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Mutuality

the voice of Christians for Biblical Equality

Leadership Development

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"Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding" (Rom. 14:19, NRSV).

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Fuzzy Words and Quick Assumptions

As a person who examines words for her profession, I am consistently amazed at how often we (myself included!) use certain words and expressions and assume that we all understand what they mean. For instance, consider the phrase “spiritual leader.” For as long as I have been a Christian, I have heard this concept applied to men, as a way to explain “male headship.” Just a few weeks ago, I listened to a pastor preach on Ephesians 5:21-33. Being familiar with the long debate over the meaning of the word “head” (*kephale*), I listened carefully for his definition, especially when he reached verse 23: “For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.” This pastor did not explicitly define *kephale*, but he did refer to husbands as the “spiritual leaders” several times throughout his sermon. The problem is, no one really knows what the expression “spiritual leader” means. The pastor, while a godly, wise, and loving man whom I respect greatly, tried to define a fuzzy biblical word—*kephale*—with an even fuzzier contemporary phrase. (The Bible, by the way, never uses the term “spiritual leader.”)

I have friends who label phrases like “spiritual leader” as “Evangelicalese”—a lighthearted way of highlighting how our Christian culture develops its own imprecise language. In an effort to not fall into this “Evangelicalese,” therefore, I share these thoughts at the beginning of our issue on leadership development. While we quite often toss around the term leadership and are quick to assume we understand what it means, what leadership encompasses (and the definition of who is and should be a leader) is a fuzzy concept to many Christians. So before we get to the “how-to’s” of developing effective leaders, let’s turn to some definitions.

We believe that leadership encompasses some kind of authority, responsibility, and influence. We also believe

the Bible teaches that God gifts both men and women for leadership roles in all realms of life—the church, home, and world—and that he does not discriminate based on our gender, ethnicity, or class. This is the starting point for this issue of *Mutuality* (and for more explanation and biblical research, be sure to explore the CBE website).

With so much confusion in the church about gender and leadership, perhaps it comes as no surprise that women encounter a maze of difficult expectations in living out their leadership callings. Our first article, therefore, includes insights from female ministry leaders on the obstacles and opportunities for women in ministry. Responding to ten common frustrations women leaders face, our authors share painful stories, encouragement from the Bible, and practical tips for moving forward.

Next, Rosie Ward challenges the popular beliefs that men and women are opposites and that they lead and communicate differently according to their gender. Mimi Haddad then invites us to understand leadership through the example of Esther, examining the qualities of effective (and ineffective) leaders. Finally, Joanna Balda poses a compelling question about the very nature of how we conceptualize leadership, and Jim Smith highlights the anniversary of Edith Deen’s important book on historical Christian women leaders. Be sure also to see Aída Besançon Spencer’s helpful response to the question of why Jesus did not choose women to be among his twelve disciples.

We pray this issue will be an encouragement to you as we all work to clarify and model true biblical leadership. Blessings on you as you read and reflect!

Megan Greulich is the editor of Mutuality. She may be reached at mgreulich@cbeinternational.org.

What do you think about this issue of *Mutuality*? Are you interested in writing for us? We welcome your comments, critiques, article ideas, and suggestions for future issues.

The View from the Pulpit

Honest Advice for Women in Ministry

Women in ministry leadership face unique challenges as they seek to follow their calling in a world that often discourages and discriminates because of their gender. Here ten women leaders share experiences, wisdom, and hope as they respond to these common obstacles.

My male colleagues exclude me from discussions and do not listen to my ideas. I feel like a “fish out of water.”

About thirty years ago, when I began teaching as the first (and, for ten years, as the only) female at my school, I noticed I went through several transitions with some of my male colleagues. First, on a local scholarly trip, I found that throughout the evening they talked to each other as if I was not there. I felt they regarded me as a child who can be seen but not heard. Although they invited me to join them on other trips, I never went again. Second, when in our academic meetings I forced myself to contribute, my comments were often

met in laughter. (The child should never have spoken!) Third, when they realized I had gained a certain amount of influence, some of them planned methods to undercut my suggestions. (The child had become unruly.) So, I went through three stages; ignored because I was of no significance, laughed at because I was different, undercut because I was threatening. What made a difference? As a faculty we took an educational trip abroad and, for once, we all got to know each other as mature individuals outside of academic concerns. Then, when we returned, I was treated with more respect. The situation also improved when other male colleagues began making a point of announcing that I had my hand up during meetings, encouraging my participation.

When you are facing exclusion from your colleagues, be affirmed by the Word of God. The Apostle Paul said that God chose the ones “that are not” in order to nullify the ones who “are” (1 Cor 1:28) and Mary praised the Lord, prophesying the Lord has “lifted up the humble,” while bringing down “rulers from their thrones” (Luke 1:52). We cannot allow the negative opinions of others to become our own opinion of ourselves because in God’s sight we are significant. The best technique of all is to ask for prayer from supporters for important forthcoming meetings and to engage key colleagues individually ahead of time to discuss those issues you believe to be important. And, remember to advocate for others as others once advocated for you.

For other practical advice, look for William David Spencer’s article “From Locker Room to Meeting Room: Restructuring Groups for Both Women and Men” in the forthcoming *Some Men Are Our Heroes*, eds. Jewel Hyun and Cindy Lathrop, as well as *Global Voices on Biblical Equality: Women and Men Serving Together in the Church*, eds. A. Besançon Spencer, W. D. Spencer, and Mimi Haddad.

Rev. Dr. Aida Besançon Spencer is professor of New Testament at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and a founding pastor of Pilgrim Church in Beverly, Massachusetts.

My seminary professor has publicly made it clear he believes women should not be in church leadership.

None of my MDiv professors were supportive of women’s leadership in the church. In one course, the subject came up in every class session, as my professor was spurred on by male students, and I, the only woman in the class, was never called on. What advice do I have for other women living such a story?

- Remember that God is your authority, not any college or seminary professor. At the conclusion of seminary, I left a denominational missions meeting where I refused to sign a statement discriminating against women pastors only to find a message on my answering machine inviting me to preach elsewhere. God truly has the final word, so give him your emotional energy. School ends. He doesn’t.
- Concentrate on the people who do support you. For me, there were specific female pastors who listened to me for hours as I went through seminary. Find those people and spend as much time with them as possible.
- Remember that you can shake people’s worldviews just by loving Jesus. Love those professors, too, and find things to genuinely affirm in them. Ask them questions based on your thorough research. Seek to influence — rather than to defeat — those who may oppose you. A male classmate told me once, “I thought all women leaders were heretics who didn’t respect God’s Word. But then I heard you thought it was okay for women to preach, so I knew that my assumption couldn’t be true.” Your life will preach to those around you as much as your professor’s lectures do.

Laura M. Rector (MDiv, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary) is currently pursuing her Ph.D. at Fuller Theological Seminary.

Some of my parishioners think my leadership style is too “feminine” while others think it is too “masculine.” I just can’t win!

An elderly male congregant once wrote me an irate email claiming that the problem with a women pastor like me is that I am not feminine enough to be a maternal figure, but I am not forceful enough to “get the job done” like men do — a description of a true “lose-lose” proposition!

I have found the book *Through the Labyrinth: The Truth About How Women Become Leaders* helpful for understanding this nuanced challenge. Authors and psychology professors Alice H. Eagly and Linda L. Carli propose the metaphor of a labyrinth to replace the old “glass ceiling” metaphor in the business world. They write:

In everyday behavior on the job, women encounter more obstacles to their leadership and authority than men do. Women who are too assertive, competitive, or even competent can at times threaten others, who then resist female influence and leadership. This resistance to their leadership can lower evaluations of women’s personalities and skills, obscure women’s contributions to group tasks, undermine their performance, and even subject them to sexual harassment. At the same time, women can be criticized for being too nice. *Men, unlike women, do not bear the burden of having to be especially likable to be influential or to be accepted as leaders, nor do they have to establish themselves as clearly superior in ability* (p. 117, emphasis mine).

Navigating a labyrinth is an apt metaphor for being a woman leader in the church — I don’t feel like I am crashing through a glass ceiling so much as making my way through the complex twists and unexpected turns of leading as a woman. According to my disgruntled congregant, as I tiptoed my way through this labyrinth, I veered too far away from the feminine and at the same time steered away from the assertive side. That’s a tough — and very treacherous — road to walk.

We must remember that we are called to be more concerned with being Christ’s disciple and less about fitting cultural expectations. In order to navigate the labyrinth as a disciple of Jesus Christ, we must follow only Jesus, listening for his voice, discerning his way, avoiding culture’s strident calls to be aggressive and self-aggrandizing, yet seeking his courage to keep from being too passive or agreeable when we need to stand up for what is right and just.

Rev. Alison Moore John is pastor of First Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) in Brookline, Massachusetts.

I feel like I’m going to fail and that when I do, everyone will use it to confirm their beliefs that women shouldn’t be in ministry.

Growing up in a very traditional denomination, I was taught that according to Scripture, God calls solely males into the ministry and that women must be submissive to men and be silent in

the church. I will be forever grateful for Christians for Biblical Equality for introducing me to writings by highly respected evangelical scholars that interpreted difficult biblical passages differently than my denominational leaders did.

During the week of my seminary graduation, in May of 2003, I received an unexpected call to serve First Christian Church in Beaumont, Texas as their interim pastor and, a year later, as their senior pastor. Occasionally when a struggle arises in the congregation, a little tape from my past plays in my head that says, “If a man were pastor here, he would be able to handle this situation quickly and efficiently.” There is another tape that echoes in my head at times: “Maybe the church would be better off with a young man with two cute young children and then the church would grow and lots of young families would join.”

