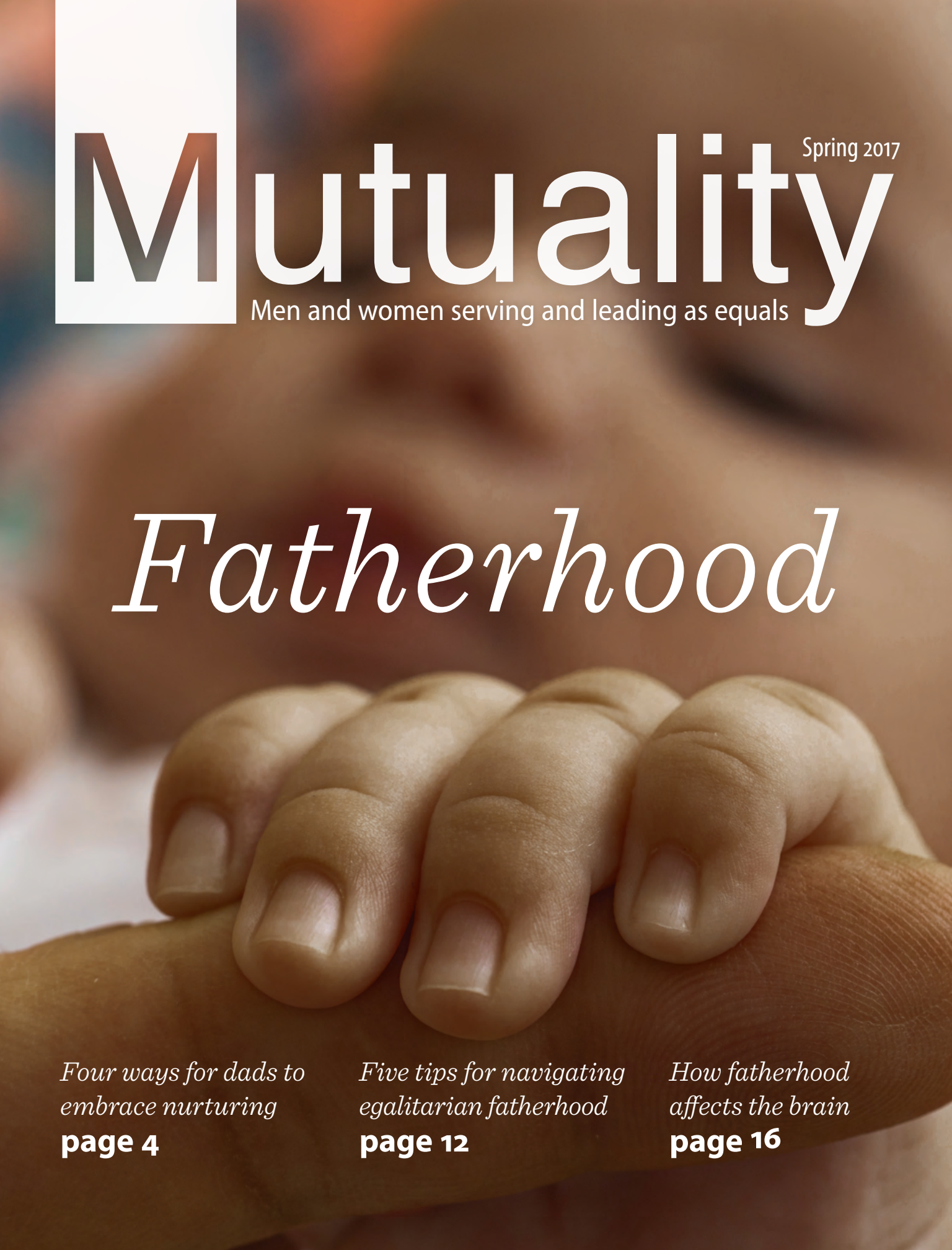




Mutuality

Spring 2017

Men and women serving and leading as equals

Fatherhood

*Four ways for dads to
embrace nurturing*
page 4

*Five tips for navigating
egalitarian fatherhood*
page 12

*How fatherhood
affects the brain*
page 16

CONTENTS

4 Delighting in Fatherhood

A celebration of nurture, and four ways for dads to embrace it.
by Daniel DeVries

8 Paying Attention to Fatherhood

A pastor reflects on stepping down from ministry to be a better father.
by Touger Thao

12 Five Tips for Navigating Egalitarian Fatherhood

One father's advice on cultivating egalitarian ideals in your children.
by Rob Dixon

14 Defending My Daughters Against Rape Culture

Teaching consent and fostering a culture of mutuality, not patriarchy.
by Eugene Hung

16 A Father's Brain

A neuroscientist shares four ways fatherhood affects the brain.
by Aaron Sathyanesan

Mutuality vol. 24, no. 1, Spring 2017

"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 the equality of men and women within the Christian church around the world.

Mutuality is published quarterly by Christians for Biblical Equality, 122 W Franklin Ave, Suite 218; Minneapolis, MN 55404-2451.

We welcome your comments, article submissions, and advertisements. Contact us by email at cbe@cbeinternational.org or by phone at (612) 872-6898. For writers' guidelines and upcoming themes and deadlines, visit cbe.today/mutuality.

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise

indicated, are taken from the 2011 revision of the *Holy Bible, New International Version*, NIV: Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Advertising in *Mutuality* does not imply organizational endorsement. Please note that neither Christians for Biblical Equality, nor the editor, nor the editorial team is responsible or legally liable for any content or any statements made by any author, but the legal responsibility is solely that author's once an article appears in *Mutuality*.

CBE grants permission for any original article (not a reprint) to be photocopied for local use provided no more than 1,000 copies are made, they are distributed free, the author is acknowledged, and CBE is recognized as the source.

DEPARTMENTS

3 From the Editor

Toward a Fuller Fatherhood

19 Reflect with Us

O Queen, Live Forever

20 Ministry News

21 Giving Opportunities

22 President's Message

Equal Parenting, Healthier Children

23 Praise and Prayer

EDITORIAL STAFF

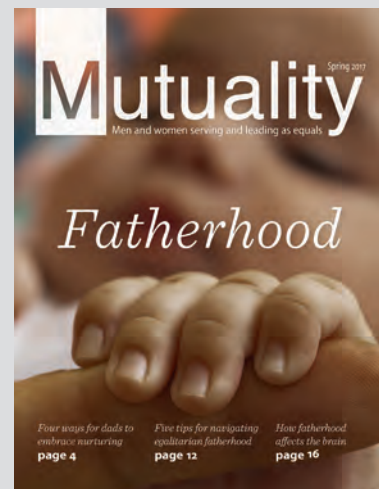
Editor: Tim Krueger

Graphic Designer: Mary Quint

Publisher/President: Mimi Haddad

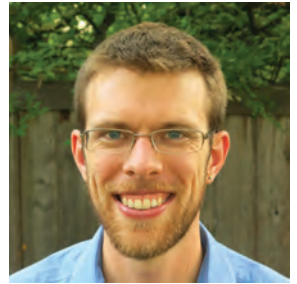


Follow *Mutuality* on Twitter
[@MutualityMag](https://twitter.com/MutualityMag)



ON THE COVER: Design by Mary Quint.





Toward a Fuller Fatherhood

“Dad, why didn’t you become a soldier?”

My dad and I were standing on our back patio, a smooth concrete slab under a rusty tin roof. I think my dad was working on a project, and I was getting in the way or playing with the dog. That’s how it usually was.

This is one of my earliest memories. I don’t remember how old I was, why I asked, or how my dad answered. I only remember asking, and I’m glad I do. It reminds me that even at a young age, we form some specific ideas about dads. To me, dads were about strength and protection. They were heroes. They were like John Wayne, and Robin Hood, and knights, and GI Joes. My dad was a missionary, which was pretty good, but was it as great as being a soldier? Nothing fit my shallow understanding of manhood or fatherhood quite like an action-hero soldier-dad who would *definitely* be played by John Wayne in a movie.

Over the years, this memory has become more significant to me, because my assumptions about fatherhood stand in ever-stronger contrast to what I actually value in my dad. He is strong, and he’d fight for his family. But it’s not his strength, leadership, or courage that makes him a great dad; it’s his gentleness and tenderness. You’d be hard-pressed to find someone with a gentler spirit or more tender heart than my dad. To me, he embodies the tender love that Jesus has for us all.

My dad taught me how to be a man. Not a “manly” man, that’s for sure. I’d rather drive a Prius than a pickup, and I’m not at all handy. And while I like sports, my pulse quickens and my palms sweat if someone calls me “bro.” I’d rather be talking linguistics or staring at maps than doing whatever it is “the guys” do.

