

CHRIST FOR WOMEN

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BWE BAPTIST WOMEN FOR EQUALITY

The forgotten story of Easter

If our leaders in the Southern Baptist Convention are to be believed, women must be under the authority of men. This means that women cannot be a deacon, and she can not be called to preach.

Easter tells us differently.

Early in the morning a group of women went to the graveside of their friend Jesus to anoint his body with oil. What they received was Jesus' anointing them to His service.

This was no small thing. We find Jesus telling the woman at the well that he was the Messiah and we see her go out preaching to her neighbors, and we have heard him speaking to Mary and

encouraging her to learn at his feet.

And now, on this holy morning, we find Jesus telling the women who he was, and giving them direction to tell others. "Go and tell the men where they can find me."

The Gospel of Mark tells us that He first appeared to Mary Magdalene, and she went out spreading the good news.

When they heard that he was alive, and had been seen by her, they refused to believe it.

Churches everywhere on Easter morning will tell the story of Jesus' resurrection and of the women who went to his grave.



Shirley Taylor

Then they will leave the women at the graveside, because they refuse to believe that a woman can preach the good news.

Was the Bible written for women?

Recently I picked up *The Bible Jesus Read* by Philip Yancey and started reading. Yancey was speaking on the Psalms and then on Proverbs. It was interesting, but something kept nagging at me. There was an uneasiness I felt as I read it.

I didn't disagree with him. It wasn't that at all. I kept reading and suddenly it burst upon me what I was feeling.

"Was the Bible written for women to read? Were the words written with only men in mind?"

Women read the Bible, and women love Bible studies by Beth Moore, and others. Women quote Scripture. Women live by faith, and find comfort in the words of the Bible. Women worship God.

But was the Bible written for women?

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Special Guest Columnist:

Naomi Walker,

Music/Worship Pastor at Immanuel Baptist Church, Frankfort, KY

Page 2

Guest Columnist—Naomi Walker

Jesus elevated the social status of both Martha and Mary. We don't know if other men were present every time Jesus visited in their home, but Lazarus was their brother and likely lived with them. And the disciples usually traveled everywhere with Jesus.

Jesus defended Mary on more than one occasion when she (gasp!) forsook her "wifely" tasks and boldly entered a roomful of men to be near Jesus. He invited her to have conversations directly

with him, and, in a culture that didn't allow women to be disciples of any rabbi, he even made her one of his disciples. A middleMAN was not required for her to have a personal relationship with Jesus and become his disciple.

And—I love this!—Jesus freed Martha from the kitchen. He invited her also to be daring, to abandon society's "wifely" expectations of her so that she could have a direct, personal relationship with him and

be his disciple, too.

The scriptures don't relate any of the men's responses to Jesus' bold moves. Perhaps they were too stunned to respond.

Women's place" in church and home has been an issue far longer than just the past few decades.

Despite Jesus' influence, patriarchy continues to exist after thousands of years. At our current rate of progress, it may take another thousand years for all women to be fully

accepted as equal to men in both church and home. That's discouraging sometimes, but it doesn't prevent us from pressing toward such a worthy goal. May God bless our efforts.

(Excerpted from "Churchwives and Middlemen," September, 3, 2010, blog post for NOTATIONS: Journeying with a Woman Minister of Music, at www.womanmusicminister.blogspot.com. Written by Naomi Walker). Also published by EthicsDaily.com. Used with permission.

Are SBC churches like white-washed tombs

Frequently I visit SBC church websites and they flash, and shine. They are connected by Twitter, facebook, and all the latest technology. The pastors are so Today. They welcome the 21st century with all its technology, and innovations.

They shout their proclamation of love for everybody. One local SBC church proclaims: "in this loving fellowship, there is a place for you." (Well, yes, but where your place is in this church depends upon your gender and not your gifts.) Another SBC church touts: "Where love abounds."

But Jesus said they are like white-washed tombs. On the outside they appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's

bones and all uncleanness. This is the church we have today.

A church of pastors and preachers who deny that women can be deacons simply because they are a woman. Church leaders who deny that women can be called to pastor.

Churches led by pastors who teach that women must be ruled by a man.

Oh, God! They are so full of self-importance and lack the love that they profess to have.

We Twitter and the world is still dark because our hearts have not come into the 21st century. We find joy in telling women what they cannot do. We find our purpose in telling women that we know that God did not intend for her

to preach. We twist the scriptures to say what we want it to mean.

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel about on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much as son of hell as you yourselves." (Matthew 23:15)

Southern Baptists are holding on to the Dark Ages of Christianity.

We think we are modern with our computers and our Blackberrys, but until women can walk into their Baptist church and not feel that the church holds it against them simply because they were born a woman, they have a long way to go.

The long road goes back-

wards to Jesus. To Jesus and the woman at the well. To Jesus and Mary. To Jesus and Mary Magdalene.