When doubts arise and those old tapes start trying to play once again, I remember that:

- The Spirit of God, who called me as a shepherd serving under the Great Good Shepherd, is equipping me to feed the flock.
- My community of faith, friends, and family are upholding me in prayer.
- I see God’s miraculous hand in circumstances in spite of my human frailty.
- I am surrounded by the communion of saints that includes myriads of named and unnamed women throughout the ages who have answered the call and have been empowered, commissioned, and ordained by the Spirit to do the work of ministry.
- I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Phil. 4:13).

Rev. Brenda Griffin Warren is senior pastor of First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Beaumont, Texas.

I wonder whether I’m being compensated differently from my male colleagues.

Max Weber, founder of the academic discipline of sociology of religion a hundred years ago, astutely observed that whatever we designate as “sacred” becomes “uniquely inalterable.” Whether cast in the harsh rhetoric of John R. Rice in 1941 (*Bobbed Hair, Bossy Wives, and Women Preachers*) or in the candy-coated language of “complementarity” by John Piper and Wayne Grudem in 1991 (*Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*), the result is the same: When God’s name is attached to any form of misogyny, for sincere Christians, that teaching becomes unalterable. It stands firm and it guides both attitudes and actions.

That reality has helped me understand (and forgive) the many times over the last six decades that I’ve been ignored, my voice has been silenced, and my contributions have been discounted. In particular this has been true in two areas. Often I felt excluded from discussions among male colleagues, or the ideas I’ve put on the table have been ignored. A second area has been the pain of knowing that a male colleague has received a larger salary for essentially the same level of responsibility and performance. Dealing with these realities is always a balancing act between speaking up when simple

justice has been compromised or knowing when to smile and let go of the desire for respect or equity.

While I have not always coped well with those “facts of life” in this fallen world, two truths have made a difference for me. First, most colleagues don’t intentionally hurt me; they simply act out of training from infancy about gender (see Weber’s *The Sociology of Religion*). That helps when I need to challenge them. Second, in the end it is God’s smile that matters. That helps when I need to let go.

Dr. Alice Mathews is the former academic dean at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, where she continues to teach as the Lois W. Bennett Distinguished Professor Emerita in the areas of women’s studies and educational ministries. She is known for her participation in the daily radio program, *Discover the Word*.

I’m tired of constantly having to defend my call. I just want us to move past the “women in ministry” question and serve Jesus!

The biblical account of Esther has long been a favorite of mine. Even as a child it captivated my imagination, most especially because God used a woman to save his people. I remember wondering if I would have the same courage should I ever find myself in a similar situation. Do you remember the part of the story when Esther walked into the throne room (Esther 5:2)? She couldn’t be sure the king would allow her in until he extended the gold scepter. He did, and she entered confidently to make her request.

Oddly, I have often come to see myself in the same place as Queen Esther when I consider the “women in ministry” question. It’s not that I have been called to “save my people,” but rather, that I have a sense of needing permission to enter. When I find myself in uncertain ministry settings, I realize I involuntarily brace myself for an adverse reaction when it’s discovered I’m a pastor. I sense the focus turn toward me and the tension mount as I wait to be invited in or ridiculed for daring to ask.

Our encouragement in the face of this tension is the truth that the Lord God has invited us all into the throne room through faith in Jesus Christ. We are called and must serve our God based on gifting, not gender. This knowledge stops my involuntary response and elicits a confidence that keeps me entering in to tell the story of God’s grace. No one said to Esther that a woman could not carry the message to save her people. They were grateful she was willing to accept the assignment. I long for the day when there will be no question about “women in ministry” and we can all just serve the Lord Jesus as he calls. Only then will the church truly be “...brought into complete unity” (John 17:23).

Nancy Parkhurst Leafblad (MDiv, Bethel University) is a pastor, former business owner, wife, and mother.

My congregation closely scrutinizes my clothes and appearance. Some are afraid that I am distracting men from worshiping when I preach.

This is a commonly expressed frustration of women in positions of ministry leadership. You may find yourself at the close of a sermon, feeling the presence of the Holy Spirit and the incredible, humbling satisfaction that God has used you, only

to be confronted by brothers and sisters who comment on your haircut or object to the length of your skirt. While many men in ministry also experience criticism of their clothes and appearance, this is simply a more prevalent problem for women.

The tension is that women in the church are expected to be “put together” but not vain; to be beautiful and captivating but not sexual. The point where these tensions meet varies from person to person, and from culture to culture. The bottom line here is the question of responsibility. You are *not* responsible for your congregation’s decisions to lust or be distracted; your body and the clothes you cover it with do not *cause* another person to sin.

You are, however, responsible for your own actions and motives. Ask yourself questions like: “Why am I wearing what I’m wearing?” “Am I trying to find my worth or acceptance in my appearance?” and “Deep down, do I want to draw attention to myself or to God?” Ask the Lord regularly to help you examine your motives. And then put something on and forget about it! Trust God to give you a healthy perspective on your clothing, and find relief in the truth that we simply cannot please everyone (nor are we called to).

Consider also the root of this problem and what your church can do to address it. Is your congregation working to prevent the objectification of women both within your church walls and beyond? Is your youth group dissecting cultural messages about the value of outward appearance? Are you providing a place for congregants to heal from pornography addictions? Consider too how to address commonly-held gender stereotypes that can be used to justify sexual sin, such as the belief that men are more “visual” and therefore unable to keep themselves from viewing women in an exclusively sexual way.

Megan Greulich is the editor of *Mutuality* magazine.

My family does not support me in my call. I’m tired, discouraged, and wondering if I am mistaken in believing that I am called to ministry.

In my thirty-plus years of ministry, I have encountered hundreds of young women who are caught between their families, churches, and personal convictions that God has called them to serve him in professional ministry. Just recently a young woman shared that her father felt that she would be sinning against God if she pursued a career in ministry. Yet she felt that she would be sinning against God if she wasn’t obedient by pursuing her calling. How could she make sense of it all? It is extremely easy in this type of situation to doubt one’s self, call, and faith.

Two principles have helped me as I have faced this challenge. My own call to ministry was a source of tension in my family, as my father had a very traditional view of women in ministry. Over the years, I found that if I moved my conversations with him toward what we both shared, which was a love for God and a desire to serve him, then we could at least have conversations that weren’t contentious, even if we didn’t agree. He grew to respect my decision, even requesting that I preach at his funeral, which I did.

Secondly, when the doubts and discouragement come, we need to get back to the core of what we know. Doubts seldom come

Journeying on Broken Glass

by Alison Moore John

Part I

“Dear Rev. John, I write about religion for The New York Times, and I am doing a story about women clergy.... Researchers and women clergy themselves talk about the ‘stained glass ceiling,’ and I was wondering if that had been part of your recent experience at all?”¹

Multicolored panes bear down overhead.
I can’t stand up all the way.
Don’t hit your head.

The stained-glass ceiling cracks.
Shards rain down.
Holy ground shimmers.
*Watch your step!
That stuff is sharp.*

Stepping carefully through the glass.
Can’t you move any faster?

My feet bleed.
*Bandage them up yourself.
After all, you’re the one who stepped on the glass.*

Part II

“...what women hold inside is more like an internal glass ceiling on their ambition, a sense of limitation [and] our deep conditioning to look for safety in relationship, to peg our entire identity on getting affirmation, particularly affirmation from men.”²

Do your feet hurt?
Mine too.
Let’s help each other get the glass out.
Sounds like you need counseling.

What if we go running?
Like a race?
Yeah. But we run it together.
This is your problem.

But remember...
Right.
Don’t talk about your feet.

*“And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!’”
Romans 10:15*

¹ Email received from Neela Banerjee of the *New York Times* on May 30, 2006.

² Dr. Elizabeth Debold, as quoted in Rich Barlow, “See spirituality in ideals of feminism,” *Boston Globe*, May 27, 2006.

when we are doing ministry. It is during those times when we are preaching, teaching, or serving in many other ways that we most often have a sense of “this is what I was made to do.” Conversely, it is in conversations with others who question the appropriateness of our ministry or in the alone times when the doubts arise. We have to trust in that sense of confidence and calmness at the core of who we are, and trust that this confidence is from God.

Pamela Erwin (DMin) is a professor at Bethel University (Saint Paul, Minnesota) with over twenty-five years of experience in the field of youth ministry as an educator, author, and practitioner.

My church congregation questions if I can be both a good mother and an effective minister.

One of my single male colleagues once called into question my commitment to ministry because I had been unable to attend all of our staff meetings. At the time I was a wife, a mother to five children, and an almost full-time student. I felt that his statement was unreasonable, and yet I found myself feeling guilty because I knew that there would be other times that circumstances would prevent me from being present. Children get sick, cars break down, the dog throws up just as I am walking out the door, and other family members’ activities conflict with my schedule. But does the fact that I am a mother make me ineffective and necessitate that I step down from ministry? Interestingly, my colleague didn’t question whether or not I had been gifted by God to serve in the church, but instead seemed to imply that my inability to function exactly as other staff disqualified me from participating.

Many churches run on a business model that requires leaders to keep certain hours and show up for every activity, which can prove challenging for women with children. These expectations are not bad in and of themselves; routines and discipline are necessary for any entity to run smoothly. But, perhaps churches could benefit from a bit more flexibility. I wonder how many people (female or male) resist answering a call from God because they can’t perfectly meet the “requirements” of their church.

