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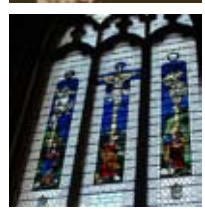
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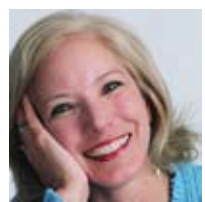
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Editor's Note: **Literary Empires and Rebel Voices**

Jessica Colund

Writing has always been my voice, the way I communicate my ideas to the world. Even when I was younger, if I had anything particularly important to say, I preferred to say it in writing. I remember writing persuasive letters to my parents, filled with "irrefutable" arguments about why I should be allowed to take horseback riding lessons. If I had a disagreement with a friend, I would compose heartfelt apologies or lengthy notes detailing my injured feelings and trying to make her understand my perspective on the situation. I have written song parodies to help me study for exams and poems to give as birthday presents. I find it so much easier to perfect the timing of a humorous story in an email rather than over the phone.

It has been said that the longest-lasting empires in the world have been built through writing. Athens is considered a more influential ancient Greek city-state than its rival, Sparta, because Sparta only perfected its military whereas Athens contributed to subsequent generations through its intellectual and artistic legacy. In fact, the ideas passed on through the writings of ancient Greece and Rome continue to influence the way we think today. Similarly, long after the sun has set on the British colonial empire, its far more beneficial literary empire is still a powerful force in the world.

Many would be quick to point out that literary empires simply provide further evidence that the voices of the ruling class drown out the voices of the oppressed.

“Even though the changing literary canon cannot allow past generations of women to use their writing talents, it does demonstrate a cultural shift in favor of women writers.”

After all, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Swift, Wordsworth, Dickens, and Yeats were all white men. Over the past several decades, there has been a somewhat controversial shift in the literary canon, in which scholars actively seek out writings composed by women and ethnic minorities to include in academic anthologies and college courses.

However, even this changing focus does not really allow the oppressed voices of the past to speak strongly and clearly. There were many women who would not have been able to express their ideas in writing because of a myriad of cultural expectations, unfair stereotypes, and a lack of educational and professional opportunities. Women in Shakespeare's day, for example, would have faced so many cultural, societal, and familial restrictions that those who may



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Editor's Note: Literary Empires and Rebel Voices, Continued

have been born with as much literary talent as "the Bard" would likely have died without writing a single word.

Even though the changing literary canon cannot allow past generations of women to use their writing talents, it does demonstrate a cultural shift in favor of women writers. Women still encounter unique challenges in their writing professions, and unfortunately these obstacles occur frequently in Christian communities (see [Lori Buckle's article](#)). However, it is much easier for women in 2008 to use writing as a powerful voice than it was for someone like George Eliot, a Victorian author who found it easier to publish under a male pseudonym. In turn, it was easier for George Eliot than it would have been for Shakespeare's female contemporaries. Progress is evident, even if it is slow and arduous. May our generation of women authors take advantage of the new opportunities available to us in the twenty-first century, and may we make even more opportunities for the next generation.

In this issue...

Laura Simmons writes about Dorothy Sayers, an influential theologian and author.

Lori Buckle describes her call to write about women in the church and the challenges she is overcoming to let others hear her story.

Shawna Atteberry tells about her fictional female role models and how they help her to contemplate what it means to be created in God's image.

In Christ,

Jessi Colund
Editor, *E-Quality*



JESSICA COLUND has returned to CBE as an editorial and administrative assistant. After graduating from Bethel University last May, Jessi spent the summer traveling in the UK and is now working at Barnes and Noble in addition to her job at CBE.



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Dorothy L. Sayers

A Writer and Theologian for Today

Laura K. Simmons

In January 1941, the Archbishop of York hosted a conference on “The Life of the Church and the Order of Society,” and over 220 people attended. About three-fourths were men—mostly bishops and other clergy. Women who were identified with organizations were “head deaconesses” or in charge of women’s schools or committees in churches and government agencies. Nine men spoke—more clergy, plus some academics and writer T.S. Eliot. And then there was the tenth speaker: “Miss Dorothy Sayers.”

The inclusion of Dorothy L. Sayers, best known as the writer of the Lord Peter Wimsey detective stories, on the program of the Malvern conference was neither an accident nor an example of tokenism. By 1941, Sayers was an established lay theologian who had a thriving correspondence with a number of religious professionals, including theological tutors, bishops, local clergy, and even archbishops. This was not her first invitation to address a gathering largely made up of clergy, nor would it be her last.

Sayers delighted in hearing from clergy and in dialoguing with them about her work (although it made her nervous to address them because she was not a trained theologian or preacher). Of all the critics, readers, acquaintances, and others who responded to her writings, a large portion of the letters she received, answered, and saved were from clergy. Some of this correspondence came at her initiative; she would write to ask for clarification on a theological concept or to refer a correspondent of hers to someone who was qualified to answer that person’s question on a particular point of doctrine. At other times, clergy wrote to her about things she had written, to invite her to speak, or to ask for her collaboration in some venture.

