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Mutuality

the voice of Christians for Biblical Equality



The Legacy Issue

Celebrating *Mutuality's* 20th year

Remembering our roots. Envisioning our growth.

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

Mutuality (ISSN: 1533-2470) seeks to provide inspiration, encouragement, and information about equality within the Christian church around the world.

Editorial staff: Tim Krueger, editor; Image Spigot, graphic designer; Mimi Haddad, president/publisher.

Contact us at: Christians for Biblical Equality; 122 W Franklin Ave, Suite 218; Minneapolis, MN 55404-2451; phone: (612) 872-6898; fax: (612) 872-6891; email: cbe@cbeinternational.org; web: cbeinternational.org. We welcome your comments, article submissions, and advertisements.

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ON THE COVER: Adapted from image by johnwoodcock, from istockphoto.com/johnwoodcockillustration.co.uk.



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The Gutenberg Stamp

In the rare event that we at CBE find ourselves unable to use our computers due to a power outage or network problem, we put ourselves to work giving the office a good, thorough cleaning. I always enjoy the change of pace and welcome the chance to locate those buried papers I gave up searching for weeks earlier. It also seems that every time we embark on a major cleaning endeavor, we uncover some treasured object from the early years of CBE. Whether it's a priceless photo from a conference, a stuffed animal from a beloved member, or an old cookbook we find in the recesses of the office, everything has a story. And each of these stories helps to tell the story of CBE.

During one of our cleaning frenzies, someone was digging through a drawer full of mailing supplies and came across a stamp—not a postage stamp, but the kind you press into an inkpad and then stamp onto a paper. This particular one wasn't the typical "Media Mail" or address stamp that we see here and there these days. This stamp, which we dubbed "the Gutenberg stamp," was engineered to hold multiple rows of tiny stamps, each containing a letter or number. It was a miniature moveable type printing press! Having never lived in a home, attended a school, or worked at an office without a computer, I'd never seen or needed such a thing.

While I pondered this ingenious device, I found myself also marveling at what it represented: the history of CBE; the debt of gratitude I owe to those who came before me; and the dedication of CBE's founders, leaders, staff, and members.

I am reminded that many things, large and small, have contributed to CBE's history without my knowing it. In fact, it's easy for those of us who have not lived through CBE's history to be completely unaware of it. But our ignorance withholds from us the wisdom of our leaders, perspective on the issues we face today, humility in our work, and inspiration to press on. History teaches us where we came from and where we are, and it points us toward the future. This is true of each of us as individuals, and together as societies and cultures. Such perspective is crucial in a movement like ours that is so deeply rooted in the history of the Christian faith and so vital to its future.

Just as we can easily forget our history, we easily take things for granted. I rarely stop to reflect on the people who came before me. I work on a computer I didn't raise funds for. I didn't establish CBE or keep it flourishing all these years. Though I have the privilege to work on *Mutuality*, I had nothing to do with its creation twenty years ago. Each of us stands on the shoulders of those who came before us. We do well to remember their legacy, honor their efforts, and seek their wisdom.

The Gutenberg stamp also illustrates the dedication of those who came before me. I doubt whether many in my generation have the patience to spend hours completing a task that we can do today with a few clicks of a button. Of course,

it goes well beyond the stamping of envelopes and thank you letters. Whether typing on typewriters, conducting research without the internet or digital databases, or stamping countless thank you letters, CBE's founders, leaders, staff, and members were able to accomplish a great deal with limited resources. Their accomplishments testify to their unwavering commitment to biblical equality—a commitment I hope my own generation will emulate.

This issue completes the twentieth volume of *Mutuality*. Milestones like this remind us to take a moment to look back and honor our roots. In

doing so, I believe we will gain valuable perspective for the years to come. In the articles that follow, several of CBE's founders and leaders reflect on the past and offer their thoughts on topics ranging from church community to egalitarian marriage to the future of CBE. We'll span generations by joining a grandmother-granddaughter conversation about biblical equality. We'll also review two books, including Sarah Bessey's hugely popular *Jesus Feminist*, which has sparked widespread discussion about faith, feminism, and equality.

I hope that the wise words of the women and men in this issue will be as refreshing and encouraging to you as they have been to me.

In Christ,
Tim Krueger



A few of the stamps that turned up in a recent office cleaning.



Pictured: back row (from left to right):

Berkeley Mickelsen, Diane Chynoweth, Jim Beck, Nancy Graf Peters, Deborah Lunde, Alice Mathews.

Front row: Alvera Mickelsen, Catherine Kroeger, Susan McCoubrie.

SWIMMING AGAINST THE STREAM

Egalitarian leaders reflect on CBE's past, present, and future.

CBE asked its founders and leaders, along with leading scholars from CBE's early years to share some of their memories and their hopes for the future. Here are a few of their responses...

What initiated your passion for gender issues?

We were part of a very conservative Baptist church. My mother was teaching a class to both men and women. My mother was a very gifted, talented teacher. But then the pastor resigned and we got new pastor. He said, "We can't have a woman teaching men."

My mother said, "Well that's fine; I need a vacation anyway." So we got another teacher who was a man. He was a man, but he wasn't gifted as a teacher. The class got smaller and smaller and smaller.

Finally the pastor came back to my mother and said, "Would you mind taking the class over for a little while until we can find another man." So she did and the class began to grow again (they never did find another man). That pastor resigned and we got another pastor. He said, "Oh! We can't have a woman teaching men!" My mom said "OK, that's fine."

My father said "This is the silliest thing I've ever heard of! Everyone in church knows Momma is the best teacher here, so why do they insist that we should have a poor teacher just because he's

*"In my simple mind,
God gave people gifts
for them to use."*

male. I can't believe that's what God wants!" My dad was always on my mother's side, which was very good, and very good for me to see as a child. I knew my mother was a better teacher than that man, and I didn't see any reason why she shouldn't teach. In my simple mind, God gave people gifts for them to use.

I tell the story about that church and I ask "Who was helped in that church and who was hurt?" Was the church helped by saying my mother couldn't teach anymore? No, no. The church was hurt by that.

— Alvera Mickelsen, CBE founder and author

Most of all, I was affected by the injustice my sisters in ministry faced. An experience of deep injustice and pain in my own life made me care much more passionately about the injustice experienced by others. A secondary but very important concern was seeing how many non-Christians were turned off to Christianity by traditionalist gender ideas that I did not believe were biblical. I had become egalitarian some years before, but being on a university campus and seeing what difference the issue made for the credibility of the gospel helped motivate me to put my neck on the line.

— Dr. Craig S. Keener, professor of New Testament,
Asbury Theological Seminary

Primarily, it was seeing how so many husbands treated their wives, as well as how men in general felt towards women. The whole marriage and family structure seemed unfair but the verse about the “man being the head of the wife” was always thrown out as being absolute. I witnessed this in my immediate and extended family and the injustices that resulted.

When I first became involved in a church in Minneapolis and talked about the role of women in the church with others, a dear elderly woman suggested I read *Women at the Crossroads* by Kari Torjeson Malcom. I was convicted of the biblical truth of gender equality. Later I went through the Gospels and Paul’s letters and underlined every woman’s name and every reference to a woman. It was like a light bulb went off in my head!

— Diane Chynoweth, CBE founder

What are your favorite memories from the early years of CBE?

My favorite memories were of the first conferences that we had, and the enthusiasm of the people who came. They had never heard any of this before and they were so thrilled to have it.

— Alvera Mickelsen

It was like waking up from a nightmare, rubbing your eyes and recognizing that a new day was dawning. A small but growing number of people were moving to reclaim community from the grip of patriarchy. I suppose in a way it was an experience similar to that of the sixteenth-century reformers who, by poring over Scripture, realized the church had been led astray.

Closer to our times, believers realized, by the light of Scripture, that the very definition of the church as community had been obliterated by accommodation to unbiblical traditions. With a sense of exhilaration, they recognized each other and banded together. They bowed their heads together over Scripture and rose up to call the church back to its origins, as God’s community rather than as a man-made institution. The pioneers of this twentieth-century movement are now passing off the scene. But others, in great numbers, rise up to fulfill their vision.

— Dr. Gilbert Bilezikian, CBE founder, scholar, and author

I was the group’s secretary and office manager. In our earliest days, the “office” consisted of a TV tray table and a shoe box filled with 3x5 inch address cards in my living room. No faxes, emails, texts, tweets, or Skype, but typewritten correspondence and lots of prayer in response to those across the country who were hungry for the message of biblical equality.