Motherhood has taught me the freeing truths that it is impossible for me to have all my “ducks in a row” and that God doesn’t require this of me. Instead, being a mother has trained me to endeavor to walk in the Spirit at all times — mothers must learn to prioritize and solve problems, be sensitive to the Spirit’s leading, and lean more on God rather than our own understanding. Are these not all crucial skills for church leaders? Perhaps it is time for churches to re-examine their structures and make room for the many members who are gifted and anointed for ministry but may not be able to fit perfectly into the present church configuration.

Liz Beyer is bookstore coordinator for Christians for Biblical Equality. She is a wife, mother of five, and a worship and youth leader at her church.

I’m weary of being the first woman in my position.

There are many challenges women face as “pioneers.” Some challenges mirror those faced by women influencers in general, but they are exaggerated — intensified, if you will — when a woman is a “first” in any field. Other obstacles seem

peculiar to “firsts.” Whichever the case, there are some common difficulties cited by women who set precedents:

- A schizophrenic juxtaposition of high and low expectations (i.e., “she’s going to have to do the job twice as well” coupled with “she’s going to blow it”)
- A confusing constellation of reactions from other females — anything from admiration, jealousy, fear, and competition to outright rejection and opposition
- Intensified tokenism, whether implicit or explicit (i.e., she’s the lone female face on the conference docket; the solo woman on the dust jacket endorsements; the logical choice for the “softer” perspective in a collaborative project; the only soprano voice on the panel)

While these problems are real, I believe the opportunities for female “firsts” are exponentially greater than the difficulties. Please understand that I’m no Pollyanna. The barriers, discrimination, invalidation, and outright abuse women still face within the body of Christ anger me on a regular basis. People who know me will tell you I have little tolerance for gender-biased behavior and will call both individuals and institutions out when they treat women as lesser beings in the kingdom of God.

However, I’ve also come to realize that the old adage rings true: what we focus on gets bigger. When I talk to women in ministry, I always take time to hear their stories of marginalization, disempowerment, and hurt. But these stories are not the conclusion. They are a crucial introduction — but only an introduction. The greater story is the unfolding of possibility that happens when women reconnect with their potential; re-commit to the hard work of personal and professional development; re-ignite their God-breathed curiosity and passion for life; and embark on new adventures of learning, creativity, and excellence.

In the end, our gift to the world is who God created us to be. As with the risen Christ, our wounds are indelible imprints on our stories. They propel us toward solutions, toward justice, toward life. But, unlike Christ, we have a tendency to get stuck in our circumstances and pain, cocooning in our scarcity narratives — the accounts of what we haven’t been allowed to do — instead of allowing God to transfigure us through new narratives — the accounts of abundance and the stories yet to be written of what we can and are doing.

Women who pioneer understand this difference. They don’t deny the past or numb themselves to the challenges. But they are continually called forward by possibilities. They believe in something so strongly — see something in their mind’s eye so clearly — they must make it a reality. It is this single-minded focus on what can be, not on what is, that fuels the illogical, life-giving hope that defines all greatness. Not a desire to be first, but a desire to co-create a brand new reality.

Sally Morgenthauer has been a pioneer in ministry for well over a decade. She is an author, an educator, and a speaker.

better TOGETHER



CBE's 2010 conference, "Better Together," is hosted by the CBE Melbourne Chapter. The conference will present Christian perspectives on gender, ethnicity, biblical justice, and servant leadership.

Featured Sessions

Visit www.cbeinternational.org for a complete list of speakers and their workshop descriptions.



Jacqueline Grey

Academic dean and professor of Old Testament studies, Alphacrucis College
Reading the Bible as the Foundation for Equality



Mimi Haddad

President, Christians for Biblical Equality
*A Passion for Scripture, Evangelism, Justice and the Cross:
How the Early Evangelicals Helped Liberate Slaves and Women*



Susan Orr

Counsellor, marriage and relationship educator
"I Just Want the Violence to Stop": Women and Abuse



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Not So Different?

Gender, Communication, and Leadership Style

by Rosie Ward

If you want something ironed really well in our house, don't ask me, ask my husband Malcolm. Trousers are perfectly pressed, shirts and blouses beautifully crease-free — even towels are ironed so they're extra fluffy. Why do I mention this? Ironing is one of those things that men are not supposed to be able to do. So I'm amused by the proliferation of popular books like *Why Men Don't Iron* and *Why Men Don't Listen and Women Can't Read Maps*, which argue that differences between men and women are due most often to biology and are thus fixed and unalterable. Malcolm is far more proficient than I am at ironing, but I'm better than he is at reading maps, and, as he often has to remind me, he is much better at listening.

Differences between *men* and *women* often have more to do with power than with either *nature* or *nurture*.

There are some very simple explanations for this, which have nothing to do with biology. Malcolm spent thirty-eight years in the Royal Air Force. As an apprentice, learning to iron one's uniform was an essential skill. Malcolm probably had more training in how to iron than I ever had, despite the fact that women are expected to do it. In addition, he trained as a counselor and has spent some of the last twenty years consciously listening to people. I'm sometimes too busy thinking of what I want to say next and finishing his sentences for him. On the other hand, I have always been fascinated by maps; as a child, I became the family navigator when my dad was driving and learned about using maps in my Girl Guides scouting troop. Why should these interests and experiences have anything to do with gender or biology?

Examining the Stereotypes

When it comes to ironing and reading maps, who performs these tasks better is probably not worth arguing about. But when it comes to leadership, the assumptions we make and the stereotypes we unwittingly fail to challenge can have much more far-reaching consequences.

Take, for instance, the idea that women speak three times as much as men. Women's speech often attracts labels such as "chat," "gossip," "nagging," and so on — mostly derogatory words. Women are supposed to be more verbally skilled than men and to be more relational in their speech; men, however, are thought to be more task-oriented in their conversation. Yet in the book *The Myth of Mars and Venus*, author Deborah Cameron challenges assumptions about the way men and women communicate and concludes that there is no evidence that women talk more than men. The real differences are more subtle. For example, in public, higher status speakers (still more often men than women) talk more than lower status ones, while in "private," domestic interactions, women (implicitly the leaders of the home) talk more than men. Such differences have more to do with power than with either nature or nurture.

These stereotypes make life more difficult for women leaders. The assertion that men and women have different personalities has long been the ground for denying leadership roles to women. In the eighteenth century, those women who occasionally moved into preaching and speaking roles in the church were often considered outlandish — witness English author Samuel Johnson's words: "A woman's preaching is like a dog's walking on his hind legs. It is not done well; but you are surprised to find it done at all." Until very recently, women were assumed not to have the right personalities for leadership — not to be ambitious or assertive enough.

But today, women are political leaders, they race to the Pole, they win marathons, they start businesses. Expectations about leadership have changed radically over the last twenty years — it has gone relational. We were told by researchers in the 1990s that women would bring the "soft skills" needed for this new style of leadership and would be better collaborative leaders, ideally suited to working in teams. Initially this is an attractive idea, but it's also subtly dangerous.

Most women I've talked to recently think that differences in leadership style have more to do with personality than with gender, though if pushed say things like "women seem to be better at building teams" and are "more approachable" than male colleagues. Some people believe women are more collaborative, but this seems more likely to be learned behavior than somehow innate. I know many male church leaders who lead collaboratively, and it's very unhelpful to them to imply this is a solely female trait. The truth is that there are often more differences between two women than between an "average" man and an "average" woman. We are who we are for many reasons: God's gifting, ethnic origin, social background, education and formative experiences, as well as gender.

A number of studies in the last few years, many of which are cited in the book *Through the Labyrinth*, assert that while women still find it challenging to exercise leadership in environments that have long been dominated by men, the psychological portrait of a good leader is neither masculine nor feminine, but includes traits from both domains. One of the most recent *StrengthsFinder* books, which helps readers identify their talents, tells the stories of two leaders with outstanding "Achiever" and "Relator" strengths. While some people might expect a male leader to score highly as "Achiever" and a woman as "Relator," in these examples it is the other way round. Research has also shown that personality traits which are common to many effective leaders, such as extraversion and good people skills, are found equally in men and women.

Thus, one can say with confidence that men and women don't, in any fundamental way, lead and communicate differently, though individual men and women may have developed different ways of working according to their background and thus may appear to fit the stereotypes. But when working on leadership teams, the path to good teamwork is to treat each person as an individual, not to make assumptions about how they will communicate based on their gender. Indeed, this is the model we see in the Bible.

Lessons from the Bible

In the beginning, God created a team, a mixed-gender team of one man and one woman. Before the fall, these two people were jointly tasked with stewarding all they had been given (Gen. 1:26–28). After the fall, there was disharmony in the team, including enmity between them (Gen. 3:15) and hierarchy (domination by the man, Gen. 3:16).

The world of the Old Testament, like nearly all societies, was patriarchal — the father was the head of the family and men had authority over women and children. Thus, it is not surprising that women leaders were few and far between. Yet we see examples of women leaders, such as Miriam and Deborah, working alongside men. They may have been unusual, but in the telling of their stories there is no hint that gender "style" is an issue.

In the New Testament, Jesus gave us a model for Christian leadership. If we read carefully, his model may surprise us, confounding the stereotypes about supposedly male and female behavior. When I helped to lead a Christian summer camp, I devised a workshop on gender. The teenagers thought about their own gender assumptions in light of Jesus and considered questions like: "Where do weeping over Jerusalem and at his friend's death, cooking fish on the beach, and washing feet fit if men aren't emotional and 'don't do domestic work'?"