My dad showed me that a great father, like a good man, is defined not by strength, but by tenderness. A great father doesn’t run from his feelings, but knows and communicates them. He is fully invested in the nurturing of his children. He is not an unflappable pillar of strength; rather he channels his strength to come alongside the vulnerable.

I often hear Christian leaders lament the absence of fathers from families. I share their concern. But when they proclaim that the solution is for men to “stand up and be men” according to their models of “biblical manhood,” I grimace. These definitions tell men, and by extension fathers, to be half human: to choose stoicism at the cost of emotion, strength at the cost of vulnerability, authority at the cost of partnership. To find their identity in less than what God designed parents to be and children to need.

Instead, let’s create a world where fathers are encouraged to be vulnerable, and where a father’s nurture is as celebrated as

a mother’s. The truth is, I think this is what most people want. I’m willing to bet that even the men who most loudly preach “biblical manhood” delight in nurturing their children as much as anyone else. But unless we as Christians celebrate a better vision for fatherhood, I fear we do little to strengthen marriages, families, or society.

In this issue of *Mutuality*, we glimpse an egalitarian vision of fatherhood. It is one where fathers emulate Jesus’ tenderness, rather than exaggerated aggression. Where fathers, like all God’s people, are freed to serve (and parent) according to their gifts, whether or not they coincide with so-called “roles.”

My dad showed me that a great father, like a good man, is defined not by strength, but by tenderness.

This issue has been personal for me. As you read these words, my wife and I are wading into the waters of first-time parenthood. Our son is due to be born around the time this issue goes to print. I am both elated and nervous to step into fatherhood.

I’m also thrilled to welcome to *Mutuality* two friends whose fathering I hope to emulate. My childhood friend Daniel DeVries has written a moving celebration of the nurturing side of fatherhood. And a dear friend and my former pastor, Touger Thao, shares a heartfelt piece on his decision to step down from ministry in order to prioritize fatherhood.

I am grateful for friends like these, but also for the other outstanding contributors to this issue, Rob Dixon, Eugene Hung, and Aaron Sathyanesan. Their articles are informative and inspiring. And don’t miss H. Edgar Hix’s poem, “O Queen, Live Forever,” inspired by the relationship between Esther and her father figure, Mordechai.

I pray you’ll be captivated by a vision of fathers co-leading, co-nurturing, and co-serving as equals alongside their wives. This model of family matters immensely for those who are fathers, but also for children, wives, churches, and our world.

In Christ,
Tim Krueger



Delighting in Fatherhood:

Four Ways for Dads to Embrace Nurturing

by Daniel DeVries

I'm the father of two boys, sixteen months apart in age. The oldest is almost three. I work full-time in a church, and my wife is working full-time on a PhD in homiletics and theology. We share parenting duties pretty evenly, but I'll bet I change more diapers.

Fatherhood has been a deeply meaningful and formative experience for me. I love it. When Christians talk about fatherhood, we like to make it about things like leadership, authority, provision, and so on. We don't really celebrate the actual parenting part of fatherhood. But we should. I want to encourage every father to embrace the joy that comes with nurturing our children.

I hope you'll indulge me as I share with you a bit of the delight I find in fatherhood. And in doing so, for new dads especially (but also for the wily veterans), I offer a few ideas to help you embrace the nurturing side of fatherhood.

Name your feelings

When our second son was a couple months old, I learned a key lesson. I'd heard it before, so I'll say I *experienced* it. I was sitting in our white Rosie maternity glider and holding little Leo, who wanted very badly for something, or everything, in the world to be completely different. And he let me know it the only way he could: loudly. My ears rang. I remembered our doctor's words: "If he's fed, he's got a clean diaper, and there's nothing hurting him, crying is just exercise." Filling up those baby lungs. My little Pavarotti. But my patience had worn thin.

If you've been tasked with caring for an inconsolable baby for any length of time, you know the brain-fried, frantic feeling. The wisest thing to do is probably to put the baby down in a safe place and go practice your downward dog or lotus position while listening to ocean waves. Maybe I should have. But I sat and held my screamer. I felt my whole body tense up. I felt anger rise, and I'm not an angry

person. There are moments when a baby simply is and will be inconsolable. It may be twenty minutes; it may be hours. It makes no difference when you're in the thick of it. I felt close to losing it.

And then, I looked down at my precious baby. I looked at the tiny tears in his squinty red eye cracks. His open, crying, toothless mouth, laced in saliva. His quivering little tongue down in there. My little boy, who I am responsible for in this world. I said to myself, "I am angry. I am impatient. I am frustrated. I want him to stop crying. But there's nothing I can do right now." I said to myself, "Anything I do that's reactive will only do damage. I'm angry, and that's okay. I don't have to do anything about it. And I won't."

At that moment, I experienced the tremendous power of naming what I felt. When I named it, my anger backed off and just stood there for a second. I looked it over. I saw it for all the futility, immaturity, even selfishness it was. And then it evaporated. My anger disappeared. Holding my crying, distraught little Leo, my whole body relaxed. My mind cleared. Just me and the little boy I love. I named my anger, and in return it left me alone.

Childcare is self-care

One of the mantras I've had knocking around my mind for the past month is "childcare is self-care." Credit once again belongs to Leo. Let me take you there:

I'm again holding Leo in my arms. He's now a delightful fifteen-month-old, and this time, he's as peaceful as a dream. We're once again rocking in the white Rosie glider, and I'm giving him a bottle of warm milk. The bottle and gentle rocking, and even the soft rhythmic creaking of the glider, usher Leo past drowsiness and into sleep. The curtains are drawn shut; the only light is the soft, dim glow of the touch lamp

For me, there has been no human relationship, no role or responsibility, that has been either as demanding or as richly formative and rewarding as fatherhood. And in particular, the nurture of childcare.

beside me. Leo's whole body has relaxed into mine. He lets go of his bottle, and it falls away from his face, which is a picture of complete peace, safety, and comfort.

Few things match holding your sleeping baby in moments like that. I was filled by the bond of nurture, the emotional result of the oxytocin both our brains were surely releasing. We felt, if I can speak for both of us, completely bonded in that moment of trust and care. And the words just came to me like a little meditation, a little wisdom from what is true and right in the universe: childcare is self-care.

Loving others well is the most loving thing you can do for yourself. Attentive and loving childcare foment patience, sacrifice, and gentleness. Carrying your child when your back hurts, playing with them when you're exhausted, disciplining them in love (and explaining that to them in love!). Childcare is a privilege, and one I don't take for granted. Being a parent is also the most character-forming arena I've entered. Attentively partaking in character-forming disciplines is constituent to responsible self-care.

Rocking gently back and forth, my warm cuddly bundle of a fifteen-month-old all but melted in my arms, breathing his little sleepy, snorty breaths, I was

struck by the reality of the deep shift that fatherhood had made in my life. Maybe there's not much visible difference—though I would guess there's some. But for me, there has been no human relationship, no role or responsibility, that has been either as demanding or as richly formative and rewarding as fatherhood. And in particular, the nurture of childcare.

Take delight in their delight

My next lesson encompasses so much of my parenting experience. That lesson is: take delight in their delight. Our house design is such that the fridge and pantry stand alone against a wall that I assume holds up the ceiling. This matters because it means that Emmett, who's about two and a half, can run indoor circles around this fridge-pantry-wall structure. The other afternoon he was running, and he yelled out as he often does, "You chase me, Dada!" So I started chasing after him. And the sound of his laughter when he knew I was running behind him was so pure, so effervescent, so full of life that I had to grab my camera as we passed, just to record a few seconds of its sound. "Live in this moment," I told myself, "because it's going to pass."

Loving others well is the most loving thing you can do for yourself. Attentive and loving childcare foment patience, sacrifice, and gentleness.

When children delight in something, they do so fully. They exclaim, “Do it again!” over and over. Nothing holds an adult’s attention in quite that way. Knowing those moments are fleeting, I try—often I fail, but I keep reminding myself to try—to take delight in their delight. On the one hand, it encourages and affirms their curiosity and imagination. It feeds their excitement and sense of wonder in the world. But it also reawakens that sense of wonder in the rest of us. Trying to see wonder through a child’s eyes, even and especially in the mundane, nudges our own slumbering sense of curiosity, of delight, of wonder.