It is clear that many people (clergy and otherwise) considered Sayers a theologian—and a good one



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Dorothy L. Sayers, Continued

at that. People praised her ability to communicate powerful theological concepts succinctly and accessibly. Theologian Karl Barth used Sayers' work to learn and practice English, and translated several of her essays into German. A priest from Washington, D.C., dining with President and Mrs. Roosevelt one evening, heard them speak highly of Sayers' detective fiction, and he recommended that they read her religious writings as well. He was startled to learn that Eleanor Roosevelt then read one of Sayers' essays that very night! And it has been said that the BBC production of Sayers' life-of-Christ play cycle *The Man Born to Be King* was one of the most significant events in twentieth-century Britain.

Sayers' influence did not cease upon her death in 1957. Theater companies continue to produce her plays, English professors include her Dante translation in their syllabi, mystery fans still read about Lord Peter and Harriett, and hundreds of classical schools around the world owe their existence to Sayers' small essay "The Lost Tools of Learning." A thriving Dorothy L. Sayers Society meets yearly, mining her work in ever-greater detail. Perhaps most significantly, many of Sayers' theological contributions keep returning to print: *The Man Born to Be King* (well-suited to reading in the weeks before Easter; C.S. Lewis read the plays yearly), *The Mind of the Maker* (about the Trinity and the creative process), Sayers' essays (most recently in the collection entitled *Letters to a Diminished Church*) and her very insightful commentaries on women and men, published in a small volume called *Are Women Human?*.

In this past year, as America found itself engaged regularly in discussions of race and gender because of our history-making presidential candidates, Sayers' words on women have perhaps become more needed than ever. In 1938, she was invited to address a women's group; her speech "Are Women Human?" was ahead of her time and probably more than a little shocking. This address, along with an essay called "The Human Not-Quite-Human," is published in the aforementioned slim-but-powerful volume.

Sayers asserted that there is no such thing as a man's job or a woman's job, but that people should pursue vocations for which they are passionate and gifted. She challenged a culture that tended to define men's interests and human interests synonymously, while holding women apart as some sort of special species, not-quite-human. She reminded her audience that Jesus treated women entirely differently than most of his followers have through the ages, and called the church to be more like Jesus in this regard. She also remarked that it was no wonder women did not want to stay at home, since all the interesting work had been removed from homes and relocated to factories and industries.

Sayers' comments made in 1938 have been proven yet again to be incredibly insightful and forward-thinking by some of the media coverage of Hillary

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Dorothy L. Sayers, Continued

Clinton's campaign for president, Sarah Palin's campaign for vice-president, and the gender issues with which Americans have subsequently grappled. One author remarked that male presidential candidates are seen as representing all people, while women candidates are seen as representing women. It's "The Human-Not-Quite-Human" all over again—almost identical language to what Sayers was saying seventy years ago. Sadly, we appear to have learned little in that time.

Sayers understood that her voice was at times too prophetic for her culture. She published a whole volume of essays called *Unpopular Opinions*—many of which were rejected by the very people who had commissioned them because they were too provocative or otherwise differed from what they thought they had requested when they asked Sayers to write or speak. Dorothy L. Sayers believed strongly that one should not write mainly to please one's audience. Certainly, audiences have needs, and many of her works were commissioned for particular populations or organizations. However, Sayers would generally write on something only if she found herself passionate about a given topic and thought she might have something to say about it—not just because someone asked her to write on that topic.

On this point, C.S. Lewis disagreed with Sayers. He often wrote for people who wanted an article on a particular subject written by a popular author because he felt a pastoral obligation to them. Sayers felt she was serving the writing itself, not the audience, when she accepted or declined writing assignments. Did something wish to be written—and if so, how did it demand to be written? This is perhaps an unusual way of talking about how she was inspired by God. She accused Lewis and others of being too impatient to wait for what God might want to say through them; they would "drag the eggs out of the goose" and write on topics they did not sufficiently understand.

Sayers also disagreed with C.S. Lewis on the matter of women's ordination. He wrote to her asking that she take a public stand against it (this defense of tradition needed to be written by a woman, he reasoned). Instead, Sayers suggested she would be an "uneasy ally" for him because she did not see any theological reason why women should not be priests. She distinguished between whether a man or a woman should be "cast for the part" of "playing" Christ in the mass (it made the most dramatic sense for it to be a man, of course) and whether a man or a woman could represent Christ to humanity. Because Christ was the representative of all humanity, not simply male humanity, she believed either a woman or a man could reflect that representation.