As CBE grew, so did the office. By 1986, Cathie Kroeger had donated a word processor the size of a box of Saltine crackers and I moved into my back bedroom, complete with folding card table, where I wrote countless “thank you for your gift” letters to our dedicated supporters. Soon we moved to the basement of a member’s house in a suburb of Saint Paul and then to a real office in a commercial building in Saint Paul.

— Susan McCoubrie, CBE founder

What challenges did you face along the way? How did you overcome them?

I was working in a very traditional environment and I had to be very careful in how I talked about issues so as not to lose that traditional audience. My stand for equality led to some embarrassing problems for the administration at Denver Seminary, though the president stood behind me. When the CBE statement came out in April, 1990, with my name in the long list of supporters, my stand cost me a job I had been offered. Did I overcome these challenges? I tried to address them humbly and judiciously.

— Dr. Alice Mathews, scholar and early CBE chapter leader

I knew that taking a position on a controversial issue would get some people angry, but I had no idea how divisive it truly was. Once my first book came out on the subject, I found just how volatile the subject was, even though

I had tried to write in a gentle and scholarly way.

I was pretty thin-skinned back then, and I had some experiences with fellow evangelicals that were so terrible I was having nightmares six months later. How did I overcome?

I love Jesus, and Jesus says to love people and forgive them even when they don’t

love you. He gave me grace to let go and reach out to people and work for Christian unity regardless of where people stand on the issue. I can’t say that I don’t still feel defensive sometimes, but I have matured more and I find common ground with other brothers and sisters in Christ (even when, as still happens occasionally, they don’t think they have any with me).

— Dr. Craig S. Keener

How have you seen CBE change over time, and what do you think remains to be done?

We’re much more practical now. We deal with the practical things. You look at the old *Mutuality* issues and it was mostly theological. We’re more into social justice now than we ever were. Back then, “social justice” was kind of a bad word.

— Alvera Mickelsen

In the early days, we were more passionate than professional. Gradually we learned how to function as an effective board. This change of emphasis came about with Mimi’s Haddad’s selection as president. Her energy, enthusiasm, administrative gifts, and willingness to learn, as well as her ability to cast a vision under God’s direction have helped bring CBE to its present place in helping to bring healing to so many of the world’s wrongs.

There is still much to be done. My heart grieves when I hear of churches and even entire denominations which do not allow women to use their gifts and serve in answer to a clear call to advance the gospel. Can they not see how this devalues women and diminishes impact for the kingdom? Unfortunately many women are taught and believe the Bible says this is the way it is supposed to be, so they are passively supportive of hierarchy.

Other issues which must be addressed relate to mental and even physical abuse experienced in hierarchical homes where this philosophy is carried to extremes and sadly condoned when relief is sought from the church. The woman is blamed for her own abuse. Clearly there is much to be done in this situation as well. And what about human trafficking and gender-related economic issues around the world and in our own nation? CBE can and must be a voice for so many who are voiceless.

I look for CBE to be at the forefront in addressing issues which go way beyond concern for the ordination of women, though that should continue to be an emphasis. As we expand globally we must be open to dialogue to hear what other leaders in other cultures can teach us as we work side by side. We must never have an attitude of having all the answers.

— Dr. Sara Robertson, CBE board member

What advice or encouragement do you have for younger egalitarians who are attempting to follow in your footsteps?

I trust that future generations of egalitarians will honor the past, be aware of the history, continue to study, and be ever ready to articulate and advance the mission utilizing new methodology and strategies, but with commitment to the principles and practices on which CBE was founded.

— Dr. Sara Robertson

CBE IN BRIEF

Highlights from CBE's twenty-seven years.

The first issue of *Priscilla Papers* is published.

Catherine Kroeger invites evangelical leaders to address the need for a national organization to advance the biblical teachings on shared leadership for males and females. The group is formed and, one month later, is named Christians for Biblical Equality.

CBE's mission statement is developed, and a board is formed.

Mutuality is launched in order to popularize CBE's message, which had previously been aimed exclusively at academic audiences.

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CBE is incorporated as a nonprofit in 1988.

CBE leaders produce the "Statement on Men, Women, and Biblical Equality" in 1989.

CBE hosts its first conference in July, 1989 at Bethel College, MN (now Bethel University).

CBE's publications join the Evangelical Press Association (EPA). Since 2000, *Priscilla Papers* and *Mutuality* have won a combined 27 awards from the EPA.

CBE begins its first strategic planning initiative, focusing CBE's efforts around four goals: popularize the message, promote egalitarian scholarship, market the message, and develop a financially stable organization.

CBE's board institutes a policy to engage in a strategic evaluation and plan for the organization every five years, ensuring CBE remains focused and relevant.

Keep pressing on, persevere! Even if you're in a group of two or three, keep on meeting and encouraging one another. It's crucial that you are knowledgeable about the Word of God and positive biblical female role models. Learn the arguments against gender equality and appropriate biblical responses to those arguments. Pray for opportunities and that you'll stay calm as you discuss egalitarian issues with others who disagree with you, because this is a highly emotional issue. It's been my experience that even if no one speaks up and supports you in a group for what you've said, later someone will come forward and thank you for what you said or did. It may seem you're all by yourself but you are not alone! First of all, the Lord is with you, but rest assured there are probably quite a number of others in your faith community that share your beliefs. I'm grateful that today those who take a stand for biblical equality can be assured of many others in our country and around the globe who believe as we do.

— *Diane Chynoweth*

They are brave women and men. They swim against the comfortable stream of unexamined beliefs. They are still a minority of faith. But both history and eternity are on their side. History shows that unfailingly committed minorities often prevail against massive stronghold of error and abuse; while biblical previews of eternity show the eternal community unbroken, undivided and whole, gathered under the supreme lordship of Christ who sits at the right hand of the Father in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and above every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come, God having placed all things under his feet and appointed him, above all things, to be head for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills equally all in all.

— *Dr. Gilbert Bilezikian*

CBE would like to extend our thanks to these leaders and scholars for sharing their memories and hopes, and to the many others who were unable to respond to our survey but who have played equally pivotal roles in establishing CBE and advancing its mission.

CBE prepares for its fourth strategic planning project, this time exploring how to clarify and focus its mission while attending to the consequences of patriarchy, particularly sex-based oppression and violence, trafficking, and "gendercide."

CBE deepens its partnerships with organizations around the world. By providing materials on biblical equality to Christian NGOs and schoolchildren alike, CBE empowers Christians around the world to better combat patriarchy at its roots in order to present the gospel as intended and to effect real and lasting change around the world.

At the same time, CBE remains true to its roots, producing and distributing resources that present the biblical perspective for shared leadership and authority in the home, church, and society.

2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	
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CBE goes global, hosting its first conference outside the United States in Durham, England.

CBE has since held conferences in Bangalore, India; Toronto, Canada; Melbourne, Australia; and Limuru, Kenya. In 2014, CBE is headed to Medellin, Colombia for its sixth international conference.

CBE's board conducts its second strategic planning project. In addition to the four goals established in 2000, the board incorporates a fifth: articulate and promote a theology of gender and justice.

In God's Image

*Community that reflects
the nature of God*

“Often, people consider the leadership of women to be secondary. Because it is not a salvation issue, it is considered to have no importance. To the contrary, it is of foundational importance, because it affects the basic definition of church as community.” — **Dr. Gilbert Bilezikian**

CBE founder Dr. Gilbert Bilezikian shares the Bible's vision of transformative community rooted in the reciprocal love and service that characterize the triune God.



Pictured: Dr. Bilezikian speaks on community at a CBE chapter event in Chicago, IL. Photo courtesy of Philippe Carvalho, mirarproductions.com

Mutuality: *In Community 101, you talk about Adam and Eve's relationship and community in the Garden of Eden as being grounded in equality, and this equality being representative of God and the community within the Trinity. Could you explain a bit about how you see Adam and Eve's relationship in Genesis 1–2 as representative of God and godly community?*

Gilbert Bilezikian (GB): Yes, I think this is made pretty clear in Genesis. I am surprised that there is not more emphasis in egalitarian circles on the importance of Genesis 1 and 2 as the normative pattern given by God for the conduct of human life. As you saw in *Community 101*, the first three verses of the book of Genesis introduce God as Trinity.

In verse 1: God is the creator, the Father, the progenitor.

In verse 2: The Spirit is the one who protects and controls God's world.

Then, in verse 3: The Word is presented to us as the creative agent of the Trinity.

In the Bible these three are presented as one being—the triune Godhead. The triune God resolves that the culmination of his creational work will be a creature that bears God's own image. He creates one, but it is not good, because one cannot constitute community. So, out of the one, he makes two, and finally declares “this is good.” He bonds them together as the founders and the source of community on earth.