**The psychological portrait of a good leader
is neither masculine nor feminine,
but includes traits from both domains.**

The rest of the New Testament also challenges our assumptions about gender. As the Spirit fell at Pentecost, ushering in a new era and restoring what was lost, Peter quoted the words of Joel in Acts 2:17–18:

In the last days, God says,
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and your daughters will prophesy...
Even on my servants, both men and women,
I will pour out my Spirit in those days,
and they will prophesy.

There is no hint here, or anywhere in the New Testament, that gifts are apportioned according to gender. In the rest of Acts and in Paul's letters, we see how this prophecy began to be fulfilled, despite cultural contexts in which women were accustomed to being the subordinate partner in the marriage relationship. In Ephesians 4:11–16 and 1 Corinthians 12 and 14:1–33, which describe gifts in the body of Christ, we see no caveats about gender. Gender is significant in 1 Corinthians only when it comes to head-coverings — which appear to be cultural signs of modesty (1 Cor. 11) — and when a new Christian egalitarianism meets old cultural norms of segregated worship and relatively untaught women (1 Cor. 14:34–35).

Moving Forward; *Challenging Assumptions*

Speaking, teaching, preaching, and leadership are not gendered gifts. At present very few women are being appointed to lead larger churches. Why? One possible reason for this is that women are thought to be incompetent preachers. Someone once said to me that they've never heard a woman preach "as authoritatively as a man." But who defines what is authoritative? Perhaps many of our inherited assumptions need to be questioned.

When we work with others, it's much more useful to *focus* on our common mission than to attempt to foresee how gender differences may make communication *difficult*.

We must be aware of our own history and how our gender views were shaped. When I asked one of my male colleagues what had led to his egalitarian convictions, he shared that his mother had been a positive role model and a strong leader. He therefore was convinced that women made good leaders before he encountered any Christian teaching that told him the opposite. On the other hand, sometimes women have had experiences working with men who are stuck in patriarchal attitudes or who fear losing power, and those negative incidents can continue to color how they relate to men for a long time.

The danger of being too aware of possible gender differences is that we can overlook all that we have in common, the task we have to do, and the differences between us as *people*. So perhaps a better way of thinking in our relationships, whether we are supervising, working with, or reporting to someone of the other sex, is to see and treat each person as an individual, with respect and care.

When we work with others, it's much more useful to focus on our common mission than to attempt to foresee how gender differences may make communication difficult. I've worked in a variety of mixed-gender teams, and I have never

found gender differences in communication style to be the most significant aspect to bear in mind; if I'm relational and he's logical, or if I'm competitive and he's cooperative, then that's just how it is. We must, above all, learn to listen to each other, trust one another, and find points of commonality.

As human beings we all thrive if we feel people care about us and see our individuality as well as our unique contributions to our team. So let's forget about the stereotypes and seek to respect and honor each other as we work together for God's glory.

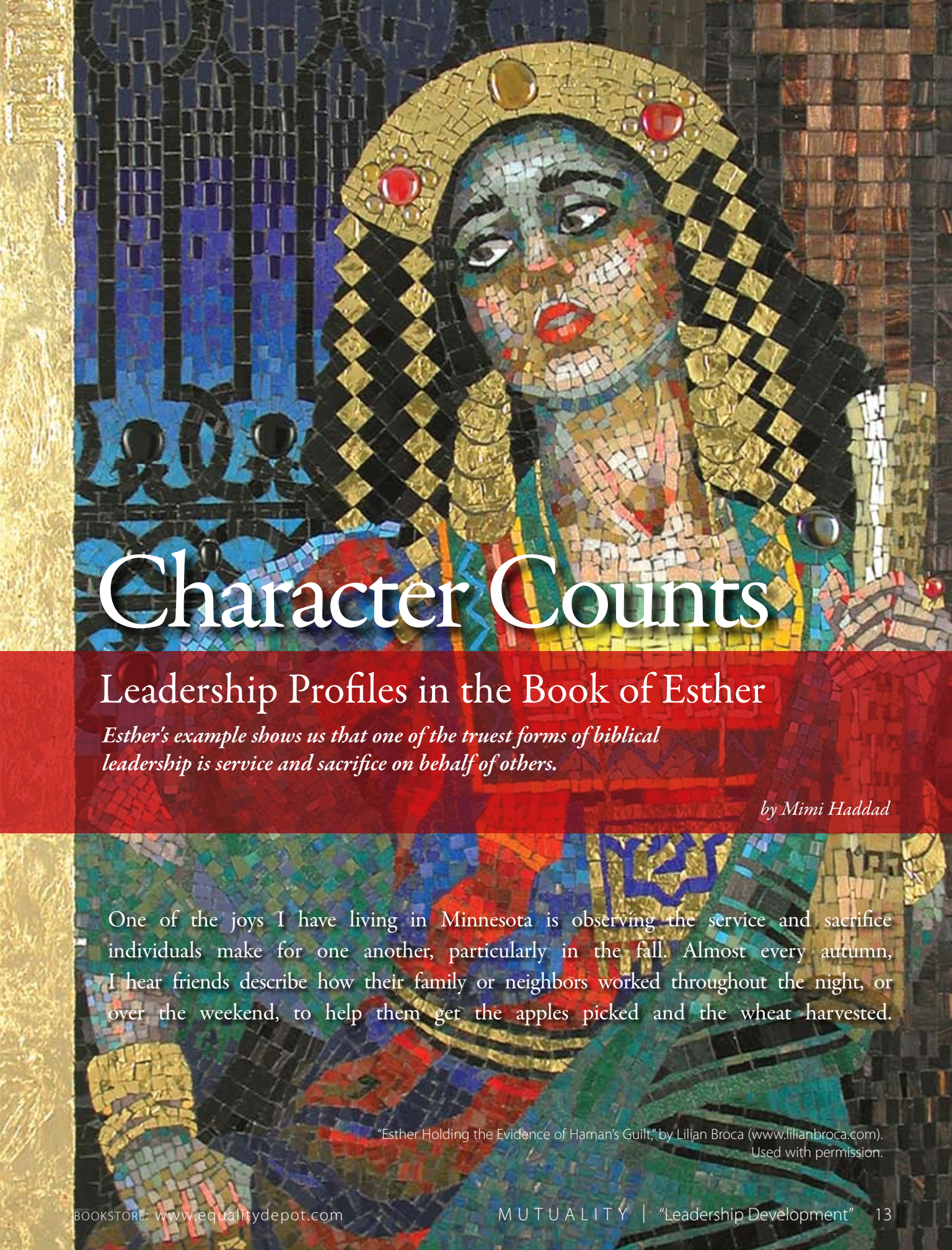


Rosie Ward is a leadership development adviser at CPAS (Church Pastoral Aid Society), where part of her role is to encourage and equip women as leaders in the church. She previously served in three parishes, having been ordained in the Anglican Church in 1994. She has written several booklets and books, the most recent being *Growing Women Leaders*.



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Character Counts

Leadership Profiles in the Book of Esther

Esther's example shows us that one of the truest forms of biblical leadership is service and sacrifice on behalf of others.

by Mimi Haddad

One of the joys I have living in Minnesota is observing the service and sacrifice individuals make for one another, particularly in the fall. Almost every autumn, I hear friends describe how their family or neighbors worked throughout the night, or over the weekend, to help them get the apples picked and the wheat harvested.

"Esther Holding the Evidence of Haman's Guilt," by Lilian Broca (www.lilianbroca.com).
Used with permission.

The sense of shared responsibility, the call of sacrifice for one's family and community, and a concern for those who are vulnerable and need our help are particularly evident in agricultural communities like Minnesota. Farms remind us that we must depend on each other; that we are placed on this earth to help one another. To realize this is to live close to the truth,

noted in the book of Esther, that our devotion and even our faith in God is often best expressed as service and sacrifice on behalf of others. This is perhaps one of the truest forms of biblical leadership, and it is a calling of all believers, regardless of our gender, ethnicity, or education.

The trouble is we live in a world where leadership is rooted in dominance, power, and self-interest. What is worse, leadership is not always associated with one's character, holiness, or intimacy with Christ. Have you ever noticed the vast number of workshops, seminars, books, and curriculum that address the

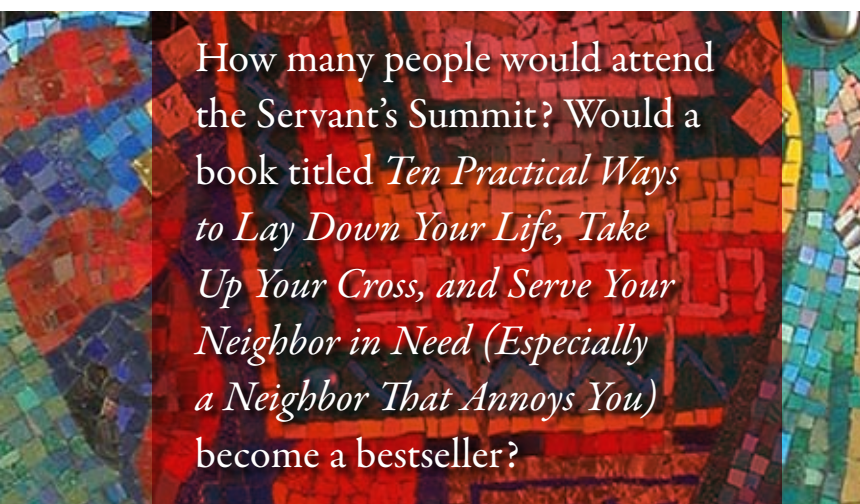
absent, perhaps so that we might notice Haman—his depraved character, his fragile ego, and his vindictiveness. Haman, we learn, is an Agagite—a people associated with the Malekites who, since the time of King Saul, were the enemy of the Jews. Haman has all the more reason to loath Mordecai, judging him according to their cultural animosity.