"Sayers asserted that there is no such thing as a man's job or a woman's job, but that people should pursue vocations for which they are passionate and gifted."



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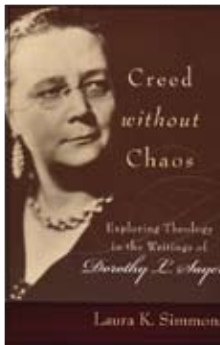


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Dorothy L. Sayers, Continued

It is important to say at this juncture that Sayers did not consider herself a feminist, and likely would have bristled at being included in that movement. This was partly due to the fact that she found feminists too often taking the pendulum to an opposite extreme and subjugating men as a reaction to years of oppression. She also believed that no individual should be seen primarily as a representative of some class of human beings (a woman as representative of all women, a Christian as representative of all Christians, etc). She preferred to be considered as Jesus considered women—simply human, no more, no less.



Purchase [Creed Without Chaos](#), Laura Simmons's book on Dorothy Sayers, from [Amazon.com](#) and CBE will receive a percentage of the sale.



Purchase [Are Women Human?](#), a collection of essays by Dorothy Sayers, from the [CBE Bookstore](#). Use [E-Quality book sale coupon](#) to save 25%.



LAURA K. SIMMONS is determined to get people to read more of Dorothy L. Sayers's nonfiction, which she finds astonishingly applicable to 21st-century life. When she is not writing (*Creed without Chaos: Exploring Theology in the Writings of Dorothy L. Sayers*) and speaking about her favorite author, Simmons is Associate Professor of Christian Ministries at George Fox Evangelical Seminary in Portland, Oregon. She teaches courses on reconciliation, communication, teaching, spiritual formation, and equipping and discipleship.



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“Lord, Help My Unbelief”

A Pilgrim's Story

Lori Buckle

In York Minster, the cathedral in the English city where I used to live, there is a famous window called “The Pilgrimage Window.” Two panels within this window usually draw the most attention from onlookers. The first shows a knight upon a white horse, holding a triumphant banner. He appears to be venturing forth on a pilgrimage. However, whenever I came to contemplate this window, it was not the knight's panel that drew me.

Rather, I was drawn to the second panel, which shows a woman walking in front of a white horse, traveling on a pilgrimage of her own. At first I could not explain her mysterious hold upon me. Then gradually the meaning unfolded, and I realized the difficulty of what this panel represented. I have since experienced my own pilgrimage, and I know how much it costs. Leaving the comfort and safety of your familiar surroundings, you embark upon a journey to find God. Before that, however, you must come to the realization that you do not fully know God, but possess a desire to know him as he really is. If you are a woman who has been raised within the patriarchal Christian tradition, then most of the time this is where your journey ends: with a deep ache, with an inchoate desire to find God on your own and discover whether what you have been taught about him is really all there is to know, or whether there are yet undiscovered divine secrets waiting for you.

For some women raised within a patriarchal culture, it may be easier to remain within the castle than to journey outwards and face the unknown hazards that lay ahead. To go on a pilgrimage like this requires that you travel alone and meet God face-to-face. True pilgrimage requires that, like Moses, you leave the others behind and journey up the mountain by yourself. Many of us find it easier to side with the children of Israel, and simply send somebody up to find God for us.



“Pilgrimage is a potentially dangerous and subversive act since it defies being fixed. Its very nature is that of movement. Movement suggests change which suggests, in turn, the overturning of order.”
 ~Susan Signe Morrison

“Lord, Help My Unbelief,” Continued

Perhaps some women are uneasy to leave the walls of patriarchy for fear that liberals and feminists and other “dragons” may be waiting to trap unwary souls, dragging them away from God’s true path and down into the cave of perdition. Better to remain within the castle walls, with the lords temporal and spiritual—your father/husband—and to let them protect you, than to venture out and do battle on your own. After all, who knows what you might lose in the process?

If I sound too harsh when I speak of the fear of these women, then it is the harshness of regret. I myself spent too many years within the castle walls before I finally ventured out on a pilgrimage of my own. The journey was difficult and not without frustration, but I completed it, and found that, indeed, God was much bigger than I had imagined. Now I feel God calling me to go on a second pilgrimage, one that will, like the first, profoundly change my life. And this time the dragons seem much bigger.

Writing as Pilgrimage

Since my first pilgrimage laid the foundation for the second, I might as well begin with an ending. “You made it!” my husband exclaimed as soon as he entered the door, and he threw open his arms to embrace me. I had been waiting for him to bring the verdict of our district lay preacher’s meeting—would they accept my application to begin training with them? As a Methodist lay preacher himself, my husband encouraged me to follow my calling and join him, and I eagerly applied. However, doubts had assailed me while I waited. Since childhood, I had dreamed of becoming a preacher like my father. But I had also spent most of my life believing that my desire to proclaim God’s word from a pulpit was sinful. This tension between desire and belief had tormented me for years, and leaving behind that belief system had been a long and difficult process. I could not bear to think that just when my dream seemed within my grasp, it could be snatched from me once more.