He gives them two mandates. One is the expansion mandate: have babies, expanding this community until it fills the earth. The second is the stewardship of the environment, which must be managed properly in order to sustain the universal expansion of community. Both Adam and Eve are equal participants in the implementation of those tasks. The significance of the fact that the mandate is identical for both cannot be lost.

The Genesis 1–3 cycle is of utmost importance. It portrays community as it was originally designed to reflect God’s image. But it also shows what happens to it once it is devastated by human rebellion. Immediately after the fall, hierarchy and competitiveness show up in human relationships. Of the original couple, one becomes ruler and the other, subject. In chapter 4, Cain murders his brother, and Lamech takes several wives to boast of his prowess as a macho man. Eventually, the people of Israel structure their relationships in the form of a patriarchy, complete with competition for dominance and rivalry for ascendancy. These patterns, which appeared as a result of the fall, violated the normative design that God had established for community to image his own nature.

Mutuality: *It’s interesting that you talk about equality in creation as reflective of the community inside the Trinity itself. A number of influential theologians argue that the Son is equal with the Father in being and worth, but eternally subordinate in authority. This justifies the belief that in a community that reflects the Trinity, women are equal in value but eternally subordinate in authority to men. How do you respond?*

GB: True, when Christ became incarnate, he intentionally humbled himself in obedience to his calling. His identification with humankind led him to adopt a new status, which was a departure from his eternal position of equality within the Godhead. But the New Testament never describes the submission he experienced to accomplish the redemption of humankind as an eternal state. To the contrary, after his resurrection, all authority on heaven and earth is given to him, and he assumes the name that is above every other name.

The manner in which he accepted humiliation to accomplish his mission reveals the true identity of God as both giver and servant within Trinity. The submission was not forced subordination, but was voluntary. He let go of the prerogatives of divinity and he submitted himself. Thus, he manifested the true character of God, which is to be a servant. In fact that is what bonds the Trinity together in oneness: mutual love and reciprocal servanthood.

Regarding the relationship between function and worth, I think that function reflects a value assessment. Function is an expression of worth: those deemed worthy are permitted to perform the most critical functions. One needs to prove worth to a greater extent to become a colonel than to remain a private in the military. The colonel’s worth is reflected in the pay and respect he or she receives. To say that a woman could not be a colonel because she is female implies that she has less worth than a man with the same qualifications. To affirm that a woman

has the same worth for the kingdom of God but doesn’t qualify for certain functions just because she is a woman constitutes a denial of her worth.

There is no such thing in the Bible. The Scriptures recognize that the worth of human beings derives from their creation in God’s image. Their worth manifests itself in Christian community through the full participation and use of their gifts out of devotion to God and his purposes. The apostle Paul says the eye cannot say to the ear, “I don’t need you” and the head to the feet “I don’t need you.” Community best reflects the Trinity when it recognizes the equal worth of each person and encourages everyone to fully participate in community life, according to their gifts.

Such mutuality is a defining characteristic of community. Even when the Bible calls Jesus the head of the church, it never defines this relationship in terms of rulership or authority. In the epistles, Christ’s function as head of the church is one of provider and servant—he is the one who provides the church with fullness, life, and growth. His role as head of the church is that of a servant provider, not a master.

Mutuality: *So is there a place for any sort of authority or hierarchy in the church?*

GB: There has to be order for the church to function. Order cannot be obtained without enforcement. And enforcement requires the exercise of authority. But in the New Testament, with the exception of dire situations such as those addressed in the Pastoral Epistles, authority is not delegated to one person. Paul addresses his letters to the Romans and Corinthians, for example, to the congregation, not to a small group of leaders. He expects that the congregation will be responsible for leading the church in the right direction. Authority is ultimately vested in the community itself, and is carried by those whom the community designates.

However, there are times when the community leadership model does not work because of a lack of consensus or because the community lacks the spiritual maturity to govern itself. Then, it becomes necessary, as indicated in the Pastoral Epistles, to resort to an authoritarian model. But this is an interim authority structure that should be used to stimulate the spiritual maturity and to develop leadership skills for the benefit of the congregation.

Unfortunately, too often, these church-planting or remedial crisis structures become permanent. This opens the way for autocratic and self-referential leaders to assume power and usurp the authority that, according to Scripture, belongs to the community.

Even when the Bible calls Jesus the head of the church, it never defines this relationship in terms of rulership or authority. In the epistles, Christ’s function as head of the church is one of provider and servant—he is the one who provides the church with fullness, life, and growth.

Mutuality: *What would you say to a pastor or a lay leader trying to build egalitarian community in a church where other leaders have a decidedly less egalitarian understanding of leadership and community?*

GB: New groups searching for a model of governance should engage in a study of the subject in Scripture. For instance, in my book, *Community 101*, those issues are surveyed from a biblical perspective that recognizes the need for authority to be exercised for the governance of the church. However, that exercise of authority should be subject to accountability to the group, not monopolized by individuals.

The church is the image on earth of the oneness of the Trinity. It loses this identity when transformed from oneness into a split-level arrangement with half of its constituency subject to the other half on the basis of gender.

Often, people consider the leadership of women to be secondary. Because it is not a salvation issue, it is considered to have no importance. To the contrary, it is of foundational importance, because it affects the basic definition of church as community. The egalitarian claim does

not concern the status of women as much as the integrity of the definition of the church as authentic community. The church is the image on earth of the oneness of the Trinity. It loses this identity when transformed from oneness into a split-level arrangement with half of its constituency subject to the other half on the basis of gender. A body thus mutilated fails to serve the purposes of its creator and disintegrates into irrelevance.

Wherever I am called to teach about such matters, I remind my hearers that the proper understanding of Scripture requires a proper framework for its use. We must first agree on a method of interpretation that finds its warrant in the Bible itself. Too often the Bible is viewed as a compendium of loose verses that are to be fitted together according to the ingenuity and the prejudices of the interpreter. By treating the verses of the Bible like the pieces of a puzzle that are manipulated at will to fit preconceived models, one can prove anything (or its opposite) as biblical truth. In my book, *Christianity 101* (pp. 14–20), I have drawn from Scripture itself three rules for its own interpretation:

- Respect for the individuality of the sixty-six books that constitute the Bible in order to replace the popular “proof-texts collage” approach with consistent book-by-book study of themes one book at a time
- Recognition of the relationship of Old Testament to New Testament as one of preparation to fulfillment
- Caution with the interpretation of biblical texts or terms that appear only once, especially when they are not clear or when their meaning has been fruitlessly debated throughout the history of the church

However, good methods and intentions do not always produce unanimity. Some have been immersed in patriarchal church environments and don’t even know that an alternative exists. Their ideas are so entrenched that they fail to see that Scripture does not restrict participation in ministry on the basis of gender, but bases it on new-creation personhood enriched with the divine endowment of spiritual gifts.

Such persons are to be approached with love and care, recognizing that we are all seekers after truth. They often must be patiently initiated to a new paradigm on a one-on-one basis.

Become a member of CBE!

Leave a lasting impact on the world around you by joining the global movement for biblical equality between all men and women!

Membership is available to any individual or organization who affirms CBE’s Statement of Faith.

Already a member? Consider giving a membership to your friend, church, or organization.

Learn more at cbeinternational.org/members



They sometimes can be set on a quest for an inclusive definition of community with simple questions, such as “Do you really believe that it was God’s intention for the church to be divided in half between leaders and followers on the basis of gender?” or “Do you realize that God expects the total involvement of the spiritual gifts of all the members of the body, and that excluding gifted women from total participation to the maximum of their capacities

We need to ask ourselves whether men have the right to deprive the kingdom of the skills and abilities God has invested in women.

mutilates Christ’s body?” The world employs the skills of women in government, business, and education. We need to ask ourselves whether men have the right to deprive the kingdom of the skills and abilities God has invested in women.

Such an approach can create a holy discomfort that softens hearts and changes attitudes. Christians know that the kingdom grows one person at a time. Like we chip away at the task of evangelism, we also chip away at erroneous views of gender. We uphold the values of the kingdom of Christ, embodied in the divine dynamic of a community where men and women are equal participants in the pursuit of God’s purposes.

Mutuality: *Chipping away slowly for years can be difficult; what encouragement do you have for egalitarians who want to see mutual community become a reality in their churches?*

GB: God has granted me the grace to proclaim in writing and in pulpits the message of oneness since I had my own change of heart several decades ago. I have often felt the loneliness of a voice crying in the wilderness. But God has been raising a host of teachers, leaders, and churches that advocate and demonstrate the beauty of community functioning without the hindrances of prejudice and exclusion. I often have the opportunity to feel their passion and to measure the extent of their commitment. I feel confident that a powerful movement of church reformation is gathering strength. More than ever, it is time for believers who have been freed from the shackles of erroneous traditions to band together to protect the honor of the bride whom Christ wants to present perfect to the eternal courts of heaven.