We should fall on our knees and beg for forgiveness for a denomination that has professed its desire to be more like Jesus, but is more like white-washed tombs.

On the
outside
they appear
beautiful

Sensitivity training suggested for SBC pastor

A Baptist pastor writes a daily piece in our newspaper. This pastor is big into manly macho things. In fact, recently his church held a series of power lunches where retired sports figures, a retired Houston weatherman, were invited to speak. It was billed as a Power Lunch for men, but women could attend also if they so desired.

I glance at his daily writings just to see what

he is up to, and this one caught my attention. It was titled "Diary of a Dog." The first paragraph spoke for the dog and chronicled every time he ate, went for a walk, went to the vet, etc.

He then made the comment that dogs are always content. They are always in love with their master. This pastor then says "If you don't believe me, throw your dog and your wife in the trunk of

your car. Drive around the block. Then open your trunk, and see which one is happy to see you!"

I wrote the following letter to the editor of our newspaper.

Not funny, Pastor. In the first place, you are not the master of your wife.

I suggest sensitivity training which can be found in Luke 6:31.

You are not the
master of your
wife.

SBC losing ground

The headlines in the February 28, 2011, Baptist Standard proclaimed "Church membership trends unchanged; SBC stagnant." We have all heard about declining and stagnant churches, but what we have here is a stagnant denomination.

This is very sad. At one

time we were reaching people with the gospel and growing churches. Today our churches are stagnated.

Southern Baptists have put leadership in just a handful of men, and those men do not have the majority of the church members on their heart. They seek to promote

male headship, all the while noting that churches have more women than men attending. They deny women equality, distorting the gospel message, damaging both men and women.

Would the SBC begin gaining ground if women were allowed to serve the Lord's Supper and take

up the collection? Would more people be drawn to Baptist churches if women were allowed to preach, or to be a servant deacon?

We won't know until the Southern Baptist Convention opens its heart and recognizes that women are equal before God.

Baptists have a history of not being right

Most long-time Baptists have never heard a woman preach. The BWIM (Baptist Women in Ministry) have a t-shirt for women pastors that say simply "This is what a preacher looks like."

Many of us have already made our judgment on women preachers. Never having actually heard a woman preach in our church, we look to television and to the print me-

dia and what we see becomes our idea of how a woman would preach.

As Baptists, we automatically discount these women who do not live up to our idea of preaching, and we tend to categorize all women preachers the same way.

Many congregations have already opened the door to women in leadership.

These congregations wor-

ship the same Lord that we do. They depend upon the same Lord as we do for their daily lives. They have found justification for women pastors in the same Bible we read.

Is God blessing these congregations that allow a woman to pastor their church?

We have been told to go join them if we don't like the way Baptists are. But our joining them would

not remove this blight from Baptists. Slavery was a sin, recognized far too late by Baptists, just as this denial that a Baptist woman can be a pastor is a sin.

Individuals, congregations and associations did not all agree with the Baptist denominational leadership over slavery. (civilwarbaptists.com)

Will you help us get it right?

BWE BAPTIST WOMEN FOR EQUALITY

bWebaptist.com

Shirley Taylor is a former 14 1/2 year employee of Baptist General Convention of Texas. This publication is not endorsed by the Baptist General Convention of Texas (now Texas Baptists).

How you can help

If you would like to be a part of bWe Baptist Women for Equality—empowering men and women to speak out for equality for Baptist women, an endeavor to bring Southern Baptists into the 21st Century, please contact me by email. bWe Baptist Women for Equality is not an organization. Only you can bring about the change in your church. It starts with the church By-laws where it is interpreted that women are scripturally unqualified to be deacons. Each Southern Baptist church writes its own By-laws and makes its own decisions. I ask you to join me in helping our daughters and granddaughters find the freedom Jesus has promised them. Change is never easy. But it will be right.

I want to be able to walk into my church
and not feel that my church holds it against me
that I am a woman.

Join the conversation with comments on my blog

www.bwebaptistwomenforequality.wordpress.com



Equal—no but!

See what others are saying about equality for Christian women.

Join us on my blog and read the comments and post your own comments.

You'll develop a real friendship with the men and women who are willing to speak out. People who know the Bible and are not afraid to challenge those who do not allow women equality in the church and home.

You'll learn more about the Holy Scriptures through the interaction with these Christians.

New content is posted on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Recent comment: I am a member of an online Christian forum. The reasons I have seen on the forum that a woman cannot be allowed to pastor a church is this: Women are not to have authority over a man. And,

women are not allowed to teach men. (this will happen if she is pastoring a church).

She is not to preach apparently because women are supposed to be quiet in church. Women must all aspire to have a gentle and quiet spirit.

I don't have a gentle and quiet spirit — I have nothing against a woman who does — I just don't aspire to be a cookie-cutter Stepford female Christian.

My Reply: Well, good for you. We don't want to be Stepford wives either. You have come to the right place. Thanks for joining us.