G. K. Chesterton, in his 1908 classic, *Orthodoxy*, writes about this amazing childhood quality. He notes that “grown-up people are not strong enough to exult in monotony.” Children have “abounding vitality” and are “in spirit fierce and free.” Chesterton goes on to propose “perhaps God is strong enough to exult in monotony.” Every day, God says, “Do it again!” to the rising sun and moon, to the blooming flowers or falling snowflakes, just as a child says “Do it again!” every time you swing them around or bounce them playfully on your knees. If we needed another reason to take delight in a child’s delight, Chesterton gives us one: perhaps it puts us somehow in touch with the God who takes delight in creation.

Simply watching children grow is an occasion for delight. I delight in the things Emmett says incorrectly, the

funny sentences he constructs, the made-up but completely understandable verb tenses. I delight in watching my boys when they’re transfixed in a task like building with blocks or when they try to read a book to themselves. When they’re frustrated but refuse to give up, and then somehow finally accomplish their goal in the most roundabout and surprising way. Delighting along with my children has given me more delight in life.

The Bible does endorse a childlike disposition toward life and faith. Part of that must certainly be a fully abandoned-to-self sense of wonder and delight.

Take a breath (or twenty)

Fatherhood is certainly the most meaningful, fulfilling, challenging, and taxing role I’ve had. And while I’m no expert in fatherhood or parenting, I do love it. If I were to offer one last piece of advice to someone just before or just after becoming a parent, it would probably be this: whenever you’re able, when you cradle your baby to sleep in your arms—even if you’re desperately hoping she or he falls asleep quickly because you have a thousand things to do or are simply exhausted yourself—count off twenty deep, slow breaths once your baby closes his or her eyes. Hold your baby. Be present in that moment. Twenty of your deepest breaths. I know it might sound insignificant. But hear me out.

On the one hand, taking these deep breaths serves the practical purpose of ensuring that your little

bundle is indeed well asleep. It relaxes you, which I have found is the absolute most effective way to relax your child. Those are the things I usually think about from breaths one to six.

During breaths seven through nine, I lose myself looking down at my sleeping boy. His petal-soft eyelids closed, his cheeks pudgy and rosy, his nose a quietly snorting little button. His tiny chest rising and falling; his toyish hands and fingers making sudden, involuntary mimics. He yawns and pouts his lips.

That moment is everything. Breaths ten through twenty are just for me, to be present in that moment. Just to store it safely into my memory, treasure it in my heart.

That moment is every parenting lesson I’ve learned, condensed. I name the moment as sacred, the most person-forming space of my life. I give myself fully to being present, attentive, mindful. It’s my deepest self-care, orienting my whole personhood in the context of this relationship. And it’s pure wonder and delight. Whatever else is calling for my time can wait twenty breaths. It must. Because these moments, too, will end. Growing is tragic beauty: with all the thrills and gains, there are also losses. The running laughter, the “do it again!”, the adorably mispronounced words, the rocking a sleeping child gently in your arms.

So sway with your beloved, sleeping baby for twenty deep breaths. Hold out your child and all your love and hope for him or her before God. Abandon yourself to complete presence in that moment. Be lost in your sleeping child’s tender, gentle face. Count twenty slow, centering breaths. Not only for your baby, but for you.



Daniel DeVries is a pastor in Drayton, Ontario. He attended Calvin Theological Seminary with his wife, Betsy, who is currently pursuing a PhD in homiletics at the University of Toronto. They have two boys, Emmett and Leo.

If we needed another reason to take delight in a child’s delight, Chesterton gives us one: perhaps it puts us somehow in touch with the God who takes delight in creation.

PREPARE TO ANSWER GOD'S CALL

- ▶ North Park Theological Seminary has prepared women and men for ministerial service for more than 100 years.
- ▶ Learn about our 12 master's, dual-degree and doctoral programs, and eight graduate certificates.

NORTH PARK
THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY

www.northpark.edu/seminary

Paying Attention to Fatherhood:

Why I Stepped Down from Pastoral Ministry

by Touger Thao

“Sometimes, I feel like a single mom.”

My heart sank upon hearing these words from my wife. My stomach felt so heavy it could’ve been filled with bricks.

My own father passed away when I was eight years old. I watched as my mother, a refugee from Laos who speaks little English, raised my seven siblings and me alone for a number of years until she remarried. To this day, I carry the deep pain of my father’s loss.

For years, I’ve wanted little more than to be a great father. But now I faced the reality that I had been absent from my wife and eighteen-month-old daughter (and our brand-new daughter, who was not yet born at the time). Something had to change.

Let me back up a bit. For the past three and a half years, I’ve had the privilege of planting and pastoring a young, urban, multi-ethnic faith community in Saint Paul, Minnesota. By God’s grace, we’ve seen people who had previously given up on church proudly proclaim that they’d found a church family. We’ve seen agnostics and atheists declare faith in God because of the way our community has loved and cared for them, no matter their beliefs. We’ve seen people find meaningful spiritual friendships that they could depend upon when they went through the rough patches of life. God has been faithful and given us a lot to celebrate.

But as anyone in ministry knows, it’s not easy. Sundays are just a tiny piece of the ministry life. There are the counseling

sessions, the meetings, the planning, the strategizing, the sermon prep, the denominational obligations, the community networking events, and the everyday administrative tasks. These things add up. They can become all-consuming. Physically, spiritually, and emotionally.

I was stressed, depressed, and constantly overworking. I was leading on empty. I knew I wasn’t very present with my wife and daughter, but I rationalized to myself that this was a sacrifice I needed to make to build the church. And, it was normal. Pastors are regularly overworking, and so are fathers and husbands in every type of career. We tell ourselves we’re doing it for the benefit of our families, or for some greater good. A lot of messages tell us that our most important job is to be the family breadwinner, and that we should find fulfillment in this. There are not many people calling men to step back from their careers to invest more in their families.

Yes, provision is important for a

My wife needs me to be more than just a provider; she needs me to be her partner to share and do life with. My daughters need me to be more than just the one who buys them presents; they need me to be present and creating memories with them.

family. But that burden can be shared, and it cannot be the sum of what it means to be a father and husband. My wife needs me to be more than just a provider; she needs me to be her partner to share and do life with. My daughters need me to be more than just the one who buys them presents; they need me to be present and creating memories with them.

I believe God showed me that I have to prioritize my wife and daughters above my work as a pastor. If I could not balance ministry and family life, then I needed to let one go. It was not an easy decision, but in the end, I'd rather be a great husband and father than a great pastor. So, this winter, I submitted my resignation. A few weeks ago, I preached my last sermon.

I don't know what my next steps are, but the one thing I know is this: from now on, I am committed to doing what it takes to be the best husband and father I can be. What does that look like?

To me, it looks like two things: presence and partnership.

Presence

Presence is all about paying attention to the moments that matter most.

Not long ago, I kissed my wife and daughter goodbye as I left for the local coffee shop to work. Usually, when I close the front door of our house, I put on my headphones and begin to listen to a podcast. On this particular morning, I paused in front of my house and looked up at the living room window. Suddenly, my daughter's little head popped up in the window. She was grinning ear to ear as she waved at me. I smiled and just took

in that precious moment. I made her day, and she made mine.

How many moments like that have I missed because I haven't paid attention? How many memories were not created because I was listening to the radio, TV, or podcasts instead of listening to my daughter's voice? How many precious moments were lost because I was so focused on my work?

A father and husband cannot just go to work and come home and exist in the same place as his family. He has to be present. He has to pay attention to the small things; they are the biggest, most important things.

Partnership

For me, a huge part of being a good father is being a good partner to my wife. Partners share each other's burdens and support each other's dreams.

I've known my wife since kindergarten. And since kindergarten, she has wanted to be a musician. She has wanted to create songs to share with the world. For so long, we've been waiting until the "right" time for her to do that. Now is the time. She has supported me and sacrificed for me as I've pursued my calling into ministry. Now it's my turn to make sacrifices for her, so she has the time and space to pursue her dream as well.

To make that happen, I spend as much time at home as possible, sharing the everyday burdens: laundry, cooking, changing diapers, cleaning up messes. Without this type of partnership, there's no way my wife can pursue the dreams

God has placed in her heart. God doesn't just have a calling on my life as the husband. God has a call for my wife as well, and I have the responsibility and privilege to support that call.

Supporting my wife's dreams isn't just about being a good spouse or having a healthy relationship. It also says something important to my daughters.

My girls are Hmong-American. They will grow up as girls and then women of color in a mostly-white part of a patriarchal world. Because they're female, and because of their Southeast Asian skin tone, the world will tell them their ideas are not as good. That they don't have as much to offer as the white man in the same class or church or company. That they're not as smart, or not as wise. That God's call on their lives doesn't matter as much as God's call on a man's life.