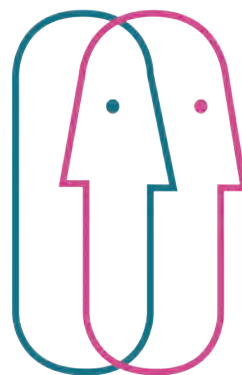


Dr. Gilbert Bilezikian (ThD, Boston University) is a professor emeritus of biblical studies at Wheaton College. He has written several books, including *Community 101*, *Christianity 101*, and *Beyond Sex Roles*. He is a founding leader of both CBE and Willow Creek Community Church.

CBE presents, in partnership with the Biblical Seminary of Colombia (FUSBC)

Male and Female in Christ: Toward a Biblical View of Christian Identity, Ministry, and Marriage

a conference in Medellin, Colombia
July 7–9, 2014



HOMBRE Y MUJER EN CRISTO
Identidad y Ministerio



It Runs in the Family:

Lessons from generations of egalitarians

A conversation with Lorry Lutz and Hollie Baker-Lutz

Mutuality joins author, missionary, and longtime CBE member Lorry Lutz and her granddaughter, sociologist Hollie Baker-Lutz, for a conversation about culture, equality, and building an egalitarian legacy.

Mutuality: *You grew up in different eras. How has the world changed for girls over the years? How were your experiences similar or different?*

Lorry: The role of women was not a question—at least that I was aware of—as I was growing up. The suffragettes had won, securing women in the US the right to vote in 1920, only eight years before I was born, so I took the right to vote for granted. Women entered the work force during World War II—doing their patriotic duty—and I fully expected to have some kind of a job after finishing college. I was the first woman from my small Baptist church to attend college, and they seemed proud of me.

Hollie: William Faulkner once wrote, “The past is never dead. It’s not even past.” We have come a long way since my grandma’s youth, yet so much of the patriarchy and racism that has shaped women’s lives remains with us today, albeit sometimes in new and different forms. My generation is in danger of taking those hard-fought gains for granted. The fight for equality may seem like ancient history—something inevitable rather than something that was fought for and can be lost. And the messages we get about womanhood and leadership in the church serve to confuse matters.

Mutuality: *What were some of those messages?*

Hollie: The messages I received in church about womanhood were marked with contradiction. Church leaders (usually pastors' wives) would pull the girls aside to warn us about two-piece bathing suits or spaghetti-strapped tank tops. Later, just prior to marriage, I was pulled aside again—this time to be given a book about the importance of good sex. Overnight, my body went from shameful to the sole path to marital success. Womanhood seemed to have a lot to do with my body, and not much to do with leadership.

At the same time, I grew up seeing women in professional careers in politics or business. These women are admired and promoted, sometimes by the same men who tell us that these women's gifts are irrelevant in a church. Even when women participate in leadership, male-dominated conversations often continue as if we weren't there. This was difficult to understand, because the God I knew from the Bible didn't seem likely to give a good gift and then ask that it be shelved.

Womanhood seemed to have a lot to do with my body, and not much to do with leadership.

Lorry: I didn't have the same kind of role models Hollie had. I did not question that men were the leaders in the church—deacons, pastors, elders, Bible school teachers. And frankly, I never expected to serve in such roles. However, in time I became aware that God had given me a gift of leadership and administration. My

husband recognized my gifts and encouraged me to use them wherever possible, even when the church did not.

Hollie: I couldn't reconcile what I was being taught in church with what I read in my Bible and saw around me. When I saw successful professional women, I wondered, "What happens when a smart woman steps into a church—what physical or miraculous change actually happens to her brain—to disqualify her from using those same gifts? Does God veil her mind?" As I grew in my faith and education, I realized the injustices my grandma grew up with still exist, but in different forms. Now they may be even more dangerous than they were in her day, when at least people wore their sexism on their sleeves.

Mutuality: *Were these the experiences that led to you explore questions gender and faith on a deeper level? Or were there other specific events that sparked your passion for gender equality?*

Lorry: While I served as a missionary in South Africa, I was asked to teach at a Bible school. It was during that time that I began questioning whether it was biblical for me to teach men. Didn't Paul say, "I do not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man" (1 Tim. 2:12)? I justified it because the mission leaders had asked me and my husband approved. It didn't dawn on me at the time that this was actually a racial issue as well—it was acceptable for a white woman to teach black African men, but not white American men.

I wanted desperately to find a biblical answer. I did not find satisfactory answers until years later when a friend introduced me to CBE. I read every book I could get my hands on, attended conferences, listened to tapes, took copious notes, and shared them all with my husband, who was beginning the journey.

I gained confidence as I learned that both Jesus and Paul blessed women who served—women like Mary, Priscilla, and Phoebe. I tried to ignore the remarks and jokes people made "all in good fun" about my feminism. When I was asked to become an elder at our church, a group of men conducted a write-in campaign to defeat me. However, the following year my pastor encouraged me to let my name stand again, and this time I became an elder. I'm pleased to report that recently when I attended a service back in that church, at least half of the elders serving communion were women.

Hollie: People ask me all the time how I became a gender activist. Honestly, I think I was born a feminist. As a child, my favorite books, such as *Matilda* or *Harriet the Spy*, featured strong women and girls. My childhood heroes were Amelia Earhart and Harriet Tubman. When I was ten, I rode my bike to the public library to read *Ms. Magazine*, even though I didn't understand the articles. My parents are happily-married egalitarians. Gender equality just seemed obvious. Still, for many years I assumed that my faith and feminism could never be friends, and I felt like I needed to hide one or the other depending on where I was. When my grandma introduced me to CBE in college, I wanted to shout, "I knew it!" CBE was the first place I felt affirmed in my faith and my passion for gender issues. CBE showed me that not only are Christianity and feminism biblically compatible, but also that there is a rich history of evangelical and biblical women who can be our example and inspiration.

... for many years I assumed that my faith and feminism could never be friends, and I felt like I needed to hide one or the other depending on where I was.

Lorry: Yes, a strong theological groundwork for biblical equality was laid as far back as Katharine Bushnell's *God's Word to Women*, published in 1923, and even earlier, by Quaker abolitionists and women preachers. And of course in the Bible! I recently taught a class at a church, and I spoke about the role of women in the New Testament. Afterwards, the irate pastor came up to me saying, "What right do you have to come into my church and open up a can of worms like that? You'll leave and I'll have to deal with it." I suspect his congregation heard several sermons in the following weeks urging women to be silent and submissive.

Mutuality: *Wow. The pastor's response shows how powerful those simple examples from the Bible and from history can be. In what other ways do you see the movement for biblical equality empowering women in the years to come?*

Lorry: CBE's international outreach is crucial as women globally struggle with the issue. I taught a class on the role of women in ministry to a group of young men in India several years ago and left a copy of my book, *Lessons in Leadership*, with one of the men. To my surprise I received an email from him when I returned home. He wrote, "At first I disagreed with what you

were saying, but after I read and studied more, I had to admit that I had not treated the women in my church with the respect I should, and I've apologized." We've seen fruit like this around the world, but men still hold most leadership roles in churches. I believe as we pray for godly empowerment for men and women, we will see a groundswell of support for women in leadership.

There are so many stories about women prophets, judges, disciples, and even female imagery for God that simply don't get taught or talked about. The next generation needs to hear about these things.

Hollie: The movement's future is as bright and vital as it ever has been. We serve a God who cares about every part of us. When Jesus spoke to the woman at the well (John 4), his interaction was remarkable not only because she was a woman, but because she was a despised Samaritan. Truly empowering the woman at the well today means caring for her whole self, not just her womanhood.

Some people are surprised to learn how much I focus on race and social class when I am a "gender activist." As Audre Lorde has pointed out, we do not live single-issue lives, so we can't expect complete justice (is there any other kind?) to come from single-issue movements. Of course, no single organization can champion everything, which is why building coalitions with others doing this work is integral for justice causes. Rooted in Scripture and committed to liberating women's giftedness, CBE is a light onto our path.