It is impossible to miss the narcissism that swallows Haman whole: it's all about Haman. Though Xerxes has promoted Haman to what might amount to chief of staff or head of his cabinet, we are left wondering why. What motivated Xerxes to give such enormous responsibility and power to Haman? After all, the text does not point to any significant accomplishment of Haman. Nor do we read that Haman is concerned with the affairs of Susa, its residents, or the king. In fact, there is some hint that Haman may be complicit in an attempt to assassinate the king. At the end of chapter two, we note that two of the king's officers:

...guarded the doorway, became angry and conspired to assassinate King Xerxes. But Mordecai found out about the plot and told Queen Esther, who in turn reported it to the king, giving credit to Mordecai. And when the report was investigated and found to be true, the two officials were impaled on poles (v. 21–23).

Immediately afterward (v. 3:1–2), we learn that Xerxes decides to honor Haman, rather than Mordecai. As a result, all the royal officials kneel down and pay honor to Haman — all except Mordecai. Why? Commentators suggest that Mordecai may have learned of Haman's plot to assassinate the king by way of these two guards. Perhaps Mordecai feared that Haman's rise to power would make him even more dangerous to the king? We know that Mordecai was a devoted servant of Xerxes. This may be why, after gaining power, Haman devises a way to “destroy all Mordecai's people” (v. 6). Feigning concern for the king, Haman approaches Xerxes and says:

“There is a certain people scattered and separated among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom; their laws are different from those of every other people,



How many people would attend the Servant's Summit? Would a book titled *Ten Practical Ways to Lay Down Your Life, Take Up Your Cross, and Serve Your Neighbor in Need (Especially a Neighbor That Annoys You)* become a bestseller?

topic of Christian leadership? Clearly, everyone wants to be a leader and, certainly, much of this material is useful. But, I have often wondered what would happen to our longing for leadership if we structured this conversation on the notions of service and character development? How many people would attend the Servant's Summit? Would a book titled *Ten Practical Ways to Lay Down Your Life, Take Up Your Cross, and Serve Your Neighbor in Need (Especially a Neighbor That Annoys You)* become a bestseller? Maybe not. Yet, the story of Esther teaches us that authentic leadership arises from one's character and is focused on the needs of others, particularly those who are defenseless or alone. Let's examine what characterizes the three most prominent leaders in the book of Esther: Haman, Xerxes, and Esther.

We become acquainted with Haman in chapter three. Esther, who has been queen now for five years, is oddly

and they do not keep the king's laws, so that it is not appropriate for the king to tolerate them. If it pleases the king, let a decree be issued for their destruction, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who have charge of the king's business, so that they may put it into the king's treasuries" (v. 8–10, NRSV).

Haman appeals to Xerxes' greed and places a vulnerable minority group — the Jews — at the mercy of a wealthy and powerful government. He is preying upon those who are weak. And Xerxes, without thinking, tells Haman, "Do as you see fit" (v. 11, NRSV). The king lends Haman his signet ring, approving Haman's plan to kill the Jews — all on the eve of Passover.

Perhaps you find it troubling, as I do, that the king gives such little thought to Haman's plan to genocide the Jews and wipe out a minority people. The fact that he hesitates not one moment in granting Haman his approval shows us how unsuitable for leadership Xerxes really is. By abdicating not only his power to Haman, but also responsibilities to his people and to his throne, Xerxes becomes a puppet king, giving his kingdom over to a dangerous and vindictive man.

What characterizes Xerxes' leadership is his inaccessibility. He continually transfers decisions and responsibilities to others — to his eunuchs, to Haman — particularly when he is bribed by wealth (10,000 talents of silver, the equivalent of two-thirds of Susa's annual gross national product). Xerxes invests more time in drinking and throwing parties than he does in serving his people. Through his absence, Xerxes creates a leadership vacuum that makes life dangerous to those who are weak and vulnerable. Yet, as life grows hazardous, an unlikely leader steps into the gap — a woman, and a minority woman at that.

Unlike Xerxes, Queen Esther is always accessible and ready for action. She is available when Vashti is disposed. And she assumes leadership when her husband abdicates his authority to others. It is Esther who accepts and receives what her husband cannot: the call to protect those who are vulnerable. Her husband signs away their lives, and Esther becomes their deliverer.

Like Moses, Esther is uniquely poised to deliver the people of God from within an oppressive social structure (v. 4:13). Without hesitation, Esther accepts her call to leadership by first joining the Jews through fasting and prayer. Recognizing that authentic power comes by way of intimacy with God, Esther seeks God by sharing in the pain of others.

Esther's leadership, at every turn, stands in stark contrast to the failures of leadership not only of her husband Xerxes,

but also to those of Haman — who is perhaps one of the most self-absorbed individuals in all of Scripture. Haman's need for continual affirmation, control, and self-aggrandizement is limitless. While Haman is bent on destroying life, Esther is ready to give her life to save others. Haman believes he is in control of history, but Esther is less sure. For Esther, the future is not certain. Yet, even so, she is humble and ready to serve, even if her life is required. Esther's availability, self-sacrifice, humility, and wisdom



While Haman is bent on destroying life and Xerxes blithely agrees to slaughter thousands of innocent people, Esther seeks intimacy with God and advocates for the oppressed.

make her one of the great leaders in Scripture — one who is celebrated yearly by Jews around the globe. During the festival of Purim, Jews read the entire book of Esther, recalling how God's love and rescue is evident through leaders like Esther. For Christians, most supremely in our savior Jesus Christ, we too are delivered from our fiercest sin and death. In many ways, then, Esther foreshadows our complete deliverance through the cross.

Esther shows us that leadership is responsiveness to God and to those who are hurting. It is a readiness to self-sacrifice, and it has everything to do with character, intimacy with God, and closeness to those who are vulnerable. May we, like Esther, live in solidarity with our Lord through service to those who are in need, recognizing that the gospel is made intelligible through authentic holiness and service to others.



Mimi Haddad (PhD) is president of Christians for Biblical Equality. She has contributed to eight books, authored more than fifty articles, and spoken frequently on issues related to faith and gender. She is an adjunct assistant professor at Bethel University and an adjunct professor at North Park Theological Seminary.



Servant leadership Development

OBSERVATIONS ON LEADERLESS LEADERSHIP

Could our entire leadership paradigm need redeeming?

by Joanna K.B. Stanberry

“Cambia, todo cambia!” the group sang, “Change, all will change!” I was sitting in a large circle at the daily meeting of the staff of MAP International, a Christian development non-governmental organization in Chilimarca, Bolivia. The meetings could go on for several hours as the men and women discussed their work teaching school, caring for the sick and preventing illness, and training indigenous Aymara and Quechua to go back to their rural communities and teach others about “total health” — the spiritual, physical, economic, and political health of a community. The group spoke of local and national politics, sang songs, shared their thoughts on Bible passages, and enjoyed cake and tea on birthdays. To a Western or Northern observer this would not seem to be “leadership development.” There was no PowerPoint presentation, no one noticeably running the meeting, no particular skills being taught, and very little use of the word “I.”

In fact, those gathered would be unable to present an observer with any leader at all. For this community, the name of the power or force that they seek to be liberated from is *leadership*, and it is known by its effects: poverty, gender inequity, violence, oppression, and a culture of silence and fear that paralyzes change.

I spent several weeks one summer with the community to see what I could learn about “leaderless leadership.” I observed no utopia, but a messy, beautiful, and powerful *corporate* struggle for wholeness. Those people with whom I spoke credit their success to the leaderless leadership philosophy they share. Jose Miguel, who serves as one of MAP’s representatives in Chilimarca, reflected on this experience in a recent email:

Unfortunately we were trapped for several years trying to catch up with the magic recipe that was offered by the innovators of leadership. The proposition that human beings can get organized under the leadership paradigm (with “the one” that leads and “the others” that follow) has brought so much suffering, injustice, corruption, and oppression in this world. Especially in the gender relationships, the leadership paradigm reproduces social constructs that we males have been born to lead and females to follow, and this has legitimized the most pervasive and

prevalent oppressions in all cultures and nations.... Team-based organizations without leaders in which each [member] is a full human being — a subject of rights and responsibilities — and [that are] highly committed to constructing a “we-ness” or “togetherness” are extremely creative and effective [at] writing their own history and achieving incredible results...We all are brothers and sisters with different functions and responsibilities to build up each other in harmony, love, reciprocity, complementarily, mutuality, and solidarity.

The gender equity component of the community’s development efforts came up repeatedly in my interviews and conversations. “Could it be possible,” I began to think, “that by modeling and empowering a community of equity, justice, and liberating education, such practice becomes modeled and reproduced continually?” I suggest this might be an image of what the West calls “leadership development,” when freed from the bondage of hierarchy and authority wrought by the power of darkness, the same power that Jesus notes at his betrayal in Luke 22:53. As his disciples wrangle over who is best only hours before this, Jesus warns them of the fruit of this power: “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves” (Luke 22:25–27).