When I support my wife's call, it tells my daughters that God has a call on their lives, and that it matters. It teaches them that their dreams are important. That they have something valuable to offer the world, and that God wants them to pursue their gifts and vision. That the way things are is not the way things have to be, and that they are part of God's plan to renew our broken world.

For too long, I've made excuses for not being present and for being less than a full partner in the life of my family. To be a father means to not just hope for a world where my wife and daughters can flourish; it means helping to bring that world into being.

This is the vision that God has given me. This is the dream that fills my mind and my spirit each night as my wife and I read to our daughters, pray for them, hold them (and a giant, stuffed Winnie the Pooh) tightly, and sing them to sleep.



Touger (pronounced Too-Jur) Thao is a second-generation Hmong-American Wisconsinite finding his home in Minnesota. He's married to Mykou, who also happens to be his favorite musician. Touger got his MDiv from Duke Divinity School and enjoys practicing Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu.

MUTUAL BY DESIGN



BUILDING GOD'S CHURCH TOGETHER



Joy J. Moore
Assistant Professor of
Preaching and
Academic Liaison,
William E. Pannell Center
for African American
Church Studies



Dr. Jamin Hübner
Founding Chair of
Christian Studies and
Director of Institutional
Effectiveness, John
Witherspoon College



Dr. Ben Witherington III
Amos Professor of NT for
Doctoral Studies, Asbury
Theological Seminary;
Emeritus Doctoral Faculty, St.
Andrews University, Scotland



Rev. Grisel Medina
Innovative Advocacy,
Leaders/Community
Developer



Dr. Michael F. Bird
Lecturer in Theology,
Ridley College,
Melbourne, Australia

Join global leaders at CBE's 2017 conference promoting the mutuality of women and men.

Wyndham Lake Buena Vista Disney Springs Resort

Conference Theme:

However, woman is not separate from man, nor man separate from woman in the Lord. For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God.

1 CORINTHIANS 11:11-12

Become a sponsor or exhibitor at CBE's conference.
There are many options available.
See our sponsorship opportunities at
cbe.today/orlando17sponsors.

Are you a student? Enter the student paper
competition to receive a scholarship to attend the
conference. For more information, visit
cbe.today/orlando17spc.

**JULY
21-23
2017**

**ORLANDO,
FLORIDA**

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT

WWW.CBEINTERNATIONAL.ORG

WORKSHOP SPEAKERS



Sue Bailey
CBE Denver Chapter
Coordinator



Dr. Amy F. Davis Abdallah
Associate Professor
of Bible, Nyack College



Rob Dixon
Divisional Director,
InterVarsity Christian
Fellowship/USA



Ashley Easter
Writer, Speaker,
Advocate; Founder of
The Courage Conference



Margaret English de Alminana
Associate Professor of
Theology, Southeastern
University; Executive Director,
Society for Pentecostal Studies



Dr. Albert Kabiro Gatumu
Associate Professor of New
Testament, Biblical Greek
and Biblical Hermeneutics
in the Faculty of Theology,
St. Paul's University, Kenya



Mimi Haddad
President of CBE
International



Rebecca Kotz
Sexual Assault/Trafficking
Counselor & Men's Violence
Educator



Shi-Min Lu
PhD Candidate, Fuller
Theological Seminary



Jory Micah
Advocate for Women
and Girls



Aloo O. Mojola
Assistant Professor and
Head of Department of
Biblical Studies, Theology
and Philosophy, Saint
Paul's University, Kenya



Johnrice Newton
President and Founder of
Tapestry Ministries, Inc.



Nilwona Nowlin
Redemptive Artist



Tristen Paige
President of Turning
Paiges



Dr. Philip B. Payne
PhD New Testament,
University of Cambridge



Ron Pierce
Professor of Biblical &
Theological Studies,
Talbot School of
Theology



Aida Besançon Spencer
Professor of New Testament
at Gordon-Conwell
Theological Seminary



Bill Spencer
Distinguished Adjunct
Professor of Theology
and the Arts, Gordon-
Conwell Theological
Seminary



A large graphic on the left side of the page features a hand holding a small, round compass. The background is a soft-focus bokeh of warm, golden light spots, suggesting an evening city scene. The graphic is partially cut off by the right edge of the page.

Tips for Navigating Egalitarian Fatherhood

by Rob Dixon

there, covered in sawdust, I thought with dismay, “I’m raising a complementarian!”

Being an egalitarian father is not for the faint of heart, but here are five tips for thriving in this vital role.

1. Understand the current of culture is flowing against us

Make no mistake about it, the river of culture is strong, and it moves in the direction of patriarchy. Tragically, that is particularly true in church culture, where it often seems like gender roles are chiseled in stone. And while it doesn’t solve the problem, knowing that egalitarian fatherhood is an upstream proposition makes it somewhat easier. Speaking personally, understanding what I’m up against moves me to pray, and it fuels my actions with a profound sense of urgency.

2. Take every opportunity to teach and train

In light of our counter-cultural commission as egalitarian fathers, we

must embrace every opportunity to help our kids grasp the Bible’s message of gender equality. For example, in our house we can be rigorous about interpreting the commercial messages we see on TV. During last year’s Super Bowl, we followed nearly every commercial with a family conversation in response to the question, “what is that ad communicating about the relationship between women and men?”

From Super Bowl ads to the US presidential campaign and plenty in between, 2016 tragically provided a lot of chances to talk about concepts like the objectification of women, hyper-masculinity, sexism, and power dynamics, all of which were playing out across the US every week. It matters how we as fathers respond to these things.

It’s easy to question how much kids grasp from these conversations. Sometimes it seems like all their brains can manage are school, video games, and trying to consume as much milk as possible. But they absorb more than you might think. So on a daily basis, I’ve found opportunities for teaching and training when I’m processing the school day with the kids, helping them think about the power dynamics in their social

Last year, when it was time to fix a sticky door in our house, I dug out the power tools, went to the hardware store, and got to work. As a bonus, our eleven-year-old, self-proclaimed do-it-yourself expert, Lucy, pledged to help me with the project.

At one point in the process, as we were sanding the door in preparation to rehang it, our thirteen-year-old son opened the door to the garage, noticed Lucy standing there, sand paper in hand and wearing her protective goggles, and said:

“Lucy, that’s a man’s job.”

I was mortified. Let the reader understand that we are an avowed egalitarian household, and all of our kids have heard Daddy speak on gender equality on multiple occasions. Standing

networks. Whether it's a more formal teaching time around the dinner table or on-the-fly interpretative conversations, egalitarian dads don't waste the chance to teach and train.

I am convinced of this: it is my sacred task to help our kids understand and lament gender inequality, and work for equality. It is my duty as a Jesus-following father to call out sexism in all its forms, and to invite my kids to embrace an egalitarian view of others.

3. Model, model, model

As an egalitarian father, I am keenly aware that how I live and what I say is the strongest message my kids will receive regarding gender equality. In light of this, my wife Amy and I strive to live out our egalitarian convictions in how we parent and in how we co-lead our household. For instance, our aim is to have both parents present for the important parenting conversations, so that our kids can see how partnership works. We've chosen not to divide up the household tasks along traditional gender lines, demonstrating that women can manage the money and men can do the laundry.

Modeling our values also means being ourselves, especially when gender-based stereotypes tell us we should be embarrassed to do so. When my daughter, Lucy, ran in the fourth-grade district finals in cross-country, I found myself in tears before her race. Part of it

was empathy, since I knew how much she would suffer during the run, and part of it was this fierce belief that she could do it. As an egalitarian father, I likewise know that she'll face hardship and pain as a woman, but that she will overcome. Standing alongside the race course that day, I let the tears flow. I am okay having others see who I am as a father, even if it defies the stereotypes.

Further, for me as an egalitarian father, I know I have a holy obligation to model for my kids the egalitarian heart of the Father God. And this high calling demands my best. In light of this, I've learned that I need other egalitarian fathers to hold me accountable to live what I believe. Welcoming others into my life in this area is not easy, but it is tremendously life-giving.

4. Find allies

One of the best things about being an egalitarian is the wonderful egalitarian community! And successful egalitarian fathers will take advantage of being in fellowship with other like-minded and like-hearted believers. The reality is that my kids can't only hear this message from me, and so I strive to find them egalitarian mentors and models who can augment what I am trying to teach at home. For our family, part of finding allies is being involved in a church where women are fully empowered to serve and available to mentor the next generation.

5. Keep the faith

The journey toward embracing a theology and practice of gender equality is just that, a journey. And as a father, I need to understand that my children are on their own personal journeys. They won't become leading gender equality advocates overnight! Probably the most profound thing I've learned about being an egalitarian father is that guiding the kids on their journeys calls for a strong dose of faith. I must trust that ultimately Jesus will be their greatest model. And so, as an egalitarian father, my greatest and deepest calling is to pray for my kids to fall more and more in love with Jesus, the ultimate egalitarian.