Mutuality: *It's been said that large-scale change starts with the family. As a family with three generations committed to biblical equality, what advice can you offer to other egalitarian families trying to build a tradition like yours?*

Hollie: My complementarian Bible study leader in high school had a profound effect on me when she said that Ephesians teaches us that wives must submit to their husbands, but husbands "only" have to love their wives. Marriage seemed like an open-and-shut case, until years later when someone at a CBE conference pointed out that Ephesians 5:21 (the verse *right before* that other one!) tells husbands and wives to submit to one another out of love for Christ Jesus. There are so many stories about women prophets, judges, and disciples, and even female imagery for God that simply don't get taught or talked about. The next generation needs to hear about these things.

Lorry: That's why it is so important that during family devotional times, when sharing stories about women in the Bible, parents point out those who were teachers and leaders, and especially how Jesus honored women—contrary to his culture. Simply put, the best way to raise children with a biblical egalitarian view is to model partnership and mutual submission, even to the point of explaining how you reach decisions by submitting to each other in love.

Hollie: Yes. My egalitarianism has been shaped most by the adults in my life acting it out, not just talking about it. Seeing my parents and grandparents make decisions together assured me that egalitarian marriages are possible. We build an egalitarian legacy when we live in such a way that the world's patriarchy comes as a surprise to our children.



Lorry Lutz and her husband Al served 22 years in South Africa during Apartheid. After earning her BA in communications/journalism at Wheaton Graduate School, Lorry directed publications for Partners International, then headed the AD2000 Women's Track. She has written ten books, including *Women as Risk Takers for God*, and is completing a two-book series on the life of Dr. Katharine Bushnell. The Lutzes have five children (one with the Lord), serving in various Christian ministries.



Hollie Baker-Lutz has a master's degree in women's and gender studies from DePaul University in Chicago. She works at a food bank in northern Illinois and also teaches sociology at a community college. She lives with her husband, Nate, and a pug named Amelia.

In 140 characters or less...

What steps have you taken in your family, church, or community to pass a legacy of mutuality to the next generation? Share your ideas on Twitter, or blog about it and share your blog on Twitter, using the hashtag **#mutualitylegacy**.



Pictured: Bill and Aida Spencer in Ephesus

Beyond the Balancing Act

What Model Should you Choose for Your Marriage and Work?

by *Aida Besançon Spencer and William David Spencer*

When we were first married, we both sensed a call to full-time ministry, and this calling did not disappear when we had our child. We wrestled with questions like “How does a called couple organize its life to fulfill both callings to minister without costing it its family?” and “How exactly does such a couple balance familial and professional responsibilities?” For some Christians, the answer is that God always calls only the husband to work; wives are to be homemakers and stay-at-home mothers. For egalitarians attempting to pursue God’s call on both spouses’ lives with equal diligence, the solutions may not be so simple.

Of course, every family situation is different, and God does not call every egalitarian woman or man to full time work or ministry outside the home, as God has us. Yet, we believe that what we’ve learned in our years of marriage has applications across different relationship contexts. Forty-one years of marriage have taught us that by pursuing a healthy model of marriage and then making intentional efforts to prioritize family and relationships, we can serve God effectively in whatever capacity God calls us.

The apostle Paul describes the Christian life as a foot race (1 Cor. 9:24). In this technological age, many married Christians’ lives can be depicted as a long distance auto race with periodic pit stops for refueling and repair. So, we see four basic models of marriage, which can be symbolized by four different types of race courses and pit stops.

Self-centered model

In the self-centered model, each spouse has a totally different race course and they meet only between races. Sometimes, they may even decide to live in different places until eventually they wonder why they are married! We knew just such a couple when we were in seminary. She was a student in New Jersey, he was working in Europe. They kept regular communication, but eventually they drifted apart. Such separation may be necessary at times, but is this God’s ideal long-term model?

“Traditional” or patriarchal model

In the so called “traditional” or patriarchal model, the husband runs the car. He is the driver. At the pit stop, the wife and children are waiting and they run out to service the car and driver. The husband decides what is best for the family. What is best for the husband is assumed to be God’s will for the family. Is this what God intends—one of every several Christians working while the rest stand by and mainly watch and wait to serve the chosen one?

Pioneer model

The pioneer model is the truly traditional model. The whole

In a Nutshell

Try out these strategies for structuring life around healthy relationships:

- **Schedule**
Schedule your work to allow space for your family and relationships.
- **Rest**
Schedule time off every day and every week to allow space to develop your relationships with family, and, especially if single, with friends.
- **Avoid Competition**
Do not compete with each other, your children, or other Christians.
- **Be communal**
Assist everyone in the family to reach their goals and potential.
- **Make Conscious Decisions**
When you have an opportunity that affects the family, think of how your decision will affect everyone.
- **Choose Your Workplace Carefully**
If possible, choose an employer that allows you to do quality work in your own way.
- **Teamwork**
Try to work as a team with your spouse.

Looking for more on marriage and relationships? Visit cbeinternational.org/marriage to find additional resources, including more from the Spencers.

family is in the car, the husband might drive, while the wife checks the map, and the children each have their job in maintaining part of the car. At the pit stop, the whole family jumps out of the car and services it and the driver. Generally, the family divides tasks by gifts—spiritual and natural.

The pioneer model is typical in contexts where economic need demands the participation of all family members. It is what appears to have existed in the first century, where husband and wife had different roles but, with the children, all ran the household.

Mutual submission model

In the mutual submission model, the driver changes. At the pit stop, the rest of the family services the car and the current driver. The family divides tasks by gifts and also alternates responsibilities. Christ is the direct head of the family, owner of the car (and the race course, too!).

What is mutual submission? It is putting the other person first and cooperating with others as they fulfill their roles. It is, as well, relying on one's spouse's strengths and one's children's strengths, as they are able.

Prioritizing Relationships

Our values as egalitarians should affect not only the model we pick, but also the way we structure our lives. Dialogue with one another. Make your roles as clear as possible. Also, each family member needs to decide what is most important: ambition or relationships? Is it to succeed in work or to succeed in relationships? A key question for each to ask is: Are you willing (if able) to delay approval from your employer, if necessary, to further familial relationships?

We do not intend to discourage industry in work. Each of us should always do our best. But at times, the cost of discipleship may affect not only what we say and do, but also how we structure our lives. John teaches us in 1 John 4:8–16 that “God is love” and Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 13:1–3: “If I succeed as the greatest speaker in tongues or the greatest prophet or the greatest giver to the needy, but I do not put a priority on loving others, I am a failure” (paraphrased). Christianity involves a justified relationship with our creator, and if we want to encourage

others to join us in this communion, then relationships should be very important to us.

Here are seven suggestions we have found helpful for succeeding in our family and relationships, while still being able to do well in our work:

1 *Schedule*

Schedule your work so as to allow space for family (and relationships). Families with children should try to make their work environment as family friendly as possible. Watch out for too much traveling away from each other because it may bring temptation, as well as distancing to the relationship. When Aída first began working as a professor at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, her goal was to prioritize her family. After explaining this to the dean, she carefully planned her class schedule in a way to maximize time on campus as well as time home to plan lectures and be present with our then preschool son. By being proactive about planning her schedule, she was better able to balance work and family obligations.

2 *Rest*

Schedule time off every day and every week to allow space to develop your relationships with family (and, especially if single, with friends). When our son was younger, we went out together as a family once a week, and once a week we parents had a date. Now that our son Steve is an adult with his own life and home, we empty nesters go out twice a week and still have recreational times with our son whenever possible. We have noticed that if we do not rest, we more easily get sick.

3 *Avoid Competition*

Do not compete with each other, your children, or other Christians. Each of us has different strengths and weaknesses, and these are meant to work together, not to compete. In a book we once read on egalitarian marriage, the wife mentioned that she liked to compete with her husband. We wondered how they could manage it. Later, we discovered, they divorced, so it did not work for them!

1 Corinthians 12:26 counsels, “if one member suffers, all the members suffer together; if one member is glorified, all the

members rejoice together.” There is no room for competition if we are all members of the same body. Another person’s success is our success too.

4 *Be communal*

Assist everyone in the family to succeed in reaching their goals and potential. That entails helping figure out each person’s gifts. Affirming family members and Christian brothers and sisters as they perform well enables them to recognize their spiritual gifts.

Early on in our marriage, when Bill was recommended for *Who’s Who in Religion*, he then recommended Aida. When Aida was recommended for Outstanding Young Women in America, she then recommended Bill for Outstanding Young Men in America. There was no need to be envious. As one person raced ahead, he or she reached out to include the other. This has set a pattern for the way we have related to each other for the last four decades of our marriage.

5 *Make conscious decisions*

When you have an opportunity that affects the family, think of how your decision affects everyone in the family. Seek mutually agreeable resolutions. Listen to each other. Seek Christ’s peace. Remember 1 Corinthians 13:5’s wise advice: “Love is not self-seeking.”