I wonder if our leadership paradigm might need some redeeming, and possibly — liberating — from the powers that have co-opted its praxis. Like Jose Miguel encourages, we could throw the concept of leadership out completely. But then we would be left with just a servant, and who in the West needs that?



Joanna K.B. Stanberry is a student in the Masters program in Organizational Leadership at Eastern University. She also works in the governance section of a large hedge fund in New York City and contributes there as a member of the leadership team of the Drucker Society. Joanna earned a BA from Claremont McKenna College and has been active with CBE since 1994.

Edith Deen's

Great Women of the Christian Faith

A Fiftieth Anniversary Appreciation of a Strong Leader and an Influential Book

by James D. Smith III

A key element in leadership development is vision. While the focus is often on projects, more important is the building of people. We must ask questions like: "What's the gifting and potential of this person?" and "What might it look like for this one to find God's place in servant leadership?" God uses an array of factors to provide insights and an "upward call," but among the most inspiring is the power of a good example.

In the mid-twentieth century, the identification of historic women as models and mentors of Christian leadership was largely a denominational matter. Roman Catholics revered Mary and the female saints. Southern Baptists knew Lottie Moon. The Methodist Holiness tradition embraced Phoebe Palmer. The Salvation Army had "mother" Catherine Booth. And Pentecostal Christians admired "sister" Aimee Semple McPherson. Absent, however, was a teaching resource which presented the "big picture" — the story of faithful women across the centuries who rose to offer their best to God and their world.

Fifty years ago, longtime Texas journalist and civic figure Edith Alderman Deen (1905–1994) stepped forward to address this need. Her breakthrough volume *Great Women of the Christian Faith* (Harper & Row, 1959) invited a generation confronted by stereotypes, barriers, and secular rhetoric to be uplifted by a twenty-century vision: the lives of women of excellence who "towered tall" in service to Christ and the church.

Deen had joined the Fort Worth *Press* staff at age twenty, and her three decades there included duties as women's editor and columnist. Active in the Disciples of Christ, her popular columns included women from the Bible. Cissy Stewart Lale (*Handbook of Texas Online*) notes Edith's husband F. Edgar Deen

(1888–1967) — former Fort Worth mayor and Armour & Co. executive — encouraged her to retire and write her first book, *All the Women of the Bible* (Harper & Row, 1955). As Alvera Mickelsen recently reflected: "She really was a pioneer. There was nothing quite like her book on Bible women. It was well-written and insightful, and I've used it in teaching for many years."

Early in 1956, the publishers suggested a sequel and, following extensive research, *Great Women of the Christian Faith* was published on both sides of the Atlantic. The London edition, *Great Women of Faith* (Independent Press Ltd., 1959) offered a dust jacket summary: "Inspiring biographies of outstanding women through nineteen centuries of Christianity, including full studies of 47 leaders and concise sketches of 76 other women from many times, countries and denominations."

Deen's spirited preface to this volume describes engaging libraries, book dealers, scholars, and her own soul: "What a privilege! I was living daily with women who felt deeply about the Spirit of God, women who were not afraid to speak their convictions...willing to give up the vanities and triumphs of this world. They thought of God as a kind, tender parent and of themselves as humble creatures of this great Creator."

Charting this "new course," rare books often became her counselors: "One of the most helpful was Julia Kavanagh's *Women of Christianity*...a copy of which I was eventually able to obtain for our own library." When this 1852 volume was republished in 2006 (available through CBE Bookstore), I felt honored to offer the foreword.

Deen went on to write *Family Living in the Bible* (1963), *The Bible's Legacy for Womanhood* (1970), *All the Bible's Men of Hope* (1974) and *Wisdom of Women from the Bible* (1978). While these proved popular titles, her 1959 volume would resource scholarship as well. *Great Women of the Christian Faith* remained the standard work of its kind until the 1980's, when Nancy Hardesty, Barbara MacHaffie and Ruth Tucker would advance the research, and distinctively detail the Story.

Despite a life of accomplishment, in person and pen, in her fifties Edith Deen entered Texas Woman's University (TWU) to complete her degree in journalism. She received an honorary doctorate from the school in 1959 (as well as from Texas Christian University in 1972), and then completed her thesis for an earned master's degree the following year. Her personal papers (including correspondence with US presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson) are in the outstanding TWU library's Woman's Collection. They bear witness to a great woman of the Faith — scarcely conventional, thoroughly Christian.

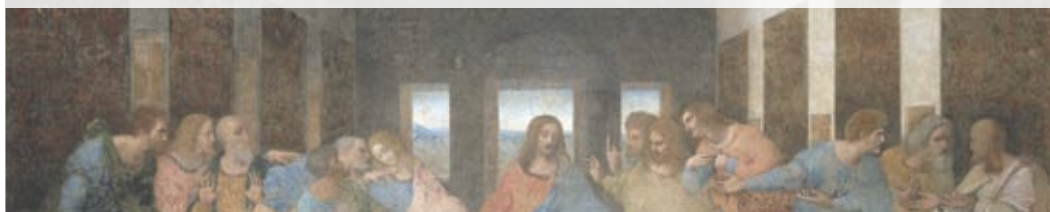


Edith Deen inspired many by highlighting examples of faithful and courageous women throughout history. Photo courtesy of TWU library's Woman's Collection.



James D. Smith III (ThD, Harvard University) is associate professor of church history at Bethel Seminary San Diego, and frequently a lecturer in theology and religious studies at the University of San Diego.

SHORT ANSWERS TO TOUGH QUESTIONS



"If Jesus were really counter-cultural in his treatment of women, why didn't he choose any women to be his apostles?"

by Aida Besançon Spencer

LET'S REPHRASE the question:

"If Jesus were really counter-cultural, why didn't he choose any *Gentiles* to be his apostles?" or "Why didn't he choose any *slaves* as apostles?" Jews thanked God that they were not born a Gentile, an untrained person (or a slave), or a woman, so wouldn't Jesus have been *really* counter-cultural if he had Gentiles and Jews, untrained and trained (or slave and free), and women and men among his twelve disciples? Paul refers to the equality of all believers (Gal. 3:28), and recognized the ministry leadership of Titus, a Gentile; Onesimus, a slave; and Phoebe, a female. Were Paul and Jesus' other disciples more counter-cultural than the Lord they followed? I think not. Perhaps we need to understand further the significance of the twelve for Jesus.

Twelve Jewish men symbolized the patriarchs of the twelve tribes of Israel (Luke 22:30). Jesus' own call to ministry was focused on reaching Israel (Matt. 10:5–6; 15:24; John 1:11; Rom. 15:8–9), because the earlier covenant was made with Israel (see Gen. 35:10–12; 1 Kings 18:31). The twelve were a witness to Israel, representing God's first covenant with them and reminding them of God's promises that were about to be fulfilled through Jesus.

The twelve do *not*, however, signify that only men can be leaders in the church. Nowhere does Jesus ever state that only men may serve as leaders in the church, nor does he teach that it is by maintaining traditional male-female roles that we will advance God's reign. Jesus' teachings do not focus on the apostles' ethnicity or sex as a model for Christian leadership. Otherwise no Gentile church could have its own leaders but would have to depend on Jewish males to lead each congregation. Also note that after Matthias replaced Judas, the twelve were not replaced once any of them died after Pentecost (such as James, son of Zebedee, Acts 12:2). Jewish male apostles are not synonymous with all leadership, and nowhere does the New Testament teach that other categories of leaders (like overseers, 1 Tim. 3:1) should be clearly limited to apostles.

Building on this Old Testament symbolic base of the twelve, Jesus began expanding the numbers for the *new* covenant. The new covenant was begun by the apostolic witness of women *and* men. An apostle is someone sent with orders, an eyewitness of the resurrected Jesus. Jesus commissioned the twelve to "be with him" and he *sent* them "to preach" and "to have authority to drive out demons" (Mark 3:14–15). To "be with" Jesus, therefore, preceded the sending. After the resurrection,

"apostles" were comprised of many who had "been with" Jesus and were now also witnesses to the resurrection (Acts 1:21–22; 4:33), including the women at the tomb (Matt. 28:1, 7; Mark 16:1, 6–7; Luke 24:5–10) and the more than 500 brothers and sisters (1 Cor 15:6). In the post-resurrection, post-Pentecost new covenant community, apostles are no longer limited to twelve, but are multi-numbered because Jesus' ministry has refocused from the Jewish people, the twelve tribes, and the old covenant, to the Gentiles, the nations, and the many tribes. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit became a permanent indweller of every believer, thus equipping every believer — both male and female — to be priest or intercessor between humans and God (1 Peter 2:9).

Moreover, we have examples of female apostles in the New Testament. Jesus *sent out* Mary Magdalene, saying to her: "Go to my brothers and sisters and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father" (John 20:17). He broke convention by choosing women as the first witnesses for the greatest event of all times, the resurrection, even though women were not considered as valid witnesses in court. He established that faith — not ethnicity, class, or gender — is the key determiner of service and leadership in the new covenant community.

Additionally, one woman, Junia, is even called an "apostle": Paul describes "Andronicus and Junia, my compatriots and my fellow prisoners, who are well known (*episemos*) among the apostles, they also came before me in Christ" (Rom. 16:7). *Episemos* is literally "having a mark." Andronicus and Junia "stood out" or were "important," "marked out," among the apostles. They were believers, witnesses of Jesus' resurrection, who stood firm despite persecution and imprisonment in the message they were given about the Messiah.