But God heard my cry, and my dream was fulfilled. As I blossomed into a local preacher over the next few months, I found that a spring of creativity welled up within me also. Ever since childhood I had loved writing stories. As I grew older, however, I tucked them away as “childish things” (1 Cor. 13:11). After all, if God did not like my preaching, then why should he like my scribbling?

Now, however, I am embarking on my second pilgrimage because my passion for writing has returned. Specifically, I find myself wanting to write about the Minster. Visiting there, I felt a connection to those faithful Christian women who had gone before me. Like many other Americans, I was raised in a kind of spiritual vacuum where theological history was concerned. I rarely even encountered Christian history, much less learned of the leadership of Christian women. Here in the Minster, however, I was “surrounded by that great cloud of [female] witnesses” (Heb. 12:1). There were many women here—incribed in wall monuments, carved as statues, and featured in stained glass windows.

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“Lord, Help My Unbelief,” Continued

Indeed, the Minster itself was founded with the indirect help of a woman. In AD 625, the bishop Paulinus accompanied the Christian Princess Ethelburga when she married King Edwin, a pagan. Two years later, when Edwin himself became a Christian, Paulinus built a small wooden church in York in which to baptize the king. Over the centuries the wooden structure was replaced with the current cathedral.

A vision came to me in this grand cathedral. What if, instead of merely having a church with images of women here and there, like the Minster, you had an entire church filled with such images? As I contemplated this, I remembered what Sue Monk Kidd had said in her memoir, *Dance of the Dissident Daughter*. Growing up in the patriarchal tradition, as I did, she wrote that she felt oppressed in her church because the windows were filled with images of men. The great men of the Bible were well represented, but where, she wondered, were the women? This feeling that women of faith were not really valued helped contribute to her eventual abandonment of Christianity.

The religion that Kidd and I had grown up believing silenced women, rendering them passive and mute. Their voices were heard only when men allowed them to speak, and their stories were told only if men allowed them to be told. Standing in the Minster reminded me of what Jaroslav Pelikan wrote in his book, *Mary Through the Centuries*: “Many of the mighty women of the history of the Middle Ages...are known to us chiefly or even solely through the medium of what men wrote down from them or about them.” What if we reclaimed our voices, though, and our stories? What if there was a church whose windows and walls were filled with women, women of the Bible and of ages past to remind present-day women of the godly heritage they are a part of?

For instance, in the Minster, there is a monument to William Wilberforce, the great British politician who led the crusade to end slavery in the British Empire in the early 1800's. I had heard about this crusade in church. What I did not hear, however, was that many women helped contribute to this moral victory. For example, it was women such as Lady Middleton (along with her husband) who urged Wilberforce to take up the cause of abolition. They and other Christians of the time who opposed slavery, such as the Quaker Hannah Moore, formed a group called the Testonites, which repeatedly petitioned Parliament to end slavery. Later, a woman friend of Theodore Pringle's (he doesn't name her), took down the story of the runaway slave Mary Prince and urged him to publish it. When he did, many women flocked to the abolitionist cause. Nearly 200,000 of these women signed a petition to end slavery and had it presented to Parliament. Indeed, in her book *Well-Behaved Women Seldom Make History*, Laurel Thatcher Ulrich proclaims: “Their efforts [Pringle's female friend and women such as Moore and Middleton] and of those of other female abolitionists helped to bring about an act of Parliament that in 1838 ended slavery in the British West Indies.” Surely then, I thought, these brave women deserved some sort of monument of their own? What if there was a monument

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“Lord, Help My Unbelief,” Continued

to these forgotten women in this Church of the Ladies of God? Imbued with the fervor of this vision, I began sketching notes of the church that I saw.

As I sketched, the dazzling centerpiece of the church appeared before me: a series of statues of biblical women, behind the altar itself. You see, behind the altar of the Minster stood fifteen statues of English kings. Suppose, I thought, instead of these monuments to war, greed, and lust, there were fourteen monuments to the faith and courage of mighty women in the Bible? Two sets of seven statues—the number seven being used to represent God. Hagar the outsider whom God still blessed; Miriam who led the Israelite women in worship; Huldah who prophesied the destruction of Israel; Mary the sister of Lazarus who dared buck patriarchal convention to sit at Jesus’ feet and learn; Martha, who called Jesus the Messiah and yet, unlike Peter, remained faithful to him all the way to the end.

Battles with Dragons

But once I began venturing out upon this second pilgrimage—my pilgrimage of writing the story of this women’s church—the dragon was quick to strike. A friend of mine let me know how much my story encouraged her. She and her husband struggled to overcome the broken legacy of patriarchy in their own marriage. How blessed I was to love a man who had grown up never doubting that women were equal in the eyes of God, she told me.

