, this means being strong, unemotional, rational, and a protector and provider. But is this uniformity what God asks of men? As Lewis observes, this approach better describes tyrants and conquerors than it does the saints. How easily we swallow the myth that “boys don’t cry,” forgetting that male saints, and Jesus himself, often failed to conform to the gender stereotypes of their (or our) day.

Consider Saint Francis of Assisi (1182–1226). An enormously complex individual, Francis was a mystic and the founder of the Franciscan order. He preached to the birds and wept uncontrollably when contemplating Christ. He often wandered about, so absorbed in the adoration of Jesus that he got lost and forgot to eat or sleep for days. He was certain that Christ spoke to him audibly and through visions, calling him to rebuild a church by begging for stones.

Being a breadwinner was the last thing on Francis’s mind. He was committed to poverty, prayer, service, and simplicity. Renouncing his family wealth, Francis showed how dependence on Christ unleashes our liberty and real identity. Unfettered from the cultural expectations of a man in his day, he abandoned himself to Christ, freeing him to pursue his holy passions. They in turn brought enormous renewal to Europe.

What if our paradigms of masculinity, both inside and outside the church, were modeled on leaders like Francis? Too often today, male leaders follow toxic models of masculinity that demand dominance and the subservience of others. They have little tolerance for emotions, empathy, and selfless service. Nothing could be further from Christ’s example.

Jesus wept over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41) and mourned his friend’s death (John 11:33–35). Tender and nurturing, Christ cooked for the disciples (John 21:9), washed their feet (John 13:8), and cared compassionately for the ill (Matt. 9:20–22, 35; Mark

2:9–12; Luke 17:12–16; John 9:6–7) and those who mourned (Mark 5:22–24, 35–43; Luke 7:11–17; John 11:38–44).

He honored women’s lives and work, even using feminine metaphors to illustrate and amplify God’s nearness and motherly protection. He taught that God longs to gather us like children, “as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings” (Matt. 23:37b). To show how earnestly God searches for those of us who are lost, Jesus paints God as a woman who lost a priceless coin. Unwilling to rest, she lights her lamp and furiously sweeps the house, searching in every corner until she finds her lost treasure.

God loves each of us as a tender mother. Men should follow this example. When fathers love their children with tender empathy, engagement, and an accessible nearness for their daily concerns, their children benefit. Their sons grow into men less prone to aggression and more inclined to become nurturing fathers themselves. Their daughters are more inclined to excel professionally and are less likely to have children out of marriage.

As Christian men become like Christ, they often defy cultural expectations for men. Intimacy with God frees men to become their true selves and empowers them never to disdain what culture deems and demeans as “feminine.” Men’s vulnerability, emotion, and nurture of others demonstrate their newness of life in Christ. Becoming fully human in Christ, they discover and share a depth of personality that embraces profoundly human ways of knowing and loving as God, self, and others.

God tenderly cares for us like a mother. Jesus nurtured the disciples, caring for their emotional and bodily needs through tears, empathy, and presence. Saints like Francis show us an abandonment to Christ that is demonstrative and counter-cultural for a man. Researchers show that nurturing fathers raise confident daughters and engaged, loving sons. So perhaps the masculinity of “boys don’t cry” is toxic by nature, enforcing gender roles that too often lead to violence and abuse. Our world needs powerful reformers like Francis, men deeply surrendered to Christ, detached from culture, wholly remade in the image of Christ, and unabashedly and fully human.

Praise

- We're giving thanks for a successful conference in Helsinki, Finland! Read more on p. 28.
- CBE awarded its first Alvera Mickelsen Memorial Scholarships last month. Congratulations to Emma Riley and Charity Sandstrom! Read more on p. 29.
- CBE attended an impactful EFOGE conference in Uganda this August. Our partnerships in East Africa continue to flourish.

Prayer

- It's hard to believe, but we're already working on our 2019 conference in Houston! Pray for wisdom in planning the event and selecting speakers.
- Pray for CBE's presence at the Evangelical Theological Society gathering in Denver this November. CBE will have a booth as always, and Mimi will join Rachael Denhollander and others on a panel discussing #MeToo and abuse in the church.

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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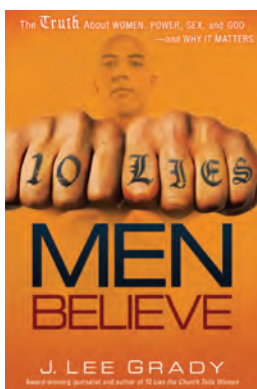
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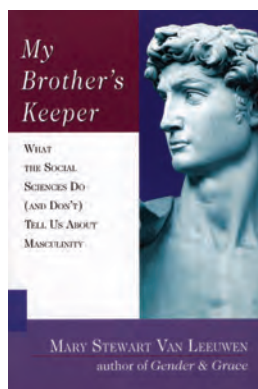
Recommended Resources from CBE!



10 Lies Men Believe

The Truth About Women, Power, Sex, and God—and Why it Matters
J. Lee Grady

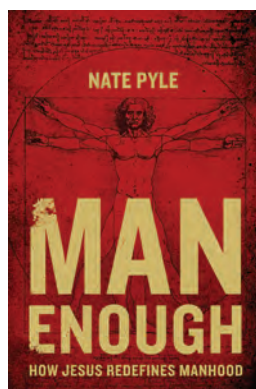
10 Lies Men Believe is a compassionate but honest look at the reasons why so many Christian men today are in serious crisis. With gut-level honesty, the author offers practical answers for men who struggle with a variety of issues, including addiction, abusive tendencies, pornography, controlling behavior, and emotional problems rooted in a lack of proper fathering.



My Brother's Keeper

What the Social Sciences Do (and Don't) Tell Us About Masculinity
Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen

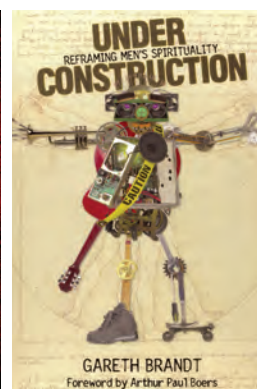
Surveying a vast amount of literature with balance and insight, Van Leeuwen probes the value and plumbs the limits of what the social sciences offer Christians. For men and women, Van Leeuwen offers an alternative to mindless conformity to—or dismissal of—cultural “norms.” Rather she encourages pursuit of a faithful masculinity that honors the God who made men and women to be a blessing to each other.



Man Enough

How Jesus Redefines Manhood
Nate Pyle

Using his own story of not feeling “man enough” as well as sociological and historical reflections, Pyle helps men see that manhood isn’t about what you do, but who you are. *Man Enough* roots men in the gospel, examines biblical examples of masculinity that challenge the idea of a singular type of man, and ultimately encourages men to conform to the image of Jesus—freeing men up to be who they were created to be.



Under Construction

Reframing Men's Spirituality
Gareth Brandt

Warriors, lone rangers, conquerors—these are the common images that come to mind when talking about men. But are those the only metaphors for Christian men? Using the story of Joseph from the Bible, Brandt shows how male spirituality reaches its height when it shows compassion to all people, and finds meaning through participation in building God’s commonwealth of love and justice.