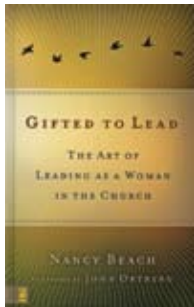
For further study, see Aida's chapter (7) in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity without Hierarchy*, as well as chapter two in her book *Beyond the Curse: Women Called to Ministry*. Both are available at www.equalitydepot.com.



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RECOMMENDED RESOURCES ON LEADERSHIP

available at www.equalitydepot.com!



Gifted to Lead

The Art of Leading as a Woman in the Church
Nancy Beach

In this practical and inspiring book, Beach shares the challenges and joys of her own thirty-year journey as a leader and teacher in the church. She offers guidance on such issues as: earning respect, finding your unique voice for leadership and teaching, managing work and personal life, forming an intentional support network, and more.

"Women in leadership will discover a treasury of wisdom in Nancy Beach's thoughtful discussion of the everyday challenges they face. Men — those who fully embrace women's gifts and those who do so with reservations — will find much to ponder on these pages." — Carolyn Custis James, author of *The Gospel of Ruth*

List Price: \$14.99

Member: \$12.74



Lessons in Leadership

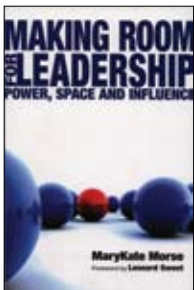
A Biblical Study of Women in Ministry
Lorry Lutz

Lessons in Leadership is a personal or group study for those working through the issue of women in ministry from a biblical perspective. Respecting those with differing views, Lutz presents an overview of women's role in Scripture and various biblical interpretations reinforced by evangelical writers.

"Lorry Lutz has written a 'must-read' for those who seek to learn more from Scripture on the leadership role of women in the Body of Christ. This easy-to-read book offers fresh insights from God's Word, as well as historical and contemporary examples of gifted women in service to Him." — Emily D. Voorhies, Executive Director, Women of Global Action

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Making Room for Leadership

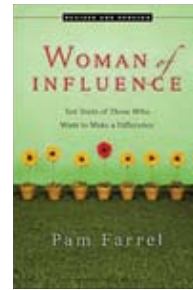
Power, Space, and Influence
MaryKate Morse

We all can lead. We all have some kind of power in us. Once we become aware of our influence, we can direct it toward good, toward building others up. Doing just that in these pages, Morse helps you learn to do the same in the places you live, move, and have your being.

"This is an important book, breaking new ground and speaking biblically and practically to a blind spot in our leadership." — Leighton Ford, President, Leighton Ford Ministries

List Price: \$17.00

Member: \$14.45



Woman of Influence

Ten Traits of Those Who Want to Make a Difference
Pam Farrel

Farrel shows how you can be a faithful servant of God in all relationships and circumstances. Here's a book that women everywhere will welcome — full of encouraging counsel for finding God's leading in your life and then following him.

"Many times I will read a book and lay it aside never to read again. But Farrel's style and practical content will provide motivation to return to this book." — CBE reviewer

List Price: \$16.00

Member: \$13.60



CBE Organizational and Institutional Memberships

Visit www.cbeinternational.org and follow the "Churches and Organizations" link under the "Membership" tab.

2009 at a Glance

by Mimi Haddad

As the extended CBE family, I thought you might enjoy learning how God has worked in CBE in 2009. The truth is that many of you worked beside us throughout the year making new outreach possible. And, as I reflect upon our blessings, many of your names come to mind as partners in CBE's work. We give thanks for each of you, for your sacrifice, encouragement, and generosity that helped equip new people with biblical resources on gender. Here is a quick glimpse of what we were able to accomplish together, in God's power:

- CBE participated in the Evangelical Fellowship of India Conference—an event held every ten years. Over 600 pastors and leaders from all over India attended. CBE led two workshops and contributed to the panel on gender and ministry. We distributed hundreds of books and CD-ROMs. The response was overwhelmingly positive. One of our lectures and PowerPoints will be used by a prominent missions organization to train their leaders working in Asia! And, our book *Still Side by Side*, by Janet George, is being translated into Hindi! I had given a copy of this book to a leader working with children and families. She quickly read it in one evening. The next day the topic of gender surfaced and our book proved instrumental in this leader's discussions.
- CBE's 2009 conference assessed the cultural impact on gender and attracted record numbers of students! Our first-ever student paper competition garnered twenty-one submissions.
- CBE launched a new website, and phase 2 of our new e-commerce solution is under way!
- CBE journals (*Mutuality* and *Priscilla Papers*) were recognized with five awards at the 2009 Evangelical Press Association convention!
- Many organizations have joined CBE as organizational members this year!
- God continues to bring gifted and visionary student interns to oversee our weekly e-newsletter, *Arise*, which is read by thousands around the world.
- Despite a challenging economy, CBE has not cut any major programs!

Thank you for standing with CBE through your prayers and your gifts of time and talent. Please join us in praise to God for his faithfulness to our ministry.

PRAISE GOD WITH US FOR...

- Fruitful and encouraging scholarship at the Evangelical Fellowship of India conference.
- Successful outreach and good dialogue at the Evangelical Theological Society's annual convention.
- Our Australian CBE chapter hosting a conference in Melbourne next summer.
- An overwhelming number of newly published books on biblical equality.
- God's faithfulness in sustaining CBE through the difficult financial year.

PRAY TO GOD WITH US FOR...

- Much-needed contributions, memberships, and book sales.
- Wise decisions, funds, and efficiency as we work to implement our new online shopping cart.
- More individuals who are willing to volunteer time in helping CBE with many diverse projects.
- More students to serve as CBE interns.
- God's guidance as we plan for and enter into a new year with limited finances and an uncertain economy.
- Many more denominations, institutions, and churches to embrace biblical equality.

REFLECT WITH US...

by Susan McCoubrie

A leader is defined as someone who guides, is in charge or command, or has influence or power. That sounds pretty impressive, but leaders arrive at their position by several routes.

Some have a natural gift of leadership. Deborah was anointed by God as the judge over Israel, and under her strong leadership, Israel had peace for forty years (Judges 4-5). Huldah was a prophet whose godly influence on King Josiah led to major reform and the reinstatement of the book of the law (2 Kings 22:13-20).

Other leaders develop with the help of a mentor, such as Timothy who was guided by Paul (1 and 2 Timothy), and Apollos who was instructed by Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:24-27).

Still other leaders are thrust into their positions by circumstance. Queen Esther did not choose her situation, but she led her people with courage and godliness. Additional examples include Shiphrah and Puah (Exodus 1:15-21) and Rahab (Joshua 2).

Critically important is the willingness of the leader to be used by God, whatever their position or reason for being appointed. Consider Mary, who, when told she would give birth to Jesus, bravely responded to the angel saying, "I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38).

"...we always pray that God will show you everything he wants you to do and that you may have all the wisdom and understanding that his Spirit gives" (Col. 1:9b, CEV).

A Living Legacy

by Naomi Thorson

Three decades ago, a handful of women and men met once a month on Saturday mornings in a restaurant or church to discuss the role of women in the Christian faith. They shared their own stories and occasionally had a guest speaker.

Over a series of difficult years, this small group of women and men grew into an organization that was incorporated as Christians for Biblical Equality. They helped develop other chapters in other cities.

One of these founding women was Alvera Mickelsen, who served as the first chair of the board of directors. Alvera sometimes spoke for the group, wrote articles about biblical equality, and still continues to help CBE with editing and small projects around the office.

But Alvera's legacy of advocating for women in ministry did not start with CBE. When she was a child, Alvera observed the harm done to the work of God by teachings that limited women in the church.

"I saw my mother, the most talented teacher in our little church, be asked by a new pastor to resign from the class she was teaching because it had men in it! This happened more than once. My father was always supportive of my mother because he recognized her gifts," Alvera said.

In her own marriage, Alvera experienced the freedom of leading and living out of her giftedness, rather than an assigned gender role. She and her husband, Berkeley, co-taught classes about women in the church and marriage at churches around Minnesota and some colleges across the United States.

Now Alvera is the mother of "two wonderful daughters, two great sons-in-law, and four remarkable grandchildren," and she is beginning to consider the legacy she will leave behind when she passes away. With full support of her children, Alvera has invested some of her savings into Charitable Gift Annuities (CGAs) for CBE and other organizations in which she has a deep interest.



Alvera (middle row, far right) shown here with other CBE founders.



A Charitable Gift Annuity generates an immediate charitable tax deduction with Alvera's gift of cash, securities, or other assets. In return, she receives a steady stream of regular payments. When God calls her home, the remaining value benefits CBE in her memory.

"[Charitable Gift Annuities] permit me to give more while I am living because the interest paid on [the CGAs] gives me money to live on. My children and grandchildren are well provided for (they have more assets than I do!) and the income from the CGAs makes it unnecessary for them to help me — I can provide for myself. We all come out on top in this arrangement!" Alvera said.

Alvera believes that Christians are responsible to God for the use of whatever assets he provides, and she believes that putting her savings into CGAs has been a wise and worthwhile investment.

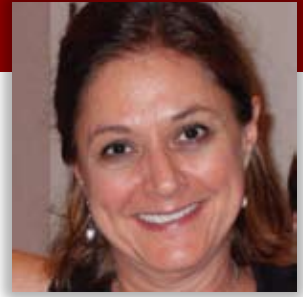
Alvera said, "It keeps me in touch with the organizations to which I give and is a constant reminder to me to pray for them — especially whenever I get a check (usually quarterly). And they keep in touch with me. That is good for me and for the organization!"

