

# E-QUALITY



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## EDITOR'S NOTE

By Megan Greulich

### Why has the church been so silent about the issue of abuse?

It is a frightening fact that rates of domestic abuse in Christian homes are equal to that of the broader population. And while I believe that no Christian, when asked, would say that the Bible allows for such violent behavior, Christian researchers and advocates for women in abusive situations tell us how little our churches address abuse from the pulpit and through other educational means. In fact, survivors of abuse often

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report that if they do seek refuge in their church community, they are either ignored or asked what they did to deserve the cruelty. Frequently, they are even advised to stay in the situation—that God will heal the broken relationship if she just stays and “submits” to her husband’s “leadership.”

This reality—that many Christian men (and those in positions of Christian leadership) use the Bible incorrectly to justify violence against women—is one that I believe God desperately wants to transform. As both Al Miles and Gerald Ford thoughtfully demonstrate in their articles in this issue, theology has a direct impact on our lives. And when we teach and believe in a theology that ignores the Gospel message for women—that of freedom and God-given worth—then we should not be surprised when abused women often find no refuge in their churches.

### What can we do about domestic violence today?

As we serve a God of justice and of love, I am convinced that God’s heart is attuned to those in our communities who are suffering from abuse. A first and important step to ensure that our churches are places of refuge and hope is to encourage our churches to publicly state our condemnation of abuse.

As one CBE volunteer said to me recently, this could begin with something as small as signs in women’s bathrooms, providing phone numbers and addresses of resource centers for survivors of abuse. Cathie Kroeger, CBE president emerita and founder of PASCH (Peace and Safety in Christian Homes), distributes “shoe cards” to churches. Shoe cards are small enough to fit under a woman’s insole, describe what behaviors are defined as abuse, and include the national domestic violence hotline number. Providing these resources for women in a safe and non-threatening way can make a powerful statement to an abused woman that she will find support from her church community. In this small way, her church



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<http://www.cbeinternational.org/new/E-Journal/2007/07summer/07summereditorsnote.html>

says to her that she will experience love, and not judgment or guilt, as she seeks help, heals, and makes important decisions about her future.

### This Issue of *E-Quality*

Due to the nature of domestic abuse, please be aware that some of the articles in this issue of *E-Quality* may be difficult to read. We pray that they will continue to challenge us to break the silence about domestic abuse and to carefully examine how our churches can work to oppose the sexism that often enables and even causes it.

More than anything else, this issue of *E-Quality* is about hope—hope for those suffering from abuse and hope for the church that we may love and support them on their journey towards healing. As you read and reflect on these articles and accompanying art images, may you be inspired to continue to seek after God's loving desire for women (and men) to experience freedom. And may God use this issue as a tool of courage and empowerment for those who are suffering.

Blessings to you,

Megan Greulich  
*E-Quality* editor

Would you like to share your story with the readers of *E-Quality*? If you have an article you would like to submit for consideration, send it to [cbe@cbeinternational.org](mailto:cbe@cbeinternational.org). We also welcome your feedback, comments, or suggestions.

### In This Issue:

**Al Miles** examines often asked questions about men and domestic violence and calls our churches to advocacy.

**Gerald W. Ford** shares insight into patriarchal theology and its influence in the lives of women suffering from abuse.

**Evelyn J. Dahlke** presents her compelling personal story of abuse and redemption.

**JoAnn Streeter Shade**, in a self-directed journal, guides us to reflect on Judges 19 and encourages healing for those suffering from abuse.

**Allison Young** reviews Elaine Flake's *God in Her Midst*, a book of sermons aimed at encouraging and empowering hurting women.

And **25% off** CBE recommended resources on domestic abuse.



**Megan Greulich** is a 2006 graduate of Bethel University with a degree in psychology. Her interests include art history, reconciliation and justice issues, singing, and baking and cake decorating. Besides editing *E-Quality*, Megan also currently serves as Membership Coordinator at CBE. She may be reached at [mgreulich@cbeinternational.org](mailto:mgreulich@cbeinternational.org).

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Christians for Biblical Equality, 122 W Franklin Ave, Suite 218, Minneapolis, MN 55404  
PHONE: (612) 872-6898 FAX: (612) 872-6891 EMAIL: [cbe@cbeinternational.org](mailto:cbe@cbeinternational.org) WEB: <http://www.cbeinternational.org>