6 *Choose your workplace carefully*

If possible, choose an employer that allows you to do quality work in your own way, rather than a quantity of overwork. Many organizations praise those who overwork, but later will not praise those same employees if their family relations are not working! Other employers will work with you to maximize your family’s gifts and abilities. When Aida was a student in Southern Seminary in Kentucky in the 1980s, she discovered that spouses of students could attend classes for free. Because of this, when we came to Gordon-Conwell Seminary in Massachusetts, we

suggested establishing a scholarship for team ministry and now Gordon-Conwell has institutionalized it, offering for-credit study opportunities for spouses and thereby encouraging the ministry of both wife and husband.

7 *Teamwork*

Try to work as a team with your spouse as much as possible. Male and female are both called to rule and subdue (Gen. 1:26, 28). Why not do it together? We team-teach when we can and team-write when appropriate. Though we have been together for four decades and have known each other for five, we are still learning about each other. We consistently strive to be proactive in our efforts to organize our marriage as we think the Lord would like it to be organized and not by models others tell us we must implement to have a truly Christian marriage.

Perhaps your situation is very different from ours—God does not call us all to work outside the home, and many couples have little choice in where or how they work. Many of our sisters and brothers are single. We believe that whatever your specific context, God has designed us all to flourish in relationships and in our work. Do not settle for society’s or anyone else’s model for your work and relationships. We encourage you to develop your own model and strategies with mutual respect and in continual dialogue with God.



Aida Besançon Spencer is professor of New Testament at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, MA. William David Spencer, in addition to being editor of *Priscilla Papers*, is ranked adjunct professor of theology and the arts at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Boston, MA. Both are board of reference members of Christians for Biblical Equality. They co-edit the *Africanus Journal* and co-produce the House of Prisca and Aquila series of Wipf & Stock Publishers. Together and separately they have authored numerous books, including *Marriage at the Crossroads*, *Global Voices on Biblical Equality*, *The Global God*, and *The Goddess Revival*. Both are Presbyterian ministers and co-founders of the Pilgrim Church in Beverly, MA. Their co-written monthly blog may be found at blogs.christianpost.com/scriptural-truths.

Praise God with us for...

CBE’s youth curriculum in Kenyan schools. Our Kenyan partner organization, Ekklesia Foundation for Gender Education, has revised *Called Out!* for use in Kenyan schools, and the curriculum is scheduled to be distributed in January 2014. *Called Out!* author Jenny Rae Armstrong recently traveled to Kenya to conduct training for teachers. Read more on p. 20.

CBE’s presence at the ETS convention. This year we mailed our fourth annual special edition journal, *An Evangelical Tradition*, to members of the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS), and at the annual ETS convention in Baltimore, CBE hosted a booth and Mimi presented a paper.

Pray to God with us for...

CBE’s 2014 conference, which will be held in Medellin, Colombia on July 7–9, 2014 in partnership with the Biblical Seminary of Colombia. This will be our first conference in South America and our first conference conducted primarily in Spanish. Pray for all those involved in planning and for God to prepare those who will attend.

CBE’s website upgrade. We are in the process of upgrading our website. The new website will offer more free articles, better facilitate sharing of resources, and improve navigation for users. Pray for God to clear our path of any technical problems or other obstacles that may arise.



BOOK REVIEW:

Kate Hurley's **GETTING NAKED LATER**

by Sara Robertson

Are you still looking for a way to use those two-for-one coupons you long to share with a spouse? Or, are you constantly giving your single friends advice on how to snag a mate? There's something for you in *Getting Naked Later*, by Kate Hurley. Don't be put off by the title—she never gets into specifics.

I may have been asked to review this book because I've been single for eighty years, which puts me way past Hurley's intended audience. But my memories help me identify somewhat with her plaintive descriptions, and my life experience helps me identify with the path she proposes should a spouse never show up; I'm still a member of the UBs (Unclaimed Blessings), who got together whenever we didn't have a date for a big (or little) occasion.

Hurley is a good writer who combines her sense of humor with wisdom to produce an enjoyable and helpful book. I especially liked her analogies, which add personality and depth to her writing. While other authors may discuss seeking guidance with signs from God, she looks for "signs like a nearsighted truck driver" (you'll enjoy reading what resulted from that activity). And, if you're ever tempted to throw a pity party, she has a plan for you, complete with proper clothing (rabbit slippers), menu (lots of Ben & Jerry's, with a garnish of marshmallows and Tootsie Rolls), mood music, games, and party favors (Pity Party T-shirts nice enough to wear to church).

As good as Hurley's writing is, the book's editing leaves something to be desired. I wish her Scripture quotations had come from an inclusive language version, such as the NIV 2011, and I was disappointed to discover dozens of errors—grammatical, typographical, and factual. Though she expressed pleasure at being steered away from a "big box publisher," perhaps such a publisher would have caught many of these mistakes, which can be distracting to the reader. Hurley deserves better for her excellent content.

Still, *Getting Naked Later* is worth your time. Hurley has avoided John Stott's warning from his own life of singleness, that "The greatest danger [singles] face is self-centeredness. We may live alone and have total freedom to plan our own schedule, with nobody else to modify it or even give us advice. If we are not careful, we may find the whole world revolving around ourselves" (quoted on p. 207).

She moves beyond pity or self-centeredness and arrives at a place of understanding. She has excellent advice for those "shipwrecked on the Isle of Singleness," and uses positive possibilities to draw us back to the God who loves us. Hurley has found a way "not to spend her life waiting," but to spend herself. You will be rewarded to find out how she did it.



A graduate of University of Northwestern–St. Paul, Sara Robertson received an MA from Northwestern University and an EdD from Northern Illinois University. She is an ordained elder for First Presbyterian Church, Glen Ellyn, IL. She serves on multiple boards, including CBE's; has contributed to journals, magazine, and articles; and is the author of *Helping the Hurting*. She enjoys swimming, sailing, reading, gardening, bicycling, traveling, and camping.

Reflect with us...

"Do This in Remembrance of Me" by Jo Ellen Heil, with inspiration from Susan McCoubrie

Memories. They can comfort us, gladden our hearts and remind us how God has worked in our lives. Memories can also spur us into action. When Jesus celebrated his last Passover before his crucifixion, he invited those he loved to not only remember their people's past release from slavery but also to follow his own example of loving God by serving others.

"Do this in remembrance of me."

But memories alone were not enough. With that last bittersweet Paschal feast came a promise to live into and work toward: Jesus' own return, his sharing with us all a heavenly banquet in a place where barriers of poverty and gender, race and disability, disease, and even death would no longer exist. It would be, as the prophet foretold, a "future filled with hope," a memory-yet-to-be-fulfilled.

It was one of the greatest truths Jesus shared with his loved ones that night: In the midst of desertion, loss, fear and suffering, there was to be hope, righteousness, a future to live for, a vision of justice to work toward.

God knows us so well. Without a vision for the future, we lose heart. We sometimes lose our way. But as Jeremiah's prophetic vision from centuries long past continues to assure us: "there is hope for your future, declares the Lord" (Jer. 31:17, ESV).

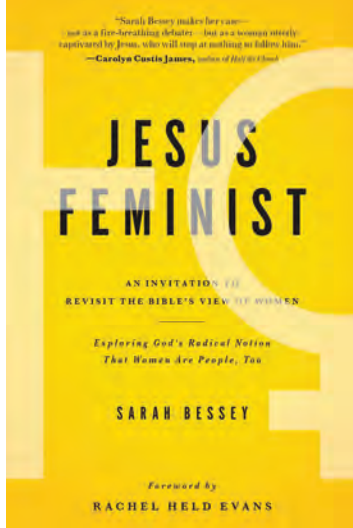
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"From the time you were born, I have helped you. Do not be afraid—you are my servant."

"Do not cling to events of the past or dwell on what happened long ago. Watch for the new thing I am going to do... I will make a road through the wilderness and give you streams of water there."

"I am your God and will take care of you until you are old and your hair is gray. I made you and will care for you; I will give you help and rescue you."

Isaiah 44:2; 43:18–19; 46:3–4 (Good News Bible)



BOOK REVIEW:

Sarah Bessey's

JESUS FEMINIST

by Naomi Krueger

"Are you a feminist?" I ask him, purposely provoking a conversation. "No."

"Do you believe that women and men are equal in the sight of God and should be treated with mutual respect?"

"Of course! But I'm not a feminist."

This is a conversation I've had many times with male friends and family members. Many times these people tend toward a complementarian perspective and the response is no surprise. Others really do subscribe to egalitarian theology and are simply opposed to using the term "feminist."