From her childhood observations of gender equality to dreaming in a restaurant about the potential of women, to retirement and planning for life's end, Alvera Mickelsen has been a faithful and passionate advocate for biblical equality. Her decision to invest in CBE through Charitable Gift Annuities will not only benefit her life, but will continue her legacy for generations to come.

To learn more about Charitable Gift Annuities, visit www.cbeinternational.org/?q=content/donate-other-assets or contact us by phone or email.



Naomi Thorson is a development and writing intern at Christians for Biblical Equality. She is a student at Bethel University in Saint Paul, Minnesota, where she is studying journalism and reconciliation studies.



Newness of Life in Christ

"Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is the new creation" (Gal 6:15).

While doing research at a theological library, a graduate student sat next to an older man she thought was a pastor. He was cordial and devout, and he initiated a conversation in which his interests in history were apparent. As they chatted, he asked a number of penetrating questions. He was quick to recommend helpful books and his interest in her work was encouraging. When she finally asked him about his life, she learned that he was the highest ranking historian in all of Britain. In fact, he holds an endowed chair at Cambridge University that dates back to Henry VIII. Despite their differences culturally and in terms of eloquence and learning, he respected her passion for history as reason to engage her as a colleague and affirm her calling. He assumed that God had brought them together to encourage one another. He treated her as an equal, and his professional welcome was not only a model of Christian pedagogy and ministry. It also reminded her of the humility and inclusivity that builds productive ministry teams.

Defying human expectations, God's power is evident in people we might consider ordinary. Consider the stuttering Moses, the elderly Sara, the young Virgin Mary, the impetuous Peter, or the slaves Andronicus and Junia. Even Jesus surprised many in Nazareth, for they considered him a mere carpenter's son. These and other biblical leaders were not impressive by human standards. Yet, God seems to delight in confounding human prejudice by accomplishing more than we might "ask or imagine" possible through individuals whom the world counts as nothing. For many churches and denominations, women are often regarded as superfluous and sometimes disdained as leaders. Consider how Paul dealt with presumption in the church at Corinth.

Chloe—the house church leader—alerted Paul to the divisions in the church at Corinth (1 Cor. 1:11ff). Factions in Corinth were based on whether people followed Paul, Apollos, or Cephas. Paul reminded the Corinthians that it was cross-centered preaching that changes lives, not clever words or eloquent teachers. Though Jews demanded signs and Greeks desired wisdom, Paul placed his hope in Christ's accomplishments at Calvary (1 Cor. 1:22ff). For egalitarians, there is something particularly helpful in this message.

In a city with a philosopher on every corner, Paul asks the church at Corinth three questions: Where are the wise? Where

is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Note the irony in these questions since the Corinthian church was comprised of slaves, the uneducated, and the poor.

Yet, they too were wise if, as Paul suggests, they preached Christ crucified. For though teachers of the law and philosophers were educated males, Paul suggests that it is not the training, gender, or eloquence of the messenger that matters. What counts is power through the Spirit. Paul admits that even his preaching did not involve wise or persuasive words but "...a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power" (1 Cor. 2:4-5).

Paul welcomes his own humiliation—his lack of persuasiveness or eloquence. He also recognizes the limitations of his readers. He writes:

... think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are... (1 Cor. 1:26-28).

Muscular Christianity (of brain, tongue, tribe, nation, class, or gender) too easily relies upon human pride and ability rather than God's Spirit. Yet, the "weakness of God is stronger than human strength" (1 Cor. 1:25b). The question is not "Are the messengers impressive?" but "Are they holy, and do they preach Christ crucified?"

There are countless women who are called and gifted by God, and they have been preaching Christ crucified since the empty tomb. God has infused their ministries with his Spirit of power. He has made them instruments of revival, not because they are impressive, well-educated, or the leaders the world expected. Rather they were and are faithful! They delight not in themselves, but in the cross. God was honored to work through their weaknesses. Not one word in Scripture holds them back from proclaiming Jesus and him crucified.

**God seems to delight
in confounding
human prejudice
by using individuals
whom the world
counts as nothing.**

Christians for Biblical Equality

Christians for Biblical Equality is an organization of Christian men and women who believe that the Bible, properly interpreted, teaches the fundamental equality of believers of all ethnic groups, all economic classes, and all age groups, based on the teachings of Scripture as reflected in Galatians 3:28.

CBE recognizes that injustice is an abuse of power, taking from others what God has given them: their dignity, their freedom, their resources, and even their very lives. CBE also recognizes that prohibiting individuals from exercising their God-given gifts to further his kingdom constitutes injustice in a form that impoverishes the body of Christ and its ministry in the world at large. CBE accepts the call to be part of God's mission in opposing injustice as required in Scriptures such as Micah 6:8.

Mission Statement

CBE affirms and promotes the biblical truth that all believers — without regard to gender, ethnicity or class — must exercise their God-given gifts with equal authority and equal responsibility in church, home and world.

Core Values

We believe the Bible teaches...

- Believers are called to mutual submission, love and service.
- God distributes spiritual gifts without regard to gender, ethnicity or class.
- Believers must develop and exercise their God-given gifts in church, home and world.
- Believers have equal authority and equal responsibility to exercise their gifts without regard to gender, ethnicity or class and without the limits of culturally-defined roles.
- Restricting believers from exercising their gifts — on the basis of their gender, ethnicity or class — resists the work of the Spirit of God and is unjust.
- Believers must promote righteousness and oppose injustice in all its forms.

Envisioned Future

Christians for Biblical Equality envisions a future where all believers are freed to exercise their gifts for God's glory and purposes, with the full support of their Christian communities.

Statement of Faith

We believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God, is reliable, and is the final authority for faith and practice.

We believe in the unity and trinity of God, eternally existing as three equal persons.

We believe in the full deity and full humanity of Jesus Christ.

We believe in the sinfulness of all persons. One result of sin is shattered relationships with God, others, and self.

We believe that eternal salvation and restored relationships are 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 in the work of the Holy Spirit in salvation, and in the power and presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers.

We believe in the equality and essential dignity of men and women of all ethnicities, ages, and classes. We recognize that all persons are made in the image of God and are to reflect that image in the community of believers, in the home, and in society.

We believe that men and women are to diligently develop and use their God-given gifts for the good of the home, church, and society.

We believe in the family, celibate singleness, and faithful heterosexual marriage as God's design.

We believe that, as mandated by the Bible, men and women are to oppose injustice.

CBE Membership

CBE membership is available to those who support CBE's Statement of Faith. Members receive CBE's quarterly publications, *Mutuality* magazine and *Priscilla Papers* journal, as well as discounts to CBE Bookstore and CBE conferences. Learn more by following the "Membership" link on our homepage.

CBE Membership Application

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United States Members

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3 Years

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Low Income*

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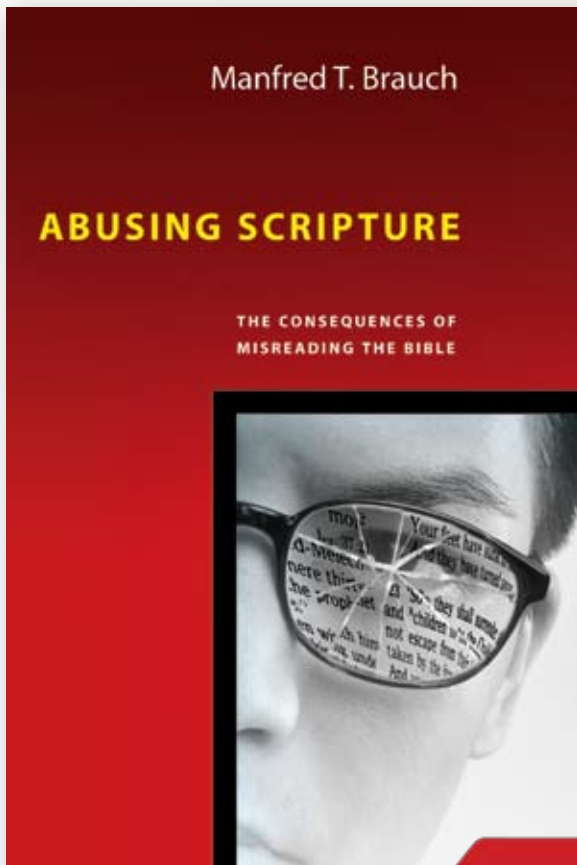
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NEW! at CBE Bookstore



Virtually all Christians recognize the centrality of the Bible to their faith. Yet many Christians misquote and misapply Scripture regularly. Often those who are most passionate about the authority of the Bible are at the greatest loss when it comes to understanding its message clearly and applying it faithfully. Professor Manfred Brauch believes this kind of mistaken interpretation and application of Scripture is a detriment to the integrity of our Christian witness and contributes to profound misunderstandings in Christian belief and practice.

In this practical book written with the non-academic in mind, Brauch identifies and corrects a number of basic errors in the use of the Bible that interpret and apply biblical texts in ways that distort their meaning and message. Chapters explore issues of context, genre, consistency, author intent, and other important considerations with an eye toward addressing not just the act of interpretation, but also the attitudes behind the ways we choose to apply Scripture.

Abusing Scripture is one of the BEST books I have ever read. It deals extremely well with every question on gender equality and other issues, too.

— Alvera Mickelsen, author and editor

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