The words of my friend touched something deep within me, and I heard the Lord whispering, “Write your story.” So I began writing it. Then I made my mistake. I ventured into a forum for Christian writers and asked what they thought of my story. Their response was swift and merciless. They would never buy it and certainly would never read it. It was too controversial. “For heaven’s sake,” they said, “you are talking about a woman preacher!” as if the term were synonymous with female murderer. And thus my beloved story died—a baby I had carried with me for months, but which I could not bear to now send out into the cruel world.

It has been two years since that rejection. In the interval, my husband and I concentrated on surviving the many difficulties that beset us. Now the Lord has led us to settle in America, and we attend a holiness church that allows women to preach and teach. I have already begun to move into this area of my calling in our church, so I sense that this particular pilgrimage in my life is coming to an end. However, writing this article has reawakened my deep desire to write, and this time I have determined not to let the dragons keep me in the castle. I have already taken the first tentative step outside of the walls; this is the first time I have set forth my story in public. Now I have taken out my battered notes about the Church of the Ladies of God and have begun to examine them again. Perhaps my story has not died after all. Perhaps it will become a published book someday. Perhaps there will even be a real

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“Lord, Help My Unbelief,” Continued

church, where women can come to be encouraged, healed, and affirmed—a living, breathing Church of the Ladies of God. I don’t know what will happen. As I struggle with my doubts and fears along this difficult path, however, I imagine myself back in front of the Pilgrimage Window, praying the prayer of the pilgrims (Mark 9:24): “Lord, I do believe; help my unbelief.”

Author’s Note:

See the [Pilgrimage Window](#) or take a virtual tour of the [entire Minster](#). (From the heart-shaped window, the Pilgrimage Window is the 4th on the right.)

LORI L. BUCKLE was born in Texas. In 2004 she moved to Great Britain after marrying her British husband. They now live in back in Texas where Lori is pursuing a career as a writer.



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Writing the World Right

Shawna Atteberry

I have always lived in other worlds. As soon as I learned to read, I began devouring books. If I could understand most of the words, I read it. I was always asking Mom what this word and that word meant, and as a result, Mom soon taught me how to use a dictionary. I was in glasses by the time I was ten. There is no proof, but I think that because I read so much, my eyes didn't think there was anything beyond the length of my arm (or the tip of my nose for that matter). By the time I finished sixth grade, I had read the *Little House on the Prairie* books, *A Wrinkle in Time* trilogy (back then it was a trilogy), *The Chronicles of Narnia*, every Judy Blume book, and too many *Nancy Drew* books to count. In fact, I would sit down after breakfast on Saturdays with a *Nancy Drew* mystery and have it finished by supper. And of course, writing stories did not lag far behind learning how to read them.

Role Models

The first time I saw the power and potential of a girl, and later a woman, was in Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time* books. Meg was strong and held her own ground. She did not have special powers and she was not a superhero, but she did what was right. Her love for her family always compelled her to do the right thing, no matter what it cost her personally. Meg showed me that regardless of what age you were, you could change the world for the better.

I lived in books filled with girls and women with whom I could relate. I grew up with a complementarian model of who a woman was supposed to be, but I never fit in that mold. I was neither quiet nor submissive, and I was not very proper. I was competitive, opinionated, aggressive, and willing to defend my beliefs. In books I found woman like me, women I wanted to be like.

I will never forget meeting Eowyn in *The Two Towers* and journeying with her through *Return of the King*.



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Writing the World Right, Continued

She was the first woman I met who was also a warrior. She defied the customs of her time, went into battle, and fought for what she believed in. She was the one who destroyed the evil king of the Nazguls. In Eowyn, I found a sister.

Seeing Humanity in Others

But fiction has done more than just show me what women can do. The genres of science fiction and fantasy have also helped me to understand what it means to be human. There is a great potential for truth-telling in these genres. I think that is because the worlds in science fiction and fantasy are not "our" world. Because it is not "us," "our" culture, "our" world, we can say things that are not readily received in other forums. Over the years, these genres have confronted the prejudices of our world, battling discrimination based on sex, religion, and ethnicity, and going even further to ask, "What does it mean to be human?"

In *Children of God*, Mary Doria Russell weaves the stories of human and alien through religion. On the world of Rakhat, there are two species: the Jana'ata and the Runa. The Jana'ata will eat the Runa for survival and to maintain the population. Two of the human characters in the book are a Jewish woman, Sofia Mendes, and her autistic son, Isaac. Joining them is Ha'anala, a member of the Jana'ata. Sofia teaches them the Jewish faith. The biblical views begin to change the way Ha'anala looks at her world, and the way she sees the Runa. She realizes all of them are created by God. When she is older, she forms a group where the Runa are treated as equals, which becomes a catalyst for starting change in her world.