Back to that day in the garage. . . After a robust debrief, Josh now knows that woodworking is not exclusively a man's job. He knows that it's anyone's job.

My job? To teach the kids this truth, as often as I can.

That's the job of an egalitarian father.



Rob Dixon lives in central California with his wife, Amy, and four kids. As a campus minister with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA, Rob has spent the last 20 years helping college students meet Jesus. In addition, Rob is almost done with a doctor of missiology degree through Fuller Theological Seminary, where he is focused on discerning the attributes of flourishing male/female partnerships in mission. In his free time, you will find Rob coaching soccer, out on a run, or blogging at challengingtertullian.com.

Special Offer for *Mutuality* readers!

Like what you're reading? Become a *Mutuality* subscriber!

Get **20% off** when you renew or buy a CBE subscription today!

Visit **cbe.today/subscribe** and use discount code **M241**.

Discount applies to all paper subscription options.

Defending My Daughters Against Rape Culture

by Eugene Hung

Many a father of daughters has asked himself, “With all the terrible things that happen to women and girls in the world, how can I keep my girls safe?” Given that I’m a women’s rights activist, this question may occur to me more often than it does to other dads. That’s probably because I frequently come across some very sobering statistics.

For example, according to the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN), one of every nine girls (defined as female persons under the age of eighteen) in the United States is sexually abused by an adult. Of those, ninety-three percent are abused by someone they already know, whether a relative or other acquaintance.

When girls become adults, things don’t get better. According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly one in five American women alive today has experienced rape at some point in her lifetime. Of the rest, forty-four percent have experienced some other sort of sexual violence, whether assault, harassment, or another form of sexual aggression.

As an activist, I often talk about how such widespread violence against women and girls has its roots in rape culture—that is, the ways our society tells men that they’re entitled to sex with women. Rape culture includes the frighteningly common notions that:

- Men are within their rights to pressure women into sex; after all, women like to play “hard to get” and know they want it.
- You can’t blame a man if he sexually assaults a woman dressed in revealing clothing. Guys can’t help themselves sometimes; she was asking for it anyway.
- We should believe a celebrity or pro athlete accused of sexual assault more than we should believe his accuser, given that there are so many “gold diggers” out there.

- It’s not really a man’s fault if he has sex at a party with a woman who’s too drunk to know what’s going on. What did she expect would happen?
- We should go easy on promising, talented young men who’ve committed sexual assault. They have their whole lives in front of them, and we don’t want to ruin their futures.
- There’s no such thing as “date rape.” Sex can happen on dates! But legitimate rape—where a guy jumps out and attacks a random woman—that is truly a horrible thing.

Just as violence against women and girls has its roots in rape culture, rape culture in turn has its roots in a patriarchal worldview. This doesn’t mean that men with a patriarchal worldview necessarily harm women and girls; the vast majority, of course, do not. But rape culture, which tells men they’re entitled to objectify, take, and own women’s bodies, can only exist in settings where men are seen as superior to women. A culture in which women and men are truly equal in value and authority would not permit such an ideology to exist. In our society, men still have far greater privilege, so rape culture still dominates.

Rape culture is, tragically, even propped up in some churches by patriarchal theology. Again, having a patriarchal hermeneutic doesn’t necessarily lead to violence against women and girls. But a male-dominant framework for understanding the Scriptures has often been used to justify it.

For example, numerous Christian women over the years have been instructed, on the basis that they are to submit to their husbands (Ephesians 5:22), to stay in their abusive marriages. And based on a patriarchal interpretation of 1 Peter 3:6, wives are also to give their husbands not just respect but obedience, even as Sarah called Abraham “lord.”

A male-centric theological framework can also be used to twist the application of other doctrines to support rape culture. Many Christian rape survivors, for instance, report that church leaders say they should forgive and be reconciled to the men who assaulted them; after all, Jesus teaches us to forgive “seventy times seven” (Matthew 18:22). And even Christians engage in victim-blaming when they say that assault survivors shouldn’t have caused men “to stumble” by wearing the clothes they did (Romans 14:21; Matthew 5:28).

These are examples of how a patriarchal hermeneutic can be used to spiritualize and sanctify rape culture. That's one of the reasons I treasure biblical egalitarianism. It absolutely repudiates rape culture! That doesn't mean we ignore passages about submission and forgiveness, but that we read them in light of the Bible's clear and overarching message: God declares that women and men are equals without hierarchy. And this means that men aren't entitled to anything from women just because of their gender.

As a practical outworking of our theology of gender equality, and as a response to the rampant violence against women and girls that arises from rape culture, my wife and I have taught our daughters the concept of consent from the time they were toddlers. That may seem premature at first blush, but it can be done in age-appropriate ways. In fact, I believe it's a vital part of my work as a Christian father.

Here's what we did. Not being experts in child development, my wife and I talked with people who were, asking how we could help our girls be safer as they grew up in our society. From their advice, we began to make certain things habitual, in order to teach our girls they are right to insist other people respect their no's:

- We taught them that their "private parts" are theirs alone, and that no one else gets to touch those parts of their bodies. Even my wife and I made it a constant practice, when our girls were younger, to ask their permission to wash or dry these areas of their anatomy.
- We limit the tickling in our household. If one of the girls says "stop" or "no more," then we stop. We want to reinforce to our girls that when it comes to their bodies,

As a practical outworking of our theology of gender equality, and as a response to the rampant violence against women and girls that arises from rape culture, my wife and I have taught our daughters the concept of consent from the time they were toddlers.

what they want and don't want is paramount; people must obey their "no."

- We've been teaching them about sexuality in ways that fit their ages. We started with a faith-based book for preschoolers called *Why Boys and Girls Are Different*. There is a version for boys and another for girls, and they both explain very simply how boys and girls are similar and different. It also calls private parts by their actual names, "penis" and "vagina," helping kids to learn that that there's nothing shameful or "dirty" about those parts of their bodies, and that it's perfectly normal to talk about them.
- We try to foster a relationship with the girls in which they'll feel safe to tell us anything. This means we also teach them there's nothing they should keep secret—unless it's a surprise, like a birthday present, for someone else. Often sexual abusers encourage their child victims to keep the abuse "their little secret," meaning the kids suffer in silence for years.
- We teach them what to say and do if someone tries to touch their private parts. They are to speak a firm "no" and then to immediately go and tell another adult.

These tactics are by no means a guarantee that my daughters won't be victimized during their lives. But I hope that by building consent into their value systems early, they'll be able to keep themselves safer in the future.