Feminism is one of the most misunderstood movements in history. Christian feminism probably more so. For so many in the Christian world, feminism has become a dirty word. Evangelicals, especially, are afraid to label themselves as feminists. For whatever reason, the word "feminist" can evoke the image of a butch, bra-less woman with a lot of anger at men. But this is not feminism.

Feminism arose as a response to a patriarchal society. We wouldn't need the word "feminist" if women and men had equal standing. Christians wouldn't need feminism if the doors were open to women in all levels of leadership, if sermons promoted mutuality in marriage, and if women were not assumed to be interested only in children's ministry or kitchen duty. But this isn't our world... yet. And that's why we need Sarah Bessey's gentle reminder of the way of Jesus. Her bold new book, *Jesus Feminist: An invitation to revisit the Bible's view of women* is a beautiful anthem for Christian feminists—both a rallying cry for feminists and a warm invitation to those hesitant to claim the label.

If you're looking for a scholarly exegesis of biblical passages about women, this is not the book for you. But there are plenty of books that come from academia on this topic. Instead, Bessey presents a fresh voice for Christian feminism that is accessible to all people.

Weaving biblical exposition into her personal reflection, Bessey describes how Jesus made her a feminist: his love broke down boundaries of gender, class, and ethnicity; and the entire redemptive arc of Scripture champions the case for women's full inclusion in God's kingdom. Our choice is whether or not to participate.

We can choose to move with God, further into justice and wholeness, or we can choose to prop up the world's dead systems, baptizing injustice and power in sacred

language. Feminism is just one way to participate in this redemptive movement. (p. 14)

With deep emotion, Bessey shares the stories of women who inspire her to join God's redemptive movement to heal the world. These "spiritual midwives," she calls them, are the authors and preachers, the friends, sisters, and aunts who are making God's kingdom a reality on earth. She explores the biblical narratives of women in the Old and New Testaments. She describes Jesus' love for women and his out-of-the-way approaches to drawing women into the kingdom. Bessey also explores Paul's revolutionary messages about women and wives and highlights women evangelists and apostles that worked alongside Paul, such as Priscilla and Junia.

The spiritual midwives in her own life and the women of biblical and church history helped Bessey give birth to a new vision for biblical womanhood. Instead of defining biblical womanhood by a set of household chores, Bessey writes,

I am a biblical woman because I live and move and have my being in the daily reality of being a follower of Jesus, living in the reality of being loved, in full trust of my Abba. I am a biblical woman because I follow in the footsteps of all the biblical women who came before me. (pp. 97–98)

Bessey writes with energy and enthusiasm. Her words flow in a lyrical current. Her joy is contagious. Her book is the exact opposite of the brusque, violent, and unsettling images the word "feminist" evokes to some. Instead, *Jesus Feminist* breathes life into the often-maligned concept of feminism, reminding us that feminism is something Christians should celebrate.

If you want a book to give to your feminist friends and your feminist skeptics, pick up *Jesus Feminist*. Bessey's gentle and profound reminder of the biblical message of feminism has the power to break down barriers, unravel misconceptions, and raise the spirits of undercover Jesus feminists.



Naomi Krueger is a Sunday school curriculum developer and freelance writer in Minneapolis-St. Paul. She interned at CBE in 2009 and is married to Tim, the editor of *Mutuality*. Naomi blogs at naomikrueger.com and you can find her on Twitter at [@naomi_writes](https://twitter.com/naomi_writes).

Called Out in Kenya and around the World

Implementing egalitarian curriculum in Kenya

“So, how do you handle dowries in the United States?”

I blinked at the young Anglican priest in surprise. It was the second day of the Ekklesia Foundation for Gender Education’s (EFOGE) training event in Bondo, Kenya, where a group of schoolteachers, clergy, and church leaders had gathered to talk about biblical equality and discuss how to implement CBE’s curriculum, *Called Out!*, in Kenyan schools. But the conversation never stayed strictly within the confines of the curriculum, and that morning’s impassioned debate about dowries was the talk of the lunch line.

“We don’t do dowries in the United States.” I replied. “I don’t think they’ve ever been common practice there.”

“You mean people just decide they want to get married, and get married?” I nodded, and he looked fascinated—and hopeful, I thought, noting his lack of a wedding ring.

Barriers to gender equality differ from culture to culture, which is why the work groups like EFOGE are doing is so vitally important. There is no shortage of secular groups advocating for gender equality, but many people on the receiving end of such “empowerment” get understandably fed up with Westerners telling them how to live. Religious people are especially likely to resist changing traditional values like the dowry system if they’ve been taught the suppression of women is divinely ordained.

But when people begin to realize that the Bible champions equality, and when the local body of Christ rises up in a grassroots movement against injustice and oppression, we begin to see hearts, minds, lives, and entire societies transformed on a deep level. This is no quick fix to help women “live their best lives now.” This is soul surgery, a painful process that can cause discomfort and confusion even while bringing about healing. It is not to be undertaken lightly or in ignorance.

That is why the EFOGE training was such a life-changing event, according to the participants. They embraced the curriculum not because it advocates equality, but because it embeds the issue of equality within a narrative overview of Scripture, which is relevant to everyone. Every morning a brilliant local priest talked about the day’s themes, pulling them into the Kenyan context. Every afternoon, there was large group discussion about how the information they were learning could impact everyday life in Kenya. Each day we heard testimonies about how inequality had impacted their lives, and how the message of gospel-centered gender equality was setting people free. We talked about theology, and biblical interpretation, and teaching strategies; but we also talked about dowries. And who made the tea. And what it meant that women washed men’s hands before meals, but not vice-versa. How should our relationship with Jesus impact our relationship with others, and what would that look like in a Kenyan context?

In short, it was the sort of conversation that needs to happen a million times over, in a million different communities around the globe.

At the end of the event, people had only one complaint: next time (and they insisted that there must be a next time), they wanted to bring their families. Instead of limiting the training to the people implementing the curriculum in schools, they wanted to bring their pastors and Sunday school teachers, elementary school teachers and others from their communities. They wanted everyone to hear the good news: God is for us all! Now, we just have to pray that God will raise up workers for the harvest.



Jenny Rae Armstrong is an award-winning freelance journalist and author of CBE’s *Called Out!* youth curriculum. Passionate about building up the body of Christ by building up women, she studied global studies and missiology at the University of Northwestern–St. Paul, and is pursuing an MDiv at North Park Theological Seminary. Jenny lives in northern Wisconsin with her husband Aaron and their four sons. You can follow her blog at jennyrarmstrong.com.



Learn more about the history of EFOGE and its work in Kenya in “Truth Discovered,” published in the autumn 2013 issue of *Mutuality*. Read it at cbeinternational.org/truthdiscovered.

Find more pictures, along with blog posts and videos about Jenny Rae’s trip to Kenya at cbeinternational.org/kenya.



CBE Founders: A Prophetic Witness and Defense against Abuse

Religion is the most deadly tool of oppression, according to Eugene Peterson. “More people are exploited and abused in the cause of religion than in any other way.” What is the first line of defense to exploitation driven by religious zeal? God’s prophets! In his introduction to the book of Amos in *The Message*, Peterson reminds us:

More people are exploited and abused in the cause of religion than in any other way. Sex, money and power all take a back seat to religion as a source of evil. Religion is the most dangerous energy source known to humankind. The moment a person (or government or religion or organization) is convinced that God is either ordering or sanctioning a cause or project anything goes. The history, worldwide, of religion-fueled hate, killing, and oppression is staggering. The biblical prophets are in the front line of those doing something about it.

To embrace a spiritual life that makes us better rather than worse will always require a healthy dose of prophetic challenge because “none of us can be trusted” Peterson warns. We too easily listen to people who agree with us. Since the line “dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being,” as Solzhenitsyn observed in *The Gulag Archipelago*, the pursuit of justice is inseparable from an honest engagement with the prophets of Scripture and the prophets God sends us in every age—prophets like the founders of CBE.

CBE founders were a solitary voice supporting the equal humanity, dignity, and authority of girls and women who had been marginalized and exploited by a shallow interpretation of Scripture. Demanding that what is unclear in the Bible be understood through that which is clear, their prophetic work made the church stronger biblically and therefore socially.

For this reason, I thank God for the day I met CBE founder Cathie Kroeger while waiting for Harvard’s library to open. She invited me to share lunch with her, and from that moment onward, my life would never be the same. A member of student council at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, I was collecting resumes of eligible female professors. Who better to hire than Cathie Kroeger? Her archaeological research on women continues to enlighten the academic community to this day, and her research on the prevalence of abuse in Christian homes has built awareness, provided desperately needed resources, and forged paths of healing over the years. A prolific researcher and writer, Cathie was always searching for new ways to enlarge the church’s conversation on gender justice. She was an indomitable defender of the vulnerable, not only in the foster children she raised, but also in her biblical scholarship and activism, which advanced the agency and capacity of women beleaguered by Christian patriarchy.