Meanwhile, Isaac has limited speech and dislikes noise. He wants silence and clarity. He works continually on a hand-held computer, looking for what he calls clarity. At the end of the book we find out what he was working on: a symphony. Isaac "understands the world solely through song, memorizes the genetic codes of the three races into three intercalating tone-rows, and harmonizes them" (John Clute, "[Excessive Candour](#)"). He calls his composition "The Children of God." The humans, the Runa, and the Jana'ata are all God's children. The book ends with a question: Where will these three races—all children of God—go from here? *Children of God* makes us think: what does it mean to be made in the image of God? To be God's children? Do we really consider those who are "other" (different races, cultures, or ethnicities) as God's children? Would we use and exploit other people if we saw them as children of God, or would we radically change the way we live as Jana'ata did?

Neil Gaiman creates London Below in *Neverwhere: A Novel*. A whole world lives beneath the streets of London in old tunnels long forgotten. London Below is populated by those who are considered misfits by the inhabitants of London Above. The residents of London Below are seen as homeless, dirty,

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Writing the World Right, Continued

and destitute. The people of London Above do not even see them; they look right past them. The dwellers of London Below have to talk to them to be seen, but once the conversation is over, the London Abovers forget all about it. Those who reside in London Below are unseen and forgotten people. This challenges the reader to examine how we see people. How do we view those who are considered "misfits"? Do we look past them? Do we see them at all?

Both of these books remind me of the core church doctrine that every single human being on the face of this planet is made in God's image. What do we do with this doctrine, once it is truly realized? Are we able to handle the responsibility this places upon us? What about those we take advantage of, simply because we can? Are there certain people who are invisible to us, who we look through on the street? Fiction has challenged me, throughout my life, to encounter these hard questions, and ask what it means to be human. God not only created every human being, but he created them in his own image. I must constantly remind myself to remember this, to live out what I believe.

Male and Female in the Image of God

Lately these questions about humanity have morphed into an examination of what it means to be made in the image of God as males and females. What does it mean to be a woman created in the image of God?

I am not sure I have found the answer in fiction. But I do know one image from a book that points me in the right direction: Eowyn and Merry in *The Return of the King*. They ride into battle together, fight together, and defend each other until they are both down. Eowyn does kill the King of the Nazgul, but she could never have done it without the help of Merry. When I think of men and women, made in the image of God, this is what I see. Brothers and sisters standing side by side, fighting the evil in our world that would belittle or ignore any person made in God's image, and building God's kingdom together.



SHAWNA R.B. ATTEBERRY is a freelance writer. She holds a BA in religion and and MA in theological studies. She attends Grace Episcopal Church in Chicago. She and her husband, Tracy, make their home in Chicago with their cat Victoria. You can found out more about Shawna at her website: ShawnaAtteberry.com

“How do we view those who are considered ‘misfits’? Do we look past them? Do we see them at all?”



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Genesis and the Gender Reformation

Excerpt from 95 More for the Door

Austin H. Stouffer

Inspired by Martin Luther's attempts to reform Christianity by nailing ninety-five theses to the door of a church, Austin H. Stouffer has written his own ninety-five theses intended to spark a gender reformation. Two of his theses are excerpted below:

Thesis #12: Adam's sin is not in the act of listening to his wife, but in disobeying God.

To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it'. . ."
(Genesis 3:17)

If you are convinced that women should never take leadership roles in church settings, you will probably agree with Ray Ortlund, who has written that Adam sinned by listening to Eve: "He abandoned his headship...this moral failure in Adam led to his ruination" (110). Pawson goes even further, stating that "In taking a 'feminine role,' Adam was abdicating his position" (24). Such statements can easily become grounds to condemn Eve for causing Adam to sin and, consequently, restrict all women for all time from leading or teaching men. That's why Pawson and others will not ordain women or let them be elders, etc. Consider what he says about Eve: "Her assuming the role of leadership had disastrous consequences *and must not be followed by other women*" (75, emphasis mine).

Yes, God said, "Because you listened to your wife..." but the sentence doesn't stop there. I'm fairly sure God would not have minded if Adam had listened to *good* advice from Eve. The sin in question here is not men listening to their wives, or wives being so bold that they share their opinions with their husbands, it is that *after* Adam listened to her, he chose an action that was directly contrary to the command that an Almighty God had previously addressed to *him*.

Thesis #13: Adam's dominance and Eve's submission sadly describe reality in a fallen world.

"Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you"
(Genesis 3:16)

The second half of v. 16 strikes me as one of the saddest verses in the Bible. Every time I read it, I think of the thousands of couples I have counselled. Over and over, this short declaration succinctly sums up so many dysfunctional marriages: "*Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.*"



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Genesis and the Gender Reformation, Continued

The second chapter of Genesis ends with celebration and jubilation as both Adam and Eve revel in the joy of a perfect, harmonious, reciprocal one-flesh union. Then sin enters and brings with it lust, pride, ambition, dominance, manipulation, lies and dysfunction. It was terrible for both of them! For Adam, the joy of tending a perfect garden is replaced with back-breaking labor, thistles, lost communication with God and the ever-present fear of death. In the beginning they shared authority and companionship—Eve was always part of the solution—but now Adam works alone and receives very little sympathy from her. With no other tools at his disposal, how easy it is to begin imposing his greater physical strength to command and intimidate.

For Eve, the memories of passionate, tender moments together with her lover are replaced with unrequited love. She longs to have her lover back, but only gets an angry, selfish stranger who is unable, or unwilling, to tenderly treat her as an equal. It is not surprising that Bilezikian (267) and Fleming (40) both include a haunting quotation by then Harvard Divinity School Ph.D. candidate Carol Castor Howard, as she describes the grim reality: *"The woman wants a mate and she gets a master; she wants a lover and she gets a lord; she wants a husband and she gets a hierarch."*

Surely, this cannot be what God intended. So, what must we conclude? It is painfully apparent that God's words to Eve in Genesis 3:16 are not meant to be a *decree of how things should be* after the Fall, but rather a *description of how things would be* because of the Fall.

This excerpt is taken from 95 More for the Door by Austin H. Stouffer, © 2008, first published by Word Alive Press. Reprinted with permission, all rights reserved.

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AUSTIN H. STOUFFER received an MDiv from Providence College and Seminary and a DMin from Fuller Seminary. Ordained with the Evangelical Free Church, Dr. Stouffer has served several pulpits and taught counseling at Trinity Western University and Seminary. Now retired from pulpit ministry, he and his wife Eleanor enjoy their daily armchair view of the smashing waves of Lake Superior, on the edge of Thunder Bay, Ontario, where he still maintains a small counseling practice.



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Priscilla's Letter:

Finding the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews

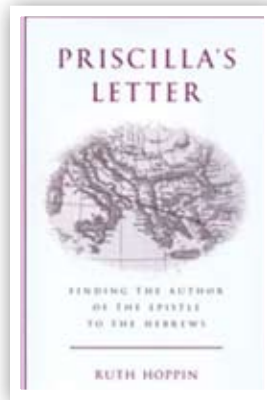
By Ruth Hoppin, Reviewed by Estella B. Horning

Ruth Hoppin has spent decades researching Adolf Harnack's hypothesis that Priscilla wrote the biblical Epistle to the Hebrews. A first book, *Priscilla, Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, was published in the late 1960s. Since that time additional relevant material has been published, some of it related to the Dead Sea Scrolls. This book is an update which takes such material into account.

Hoppin begins by calling attention to the mysterious anonymity of the author of Hebrews, who is obviously a highly competent biblical scholar, a widely respected leader of the early church, colleague of Timothy and probably of Paul. How could such a person be unknown and unnamed, yet have written a work so widely known and revered?

Hoppin then examines clues in the text of Hebrews itself: in the title, the use of pronouns, and in the postscript (Heb 13:22-25) with its references to Timothy and other leaders, mention of "they of Italy," and the strange apology of 13:22. Next Hoppin constructs a psychological profile of the author and explores the questions: Is the author feminine? Does the author identify with women? Hoppin reviews the centuries-old speculation regarding authorship of Hebrews, concluding that of the available candidates, only Priscilla meets all the qualifications. Acknowledging the historical ties of this Epistle to Rome and noting its textual connections with Timothy, Hoppin concludes that Priscilla wrote from Rome to the church in Ephesus where she was an acknowledged and respected pastoral leader.

This book indicates extensive and up-to-date acquaintance with the literature and commentaries, and presents a convincing argument for Priscilla's authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Hoppin's thesis is based on the hypothesis of Harnack, which was further elaborated by other scholars. She has also tied together information from the narratives of Acts, archaeological discoveries, inscriptions in the catacombs of Rome, historical mention of probable contacts with Peter and Philo, and Priscilla's relationship to Paul as identified in the New Testament. I recommend this book to any scholar who is concerned with the message, author and setting



“How could such a person be unknown and unnamed, yet have written a work so widely known and revered?”



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Priscilla's Letter, Continued

of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Hoppin's work might also be of interest to feminist biblical scholars who try to analyze, identify and understand the role of women in leadership of the early church.

This article first appeared in Priscilla Papers (Fall 1998, Volume 12, Issue 4, p. 22) and is used with permission.