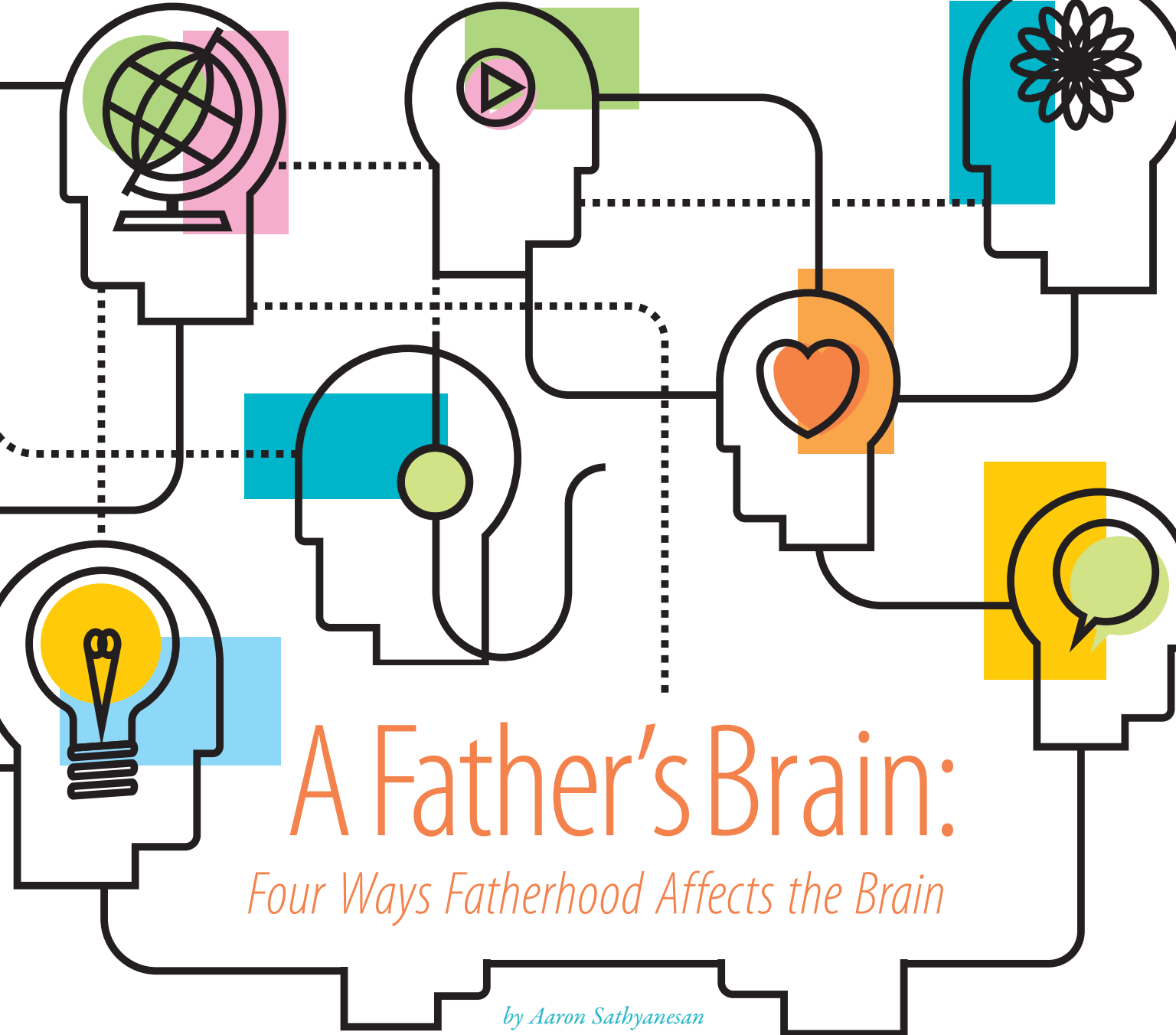
And just as importantly, I want this intuitive sense of consent to help them feel convinced, deep in their souls, that their bodies belong only to them and their Creator, and that patriarchal models that give men, even husbands, entitlement over their bodies are wrong.

None of this will really stick with my girls if my wife and I don't model what we teach. We strive to be equal partners in our marriage, living out what respect and consent look like. By teaching and modeling consent, rooted in biblical egalitarianism, I hope they grow up as women that reject rape culture and patriarchy, instead embracing respect and mutuality.



A father of two daughters, Eugene Hung holds a ThM from Dallas Seminary and pastored churches for over twelve years. These days, he works as an SEO content creator and as a freelance writer and speaker on issues of gender, race, and parenting. He blogs at www.FeministAsianDad.com and lives in Southern California.

I want this intuitive sense of consent to help them feel convinced, deep in their souls, that their bodies belong only to them and their Creator.



A Father's Brain:

Four Ways Fatherhood Affects the Brain

by Aaron Sathyanesan

One of the TV shows that my wife and I enjoyed watching last year was Marvel's *Luke Cage*. Apart from its incisive commentary on systemic racial injustice, an important theme running throughout the show is the importance of fathers. In one of the episodes, following a particularly brutal shootout in Harlem (where the story is set) Luke Cage (Mike Colter) says something that really stuck with me: In Harlem "everyone has a gun, but no one has a father."

Over the decades, psychologists have gathered quite a lot of data on fatherhood and the role it plays in the lives of children.

For example, there is data from social and developmental psychology which tells us that parental rejection affects children more when it stems from fathers.¹ This rejection can have negative consequences when these children become adults and begin developing intimate relationships. On the other hand, studies suggest that engaged fatherhood results in reduced behavioral and psychological problems in boys and girls respectively.²

But all this is mostly ooey-gooney psychology, not hard biology (no offense to psychologists reading this!).

In all seriousness though, what does the hard science of biology tell us about human fatherhood?

Not much actually. This isn't too surprising considering that generally speaking, far more is physically required from mothers than fathers in the child-bearing and child-rearing process. During pregnancy, the mother's brain experiences the activation of the neuroendocrine system. This system is basically a set of complex groups of brain cells making and responding to pregnancy hormones, all working in concert to aid fetal development

More and more, researchers studying the brain are realizing that there is more to fatherhood than meets the eye—quite literally.

and prepare the mother for childbirth.³ These networks continue to exert physiological changes in the mother's body beyond pregnancy. The existence of such a vast mechanism has led to the mother-child bond being far more extensively investigated than the father-child bond.

But more and more, researchers studying the brain are realizing that there is more to fatherhood than meets the eye—quite literally. Powerful tools such as fMRI (a type of MRI that allows us to see brain activity) help us observe and study physical changes in the brain associated with fatherhood. Additionally, since brains in different species share common features, studying animal “models” has vast potential to discover changes in the brain associated with paternity in humans as well.

An important side note I should add here is that although the neuroscience of fatherhood is an exciting area of research, it is still an emerging field, and many studies require replication and independent confirmation by other research groups.

With that disclaimer, here are four significant insights biology offers into the effects of fatherhood on the brain:

1. Fathers experience hormonal changes as well

One of the better-known hormones in the brain is oxytocin. Oxytocin is implicated in the formation of social bonds between the mother and infant in socially monogamous species, including humans.⁴ Interestingly, oxytocin has also been suggested to play an important role in father-infant interactions as well. In fact, a study involving 160 first-time parents showed that oxytocin levels in the blood plasma were similar in mothers and fathers during the first six months following childbirth.⁵

One big caveat regarding oxytocin research is that much of it has been done on prairie voles, because they are socially monogamous, like humans. While conclusions on oxytocin's role in the bonding behavior of prairie voles are

generally accepted in the neuroscience community, oxytocin's role in human pair-bonding is hotly debated and many times, conclusions in support of the “positive” effects of oxytocin are overblown. Nevertheless, the study cited here, which was one of the first of its kind to look at oxytocin levels in fathers, suggests that at the very minimum, there is circumstantial biochemical evidence to expect oxytocin to affect paternal behavior, especially during early interactions with children.

2. Parenting activates similar areas of fathers' and mothers' brains, but in distinct ways

One of the earliest experiments on how parental brain activity was related to infant stimulus—specifically infant cries—showed that both the mother's and father's brains showed greater activation in the amygdala, which is a brain region critical to the processing of emotional experiences.⁶ Many other studies suggest much similarity in the ways that the brains of mothers and fathers are activated in response to hearing their children cry or looking at pictures or movies of their children.⁷ However, while pregnancy hormones activate unique pathways in the brain for mothers, fathers tend to show activation in brain pathways based on experience and learning.

While these findings seem interesting, one should be wary in drawing strong conclusions, since many of these studies involve small sample sizes. Larger studies would have to be conducted to definitively conclude differences in brain activation patterns between mothers and fathers.

3. Social interaction with offspring likely changes a father's brain cells

One of the most exciting insights we have gleaned from paternal care research in animal models is that there are actual cellular changes in fathers' brains when they

interact with their offspring. This can be clearly seen in two breakthrough studies conducted by independent research groups.

In a pioneering preliminary study involving marmosets, researchers found significant microstructural changes in the neurons of the pre-frontal cortex of infant-carrying marmoset fathers.⁸ These neurons displayed more “spines” on their dendrites, structures that are responsible for communicating with other nearby neurons. The prefrontal cortex plays a role in planning, decision-making, and social behavior. Researchers found that these changes were more profound in both first-time and experienced marmoset fathers compared to those adult marmosets that did not father children. Such cellular changes in a non-human primate associated with fatherhood was then unprecedented.

Even more recently, a different group of researchers found that for male mice, new neurons are born when they interact with their pups.⁹ In an important experiment for this study, researchers separated the pups from the fathers for a period of time and then reunited them when the pups became adults. The researchers found that the ability to make those new neurons is critical for these fathers to recognize their own pups when they are reunited. These neurons were born in parts of the brain responsible for smell and memory—the olfactory bulb and hippocampus, respectively. It was previously known that mothers could recognize their offspring easily, but that even fathers could do this, and had specialized brain cells responsible for this recognition, was a new finding.

Together, these studies show that neurons change their shape and are even born in response to fatherhood and caring for offspring.

4. Fatherhood up, testosterone down

For a long time, it was thought that the reason that some men do not invest in their children is because fatherhood represents

We should all strive to make men realize that although there may be no one-size-fits-all formula for fatherhood, they have God-given potential, embedded even in their own brains, to be better, more involved, more nurturing fathers in the lives of their children.

a tradeoff between mating and being involved with their children. Recently, a group of researchers tested this idea in an interesting way. They measured the volume of fathers' testicles and compared it to their caregiving. What they found was that caregiving and testicular volume was inversely correlated.¹⁰ In other words, men with larger testicular volume scored lower on caregiving, and vice versa.