Through Cathie, I met CBE founder Gretchen Gaebelein Hull, daughter of Frank Gaebelein, a prominent evangelical writer, educator, and social activist. Like her father, Gretchen was as erudite as she was lucid and she quickly assumed leadership of CBE’s publication—*Priscilla Papers*. Under Gretchen’s leadership as editor, *Priscilla Papers* grew rapidly and became the primary means of disseminating egalitarian theology to seminaries, colleges, and Christian thinkers around the globe. Gretchen’s grasp of the evangelical world proved essential to CBE’s strategic outreach. Her piercing logic and prophetic vision made her a key spokesperson, and her speaking engagements took her to distant audiences. She was CBE’s golden tongue, and her classic volume, *Equal to Serve*, continues to enjoy a broad reading. Her commitment to social justice was one that was shared by many CBE founders, and it was in Gretchen’s home in New York City that evangelical

CBE founders were a solitary voice supporting the equal humanity, dignity, and authority of girls and women who had been marginalized and exploited by a shallow interpretation of Scripture.

leaders convened to write CBE's "Statement on Men, Women and Biblical Equality," now available in thirty-one languages.

Like Gretchen, CBE founder Alvera Mickelsen has long been an extraordinary leader and communicator. She and her husband Berkeley—a New Testament scholar—together advanced biblical equality as teachers and writers. Berkeley provided treasures from the New Testament, while Alvera addressed practical issues. Recognizing that not everyone reads Greek, Hebrew, or Latin, Alvera had a passion to popularize CBE's message through more accessible resources. What is more, she made herself widely accessible to CBE's community, particularly those suffering the consequences of patriarchy, addressing the concerns of housewives, business leaders, and PhD students alike.

To release the chains of patriarchy from the necks of girls and women, Alvera worked to create a financially stable organization. Her focus on development made it possible to grow CBE's staff and to provide them with effective technologies. To enlarge CBE's outreach, Alvera created CBE's first development committee by inviting Sara Robertson, an expert in the field and the vice president of development of Pioneer Clubs, to lead this vital project. Sara not only mentored CBE staff, she also joined CBE's board. In the years since, she has gifted the organization with her vast experience in areas such as development, editing and publishing, and best practices for nonprofits.

Robertson was joined by Virginia Patterson, who had recently retired after twenty-seven years as president of Pioneer Clubs. A strategic thinker and organizational leader par excellence, Virginia served as CBE's board chair for more than

twelve years. During this time, she transitioned CBE's board from managing tasks to governance. Virginia established a regular process of strategic planning that developed and assessed mission, ministry goals, and an annual analysis of organizational growth and vision. As CBE's board matured in governance, its staff received correspondingly greater support for their work in carrying out the mission on a daily basis. It was a win-win!

There is not enough space to celebrate the contributions of CBE leaders like Ruth Bolyard, who first developed and nurtured CBE's chapter ministry, and whose legacy continues to empower grassroots egalitarian activism. Or Gilbert Bilezikian, the confidant and mentor to hundreds of students and egalitarian leaders. A great midwife, Bilezikian birthed ideas, books, and leaders, while also ensuring that leaders had the theological and spiritual nurture they needed to reach their fullest potential. Or Roger Nicole, a founder of the Evangelical Theological Society, contributor to CBE's "Statement on Men, Women and Biblical Equality," and champion of women's theological voices and leadership; or Pat and Stan Gundry, Nancy Graf Peters, Faith Martin, Jo Anne Lyon, Carolyn Olson, Ron and Arbutus Sider and many others, who comprised an extraordinary community of scholars, activists, and practitioners who together declared the good news of Scripture that men and women are created in God's image, recreated in Christ, and thus called to a shared dominion in advancing Christ's kingdom and justice.

Their prophetic voice dealt a blow to patriarchy which had long been portrayed as a biblical ideal. Through their collective service, girls and women are recovering their identity and agency as heirs and daughters of Abraham.

Giving Opportunities

God has graciously gifted CBE with many extraordinary founders who still provide us vision and guidance, though we've also said goodbye to several of our beloved founders and leaders. To honor their legacy, CBE has established the Founders Fund, which cultivates and nurtures the next generation of egalitarian leaders by providing conference scholarships, memberships, and resources for students and egalitarian leaders around the world. By connecting future and current leaders at conferences and furnishing them with much-needed resources, we equip the egalitarian leaders of the future.

Help CBE find and develop egalitarian leaders by donating to the Founders Fund.

Visit cbeinternational.org/foundersfund to donate today.

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.

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.

Opposing Injustice

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.

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

NAME

STREET ADDRESS

CITY

STATE / PROVINCE / COUNTRY

ZIP / POSTAL CODE

PHONE

EMAIL ADDRESS

Membership Fees *(all fees are in US dollars)*

United States Members

1 Year

3 Years

Individual

☐ \$49

☐ \$129

Household

☐ \$69

☐ \$184

Low Income*

☐ \$27

☐ N/A

Subscription Only**

☐ \$40

☐ \$115

International Members

1 Year

3 Years

Individual

☐ \$59

☐ \$154

Household

☐ \$79

☐ \$204

Low Income*

☐ \$37

☐ N/A

Subscription Only**

☐ \$49

☐ \$140

Churches and Organizations

1 Year

1–100 people

☐ \$55

101–500 people

☐ \$85

501–1000 people

☐ \$110

1001–2000 people

☐ \$220

2001–5000 people

☐ \$330

5001+ people

☐ \$440

Additional Contribution \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

* Available to those with an annual household income of less than \$23,000.

** Does not include membership benefits.

CBE is an exempt organization as described in IRC Sec. 501(c)3 and as such donations qualify as charitable contributions where allowed by law.

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Christians for Biblical Equality

122 W Franklin Ave, Suite 218, Minneapolis, MN 55404-2451

Phone: (612) 872-6898 | Fax: (612) 872-6891

Email: cbe@cbeinternational.org

Web: cbeinternational.org

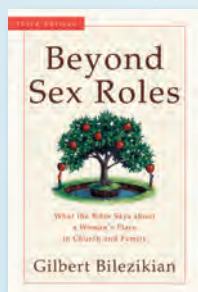
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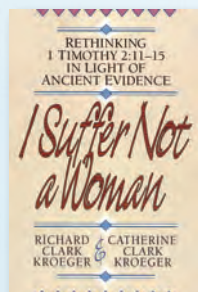
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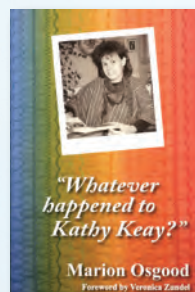
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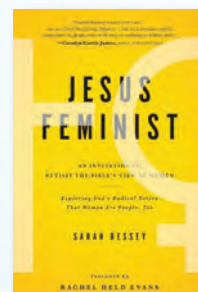
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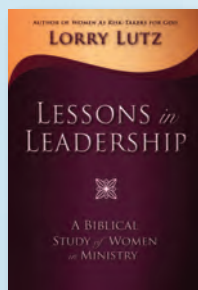
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Catherine Clark Kroeger and
Richard Clark Kroeger



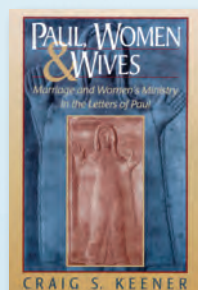
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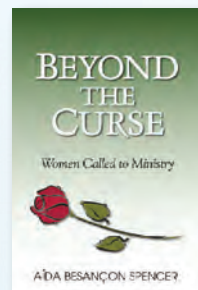
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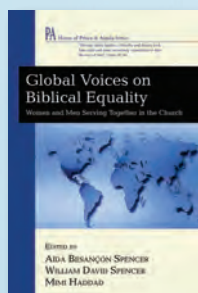
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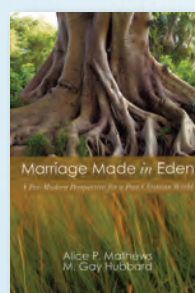
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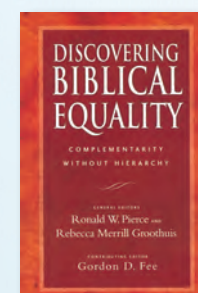
Global Voices on Biblical Equality
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Mary J. Evans and Catherine
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Marriage Made in Eden
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