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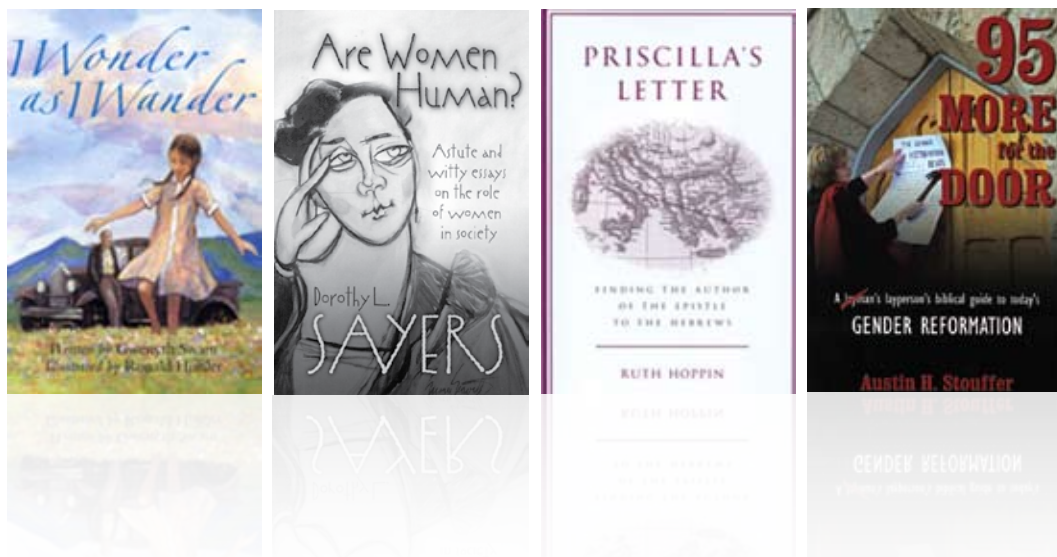
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CBE's Summer Conference

Christians for Biblical Equality will host a conference called "Are Men from Mars and Women from Venus? A Biblical Response to Gender Difference" in St. Louis, Missouri on July 24-26, 2009. Conference speakers and attendees will explore how Scripture, home, church, society, and government assign meaning to gender.

"Gender affects everything we do," explains Megan DeFranza, who is scheduled to speak at the conference, "the ways we think, feel, read the Bible, educate, and minister. Most of these ways go unexamined in our lives and in our churches. CBE's summer conference gives us an opportunity to reexamine our gendered habits in light of Scripture and some of the finest evangelical research available to date."

Many speakers who will be presenting that research at the conference are professors, advisors, anthropologists, Bible scholars, and leaders in their fields.

The four general sessions at the conference are intended to be accessible to all people. Dr. Brian Howell will open the conference with "Culture Matters: Why Culture Affects Our Understanding of Gender in Life and Scripture." Dr. Miriam Adeney, during her general session, will discuss how culture empowers women, and Dr. Jenell Williams Paris will present her research on how Christian media affects gender roles. The conference will close with the Rev. Dr. Cheryl Sanders' "The Bible as a Guide and Roadmap for the Liberation of African American Women." In addition to these general sessions, there are twenty different workshops that will accommodate conference attendees' wide range of interests, educational backgrounds, and familiarities with biblical equality.

The ministry of CBE is to educate and empower people with the biblical foundations for gift-based rather than gender-based ministry, and to encourage others to take up this same mission. "[The conference is] a place where those who are on the front lines—lay women and men who are advocating for biblical equality in the church—come to be refreshed, challenged, and encouraged by like-minded individuals," said David Csinos, also scheduled to speak in St. Louis.

Community dinners, the silent auction, and the authors' autograph party are a time of social interaction with speakers and other attendees. The on-site conference bookstore will offer attendees books and curriculum written by conference speakers and other egalitarian leaders, as well as CDs of general sessions and workshops recorded over the conference weekend. It is CBE's prayer that our forthcoming conference will strengthen, prepare, and energize attendees to return home to their churches and communities and create change.

For more information about the conference, visit www.cbeinternational.org.



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Each week, we send members and donors updates on their contributions and member benefits. To do so requires a great deal of data management—which is very time consuming. But there is new technology available that would make this tedious effort a thing of the past! The software is called Queue—a program that prepares donor receipts and membership renewal notices automatically. It then reminds staff to run a feature that e-mails and prints donor and member communication—cutting our staff time in half, giving staff more time for other projects.

Best of all, Queue is affordable. To purchase the software, install, and train staff costs \$4,110. Yearly maintenance runs \$658. For just under \$5,000 CBE will free up about 20 hours of staff time per week. In salary dollars, we save over \$20,000 a year!

Friends, when times get tough, God shows us how to work smarter. Will you help us become even better stewards of God's resources?

Through a generous donation, we can begin 2009 with technology that frees our staff to serve more widely! Please make a generous gift today.

Thank you for being part of God's answer to our prayers. We all wish you a very joyous New Year!

In Jesus, who is faithful,

Mimi Haddad
President

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