Caregiving was also inversely correlated to testosterone levels. In the most important experiment of the study, researchers measured brain responses of fathers while they were in an fMRI machine, as they were shown pictures of their own children. The researchers looked at patterns of activation across the whole brain and found that a specific region in the brain called the ventral tegmental area (VTA) showed an inverse correlation with testicular sizes of the subjects. The VTA is a part of the "reward system" of the brain and has also been observed in rats to be activated during parental

behavior. This would make sense, because parental investment comes at a heavy cost to the parent, so the brain "rewards" good parenting by turning on this region. In summary, this study showed evidence that a more involved fatherhood comes at the price of decreased testosterone levels.

What all these studies show is that fatherhood (as distinct from motherhood) is clearly very important, not just for children, but also for the fathers themselves. In a father's brain, there are distinct regions and pathways dedicated to parenting. They are activated in ways that are similar to those of mothers' brains, but are also different in some respects.

Often, Christian leaders idealize the more stereotypically "masculine" behaviors associated with testosterone (drive for dominance and competitiveness, for example). The oft-heard message for fathers is that more "manliness" is where fathers find satisfaction, and that this is what children need from their fathers.

But evidence from neuroscience suggests a more nuanced understanding of fatherhood, one that is more complicated and sometimes quite different from what is commonly preached from the pulpit. We should all strive to make men realize that although there may be no one-size-fits-all formula for fatherhood, they have God-given potential, embedded even in their own brains, to be better, more involved, more nurturing fathers in the lives of their children. This is the kind of fathering we should encourage men to pursue.



Aaron Sathyanesan is a developmental neuroscientist by profession. He has authored multiple research papers in neuroscience journals. He also enjoys writing on topics at the interface of science, faith, and pop culture. His writing has been featured on the BioLogos forum and PLOS Blogs. Aaron and his wife, Ange, are passionate about women's rights, especially in their home country, India. You are invited to follow him on Twitter @UnctionFunction.

1. Abdul Khaleque and Ronald P. Rohner, "Transnational Relations between Perceived Parental Acceptance and Personality Dispositions of Children and Adults: A Meta-Analytic Review," *Personality and Social Psychology Review: An Official Journal of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Inc.* 16 (2012): 103–115. doi:10.1177/1088868311418986.
2. Anna Sarkadi, Robert Kristiansson, Frank Oberklaid, and Sven Bremberg, "Fathers' Involvement and Children's Developmental Outcomes: A Systematic Review of Longitudinal Studies," *Acta Paediatr* 97 (2008): 153–158. doi:10.1111/j.1651-2227.2007.00572.x.
3. Paula J. Brunton and John A. Russell, "The Expectant Brain: Adapting for Motherhood," *Nature Reviews. Neuroscience* 9 (2008): 11–25. doi:10.1038/nrn2280.
4. Allison M. Perkeybile and Karen L. Bales, "Intergenerational Transmission of Sociality: The Role of Parents in Shaping Social Behavior in Monogamous and Non-Monogamous Species," *The Journal of Experimental Biology* 220 (2017): 114–123. doi:10.1242/jeb.142182.
5. Ilanit Gordon, Orna Zagoory-Sharon, James F. Leckman, and Ruth Feldman, "Oxytocin and the Development of Parenting in Humans," *Biological Psychiatry* 68 (2010): 377–382. doi:10.1016/j.biopsych.2010.02.005.
6. Erich Seifritz et al., "Differential Sex-Independent Amygdala Response to Infant Crying and Laughing in Parents Versus Nonparents," *Biological Psychiatry* 54 (2003): 1367–1375.
7. Eyal Abraham et al., "Father's Brain Is Sensitive to Childcare Experiences," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 111 (2014): 9792–9797. doi:10.1073/pnas.1402569111.
8. Yevgenia Kozorovitskiy, Maria Hughes, Kim Lee, and Elizabeth Gould, "Fatherhood Affects Dendritic Spines and Vasopressin Via Receptors in the Primate Prefrontal Cortex," *Nature Neuroscience* 9 (2006): 1094–1095. doi:10.1038/nn1753.
9. Gloria K. Mak and Samuel Weiss, "Paternal Recognition of Adult Offspring Mediated by Newly Generated CNS Neurons," *Nature Neuroscience* 13 (2010): 753–758. doi:10.1038/nn.2550.
10. Jennifer S. Mascaro, Patrick D. Hackett, and James K. Rilling, "Testicular Volume is Inversely Correlated with Nurturing-Related Brain Activity in Human Fathers," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 110 (2013): 15746–15751. doi:10.1073/pnas.1305579110.

O QUEEN, LIVE FOREVER

Mordechai's Instructions

If you had been my own blood
you would not have been my
daughter more.

O queen, live forever

Live as you have seen me live.

We have been plucked from
our land and now you have
been plucked from my home.

O queen, live forever

like you see our people live in
the hand of God.

Put on the robe of Yahweh
that I wove for you with
a lifetime of love and
teaching.

O queen, live forever

for your God and your
people, or else die well.



Looking Ahead in 2017

Here at CBE, we're giving thanks for a fantastic 2016, highlighted by our "Truth Be Told" conferences in South Africa and Kenya.

We're looking forward to another great year in 2017. Here are just a few of the things on the horizon for this year.

Year of Jubilee

In case you haven't already heard, 2017 marks CBE's thirtieth year of ministry! We're celebrating by declaring 2017 a Year of Jubilee! In 2017:

1. **We're giving current members a free year of membership.** Any membership that is current as of December 31, 2016 will be extended by one year.*
2. **All issues of *Priscilla Papers* and *Mutuality* are free online!** We want to spread the Bible's mandate for gender equality far and wide, so this year everyone has access to all of CBE's award-winning content.

Because we're not charging membership fees, we're left with a budget gap of \$34,000. If you can, please help support the research, writing, and production of *Mutuality* and *Priscilla Papers*, as well as the website that hosts our many fine resources.

Support the Year of Jubilee at cbe.today/jubilee.

CBE Around the Globe

CBE's president, Dr. Mimi Haddad, will be traveling far and wide this spring. Highlights include:

- **March 16:** Radical Revolution's 2017 Women's Conference in Atlanta, GA.
- **March 24:** Council for Christian Colleges and Universities' 2017 "Advancing Women in Leadership in Higher Education" conference at Biola University, La Mirada, CA.
- **April 18:** Truett Seminary, Waco, TX.

- **April 21–May 20:** Fuller Seminary–Houston. Dr. Haddad will teach the course "Women in History and Theology."

- **April 28–30:** "Better Together: Men and Women: One in Christ," CBE Melbourne's 2017 conference, Melbourne, Australia.

CBE's 2017 Conference



We're gearing up for our 2017 international conference, "Mutual by Design: Building God's Church Together," which will be held July 21–23 in Orlando, Florida.

"Mutual by Design" will bring together speakers and attendees from all over the US and the world to promote the co-leadership and co-service of women and men in the church.

Plenary speakers include Joy Moore, Jamin Hübner, Ben Witherington III, Gricel Medina, and Michael Bird. In addition, the conference will feature dozens of workshops by renowned egalitarian leaders.

"Mutual by Design" will feature a wide range of topics, from history to the Trinity, to intersectional egalitarianism, abuse, and biblical exegesis. Whether you're a pastor, educator, or simply a Christian who wants to learn and be empowered to serve, this conference has something for you.

Find the full list of speakers, learn about the student paper competition, or register today at cbe.today/orlando17.

* Members who have paid for printed journal copies will continue to receive them. Organizational memberships and subscriptions are not affected and will continue as always.

Equip Future Egalitarian Leaders

Young people and seminarians are a vital and dynamic part of CBE's international conferences. They inject fresh energy, vision, and enthusiasm. Over the years, students have shared how meeting informed, passionate, and experienced egalitarians helps inspire confidence that frees them to courageously join in God's mission and use their gifts to the fullest in their communities.

Here's an example:

Thank you so much for providing me a scholarship to attend the CBE conference in LA! I was very blessed by my time in fellowship with other believers, and this conference provided a safe space to continue in my process of discerning and confirming my egalitarian leanings.

At CBE conferences, our global community gathers to learn, share, and celebrate God's design of equal gifting and leadership for women and men. And through conference scholarships, we invite students and future leaders to engage with powerful speakers and teachers to explore the full equality of men and women as taught in Scripture.

You can help encourage students to pursue their God-given purpose by sending them to "Mutual by Design," CBE's international conference running July 21–23 in Orlando.

