



A Legacy of Grace

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

In this final issue of 2023, *Mutuality* celebrates thirty years in print with a look back. Since its founding, it has been a space for egalitarians, both within and outside of CBE, to share reports, experiences, and reflections on working out biblical equality in their own lives.

Advocating for biblical equality can be a tricky and often painful task; from churches stuck in their specific traditions to scholars who argue vehemently against biblical equality, emotions flare and change can feel impossible. Should we just throw in the towel, swallow our calling and pain to keep the peace? How do we balance righteous anger with loving exhortation, when all we want to do is flip tables?

For this legacy issue of *Mutuality*, we have gathered articles from our history that speak to just that. Advocating neither avoiding conflict nor attacking everyone who disagrees, each author explores a third approach: taking dissent seriously, calmly seeking to understand differing perspectives, and dialoguing in love and gentleness. Tempers may run high today, but we are not alone in the fight. We look back to the wisdom and words of those who came before.

The global church is made up of so many different perspectives and stories that it is no surprise we disagree on different points. We start off with a reflection by Louisa Macort, who dives into the question of whether disagreeing within the church is bad for our witness. Should Christians just agree in order to get along and maintain a united front?

Sometimes uncomfortable conversations are divine appointments that help us grow and reflect Christ more

accurately. In this next article, Mimi Haddad speaks about the importance of prophetic dissent within the church. Then, former *Mutuality* editor Megan Greulich describes the difference between peacemaking and peacekeeping and identifies the key to reconciliation even where it seems impossible.

Christena Cleveland explains some of the reasons that conflict gets ugly, and how we lose sight of the humanity of our opponents; she then shows what works and what doesn't as we push forward together. Susan McLeod-Harrison then outlines the ways that Jesus lifted up the broken, using his power for restoration—not aggressively, but with a spirit of forgiveness and grace.

Next, Liz Sykes asks two questions many of us have asked ourselves in awkward situations: Should we say something? And if so, what? Then, founding member Alvera Mickelsen provides a helpful guide for remaining gracious in moments of tension and discord.

Finally, Mimi Haddad wraps up the issue by reflecting on *Mutuality's* roots and looking forward to where the future will take us. We have also included clippings from the very first issue of *Mutuality*, when it was a newsletter—complete with an audio cassette order form!

As Christians, we are called to defend the oppressed, to work against injustice—and we are called to build each other up, giving an answer for what we believe in gentleness and respect. It is important *that* we speak, as well as *how* we speak. *Mutuality* has come a long way from where it started, but it strives to remain faithful to its original purpose, maintaining an irenic tone, speaking truth in love, creating light and not heat, as we help egalitarians share their stories and reflect on biblical equality together.

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