CBE aims to raise \$5,970 to provide 30 scholarships (\$199 each) to this life-changing event.

Visit cbe.today/scholarships to make a gift. Thank you for helping students attend this inspiring time of learning and community.

How much better to get
wisdom than gold, to get
insight rather than silver!

Proverbs 16:16





Equal Parenting, Healthier Children

It has been said that one of the best things married parents can do for their children is to invest in a healthy relationship with each other. When it comes to a father, there are two fundamentals that cannot be ignored: the way a father lives in partnership with his wife, and his emotional investment in his children.

While both complementarian and egalitarian fathers have profound love for their wives and children, it comes as no surprise that an egalitarian worldview encourages an equal partnership in marriage and thus greater paternal involvement. Equal partnership and paternal involvement both lead to greater flourishing for every member of the family.

Because healthy parenting begins with a healthy marriage, let's start with marriage. Egalitarian marriage experts Jack and Judy Balswick explore the many benefits of equal partnership marriages in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity without Hierarchy*. Just as Paul promotes mutuality in marriage (Eph. 5:21, 1 Cor. 7:4), the Balswicks recognize that equal partnership marriages locate authority not with males or females but in the relationship itself. Because no one person makes all of the decisions, egalitarians focus on the "we-ness" of marriage (452). The underlying question is, what is best for the marriage?

Patriarchal marriages, on the other hand, assign authority to males and thus create gendered "roles," where a husband has authority over his wife and children. This power comes with his "job;" it is not earned or based on character (450). The authority and power of husbands becomes the primary emphasis in patriarchal marriages.

Unfortunately, the primacy of gendered "roles" in patriarchal marriages means that wives bear the most responsibility for childcare and household chores. What is more, there is an assumption that all women not only find these tasks fulfilling at a deep level, but that they also constitute the basis of female identity. Men in patriarchal marriages, meanwhile, bear the brunt of the financial provision and physical protection of the family, which is said to resonate with their created nature as men. Undoubtedly, families that affirm male-authority do not all strictly adhere to such a gendered division of labor and identity, but share childcare and household work to varying degrees, with fathers who are invested in the care and nurturing of their children. Often, people behave better than their ideas.

The fruit of equal partnership marriages is positive for couples, who report greater sexual intimacy and also physical and psychological health. Likewise, co-parenting (husbands and wives sharing the burden of childcare and household management) has significant benefits for children.

The Balswicks note that co-parented children excel in confidence, creativity, social skills, and moral development (454). And, the more fathers are involved in the daily lives of sons/boys, the more secure their sons are. The less likely they are to engage in hyper-masculine posturing and risk-taking behaviors. Boys also show more "empathy, affection, and nurturing behaviors" (455). Sons with emotionally involved fathers become more rational adults and are more capable of nurturing others. They are more likely to want to become parents and also egalitarians (455). Similarly, girls whose fathers are very engaged in parenting possess greater self-confidence and an awareness of personal boundaries. They are less likely to become victims of abuse.

Daughters with co-parenting fathers interested in their achievements are also more likely to be successful professionally (455).

For many reasons, a co-parenting couple with an involved, nurturing father is

not an option for every family. Many single parents succeed at raising healthy children, and we as the church should celebrate and come alongside them, modeling mutual relationships and emotional and spiritual engagement, especially by men. What is more, churches must do more to address abuse, which is far too common in our world, and is often enabled or reinforced by church teachings. The seriousness of abuse cannot be overstated, and safety from husbands and fathers who abuse is paramount. The church often seeks to preserve a marriage at all costs, but sometimes, separation from a father is the safest, healthiest option for everyone. Only then can healing and recovery be found.

Mutuality in relationships reflects the teachings of Scripture and offers a powerful challenge and alternative to one of the most damaging forces in this world—patriarchy. The sacred responsibilities of marriage and parenting are an extraordinary opportunity to demonstrate the benefits of Christian mutuality, as it flourishes children, marriages, and the body of Christ.

Co-parented children excel in confidence, creativity, social skills, and moral development.

Praise

- 2016 was another great year for CBE. Our resources reached more people than ever before, we established new partnerships, and we surpassed our fundraising goals!
- Through our partnership with Publish4All, CBE has been able to distribute hundreds of resources to Haiti.
- We are happy to welcome a new CBE chapter: CBE–Voices of Color, an online chapter devoted to expressing the struggles particularly faced by Christian women of color as they seek to live out biblical gender equality.

Prayer

- The Orlando conference is not far away! Pray for all the logistics, funding for scholarships, and great student paper competition submissions.
- Pray for the Year of Jubilee. We hope to see our resources spread far and wide during this year in which we're offering them for free.
- Mimi will be traveling to speaking engagements in California, Georgia, Texas, and Australia this spring. Pray for stamina and for positive impact each place she speaks.

Christians for Biblical Equality

Mission Statement

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

Statement of Faith

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

Core Values

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

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

CBE's Year of Jubilee

To celebrate 30 years of ministry, CBE is pleased to offer the benefits of an individual membership to the public at no cost in 2017! We have made available, for free, every *Mutuality* article ever published. In addition, find the full archive of CBE's academic journal, *Priscilla Papers*, and hundreds of book reviews and recordings of lectures given by world-renowned scholars like N.T. Wright, Gordon Fee, and more!

Find it all at cbeinternational.org!

Organizational Membership

CBE memberships are available to organizations, and include copies of CBE publications, discounts to CBE conferences, discounted advertising and sponsorship opportunities with CBE, and more.

Visit cbe.today/orgmembers to learn more.

CBE Subscriptions

Print subscriptions to *Mutuality* and *Priscilla Papers* are available to libraries and individuals.

Visit cbe.today/subscriptions to learn more.

Get Connected with CBE

Connect with CBE online to learn more about us, enjoy the resources we offer, and take part in our ministry.



Visit our website, cbeinternational.org, to find over a thousand resources—articles, book reviews, and video and audio recordings.



Follow our blog, *Arise* (cbe.today/blog).



Follow us on Twitter @CBEInt (twitter.com/cbeint).



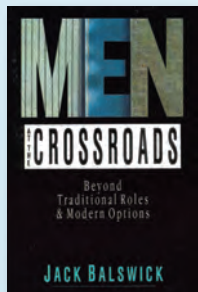
Find us on Facebook (facebook.com/christiansforbiblicalequality).

Christians for Biblical Equality
122 West Franklin Ave, Suite 218
Minneapolis, MN 55404-2451

Forwarding Service Requested

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Jefferson City, MO
Permit No. 210

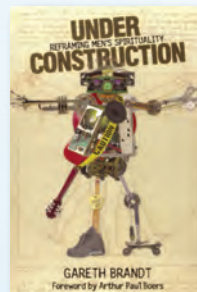
Recommended Reading at CBE Bookstore!



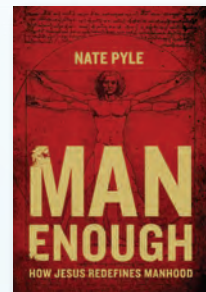
Men at the Crossroads
Jack Balswick



10 Lies Men Believe
J. Lee Grady



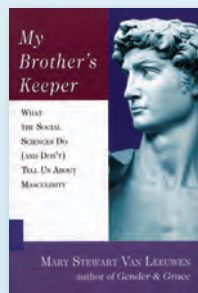
Under Construction
Gareth Brandt



Man Enough
Nate Pyle



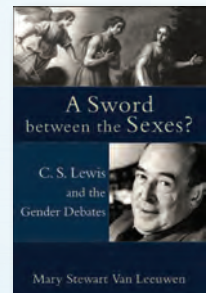
Families Where Grace is in Place
Jeff VanVonderen



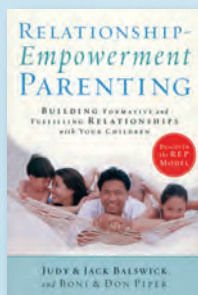
My Brother's Keeper
Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen



A New Man
Luke Reynolds



A Sword between the Sexes?
Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen



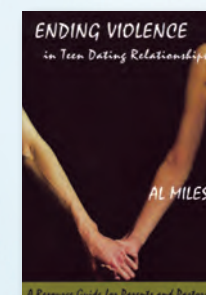
Relationship Empowerment Parenting
*Judy and Jack Balswick,
and Boni and Don Piper*



Men's Work in Preventing Violence Against Women
*James Newton Poling and Christie
Cozad Neuger, eds.*



Some Men Are Our Heroes
*KeumJu Jewel Hyun and Cynthia
Davis Lathrop, eds.*



Ending Violence in Teen Dating Relationships
Al Miles