

Some do, some don't Letters
Blue are emails to me. Burgundy is my reply.

You really need to pray and ask God to reveal His Word to you. You are being misled.

A Christian lady

Thank you so much for writing. I deeply appreciate you taking the time to respond.

In today's Religion section of the Houston Chronicle, there is a story about a PBS documentary, The Mosque in Morgantown. In the interview with this Muslim woman, the question was:

"Was your fight about the role of women or about reaching a moderate Islam?"

Answer: "It's really about moderate Islam. Women are the canaries in the coal mine. They are an indicator of how you interpret the rest of your faith - are you going to have a literal read on verses that justify domestic violence and suicide bombings?"

Question: "Why was your campaign for gender equality inside the mosque so important?"

Answer: A society can't move forward as long as half the population is oppressed and subjugated. We have some of the most talented and inspiring women in our community, yet when they go to the mosque they're told to sit in the corner and shut up."

Now you very upset with what I have just written because you are sure that we are nowhere near treating our women like the Muslims do. But we are not far from it. Did you know that for 40 years at the annual meetings of the Southern Baptist Convention, the WMU (Women's Missionary Union) could not stand and read their report until 1927? It had to be read by a man. Read this excerpt below from a Southern Baptist Historian. I am attaching his whole article which was written in 1987 so you can see the history of Baptist women evolve. This step for women to be pastors and deacons is just another step. You probably have big screens in your church services, and sing praise songs. That, too, is an evolvment, designed to reach the younger generation and which befuddles the older generation.

After the Woman's Missionary Union was formed in 1888, the WMU prepared an annual report to the convention. Though women wrote the report, they could not present it; for the first forty years the annual report was read to the convention by a man. (1888 to 1928). When the president of WMU first gave her own report, it proved so controversial that several men walked out rather than witness such desecration.² For several years, it was customary for the convention to move from the church sanctuary to the Sunday

School assembly rooms when it was time for the WMU report, so that a woman would not stand behind a pulpit.

We have had an almost irrational fear of women even standing in the pulpit, whether they were preaching or not.

H. Leon McBeth, professor of church history, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, presented this address at the annual meeting of the Historical Commission, SBC, and Southern Baptist Historical Society in Birmingham, Alabama, in April, 1987. (<http://www.baptisthistory.org/womeninbaptistlife.htm>)

Shirley Taylor
bWe Baptist Women for Equality

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Dear bWe,
Please keep the dialogue going. I am a pastor in Texas and have been praying for something like this to happen. In the church that I pastor, we are talking about this!!

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bWe
Please do not send me Email. I am sorry that you feel the only way you can serve God to do what he said not to do. I pray for your pride. In addition, if you are not happy with the Baptist Faith, Choose another, or do what so many others have done, start your own. However, you'll find no support here for women pastors. Read your Bible!

Thank you so much for your reply. I have read the Bible. Baptists believe in the priesthood of the believer and this believer sees a loving God who has created women in His own image, who has made her soul just as worthy as a man's is. When we get to Heaven, your soul and mine will look just alike.

In my email I express the thought "I wonder if humbleness is only for women and not for men, also." While you are praying for my pride, be sure to pray for your own prideful attitude that God made you a male.

Jonah 4:5-11 (Today's English Version)
Jonah went out east of the city and sat down. He made a shelter for himself and sat in its shade, waiting to see what would happen to Nineveh. Then the Lord God made a plant grow up over Jonah to give him some shade, so that he would be more comfortable. Jonah was extremely pleased with the plant. But at dawn the next day, at God's command, a worm attacked the plant, and it died. After the sun had risen, God sent a hot east wind, and Jonah was about to faint from the heat of the sun beating down on his head. So he wished he were dead. "I am better off dead than alive," He said.

But God said to him, "What right do you have to be angry about the plant?"

Jonah replied, "I have every right to be angry - angry enough to die!"

The Lord said to him, "This plant grew up in one night and disappeared the next; you didn't do anything for it and you didn't make it grow - yet you feel sorry for it! How much more then, should I have pity on Nineveh, that great city. After all, it has more than 120,000 innocent children in it, as well as many animals."

The point I am making is this. God is telling Jonah that he has the right to change his mind when it comes to mercy. Wouldn't you call giving women more status than being a husband's property, mercy? Wouldn't you call allowing women to spread the gospel and baptize the masses of lost people, mercy? Wouldn't you call having women minister to the sick and dying as a hospital Chaplain, mercy? Wouldn't you call allowing your daughter to stay at home to preach instead of having her go to Turkey or Kosovo or any place where her life is in danger, mercy?

Jonah, can't you have mercy on a lost and dying world that needs to hear the gospel of Jesus - whether from a woman's mouth, or from a man's mouth?

Shirley Taylor

His rely

I do pray for myself daily. It is a must. Thank you for your prayers. I do have two questions for you in this quest.

1) Why do you think that the Baptist community needs to whole heartedly accept what you believe? First off, All Baptist church units operate independent of any organization. The SBC doesn't tell ANY church what to believe. If the first Baptist Church of Wherever wanted YOU to be their pastor, then they could elect you as pastor. Nothing to stop them. No one to answer to. Even the local associations would have a hard time getting that church's membership from the COOP revoked. So what may I ask is stopping you from doing this?

2) Why not just join a denomination that accepts women as pastors. Methodist, Pentecostal, Church of God, and independents all over America do this without anyone stopping them. So why not just go be a pastor? See it has been since the beginning, Baptists make no effort to hide what we believe, how we worship. It's out in the open. So why are you so bent on trying to change something that is so transparent?

Believe what you want, translate how you will, but a woman will NEVER be the husband of one wife. Of course, I am sure that you could also do what a lot of Baptists have done and write your own Bible to fit your needs. Oh, and point your finger at all us "Pride laden, blind, bigoted,

woman bashing, hate speech filled baptists." That was sarcasm, just so you read that sentence correctly.

(The next email)

Oh in addition There is nothing preventing a women from leading someone to Christ. That job is not the sole property of a male preacher/pastor, that is EVERYONE's responsibility. Leading the lost to Christ and Pastoring a church are not one in the same.

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Shirley:

I'm sure the battle you fight is filled with both joy and pain. Hang in there, and thank you for putting me on your mailing list. I was a senior pastor for 24 years at 2 SBC churches before God called me to a new ministry of small groups. "Church" is not just the institutional kind, but also meetings that take place in homes, businesses, restaurants and coffee shops. George Barna believes these kind of groups will account for as much of the Christian expression as institutional churches by the year 2025.

If any of your ladies would like to start and pastor a small group like this, send them my way. They are welcome.

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bWe: Immediately remove this email address from any further correspondence.

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Praise to the Lord and Father....

I am a widow of a Baptist Pastor..who at this very moment is holding his head and saying OH no she is going to respond to this one....

I have to start off by saying I agree with you completely...In the church where I serve our Jesus, I already teach and preach every Sunday morning (In Sunday School Class) I have a co-ed class, and they get the word declared to them rightly dividing the truth.....

I have been invited to come speak in the _____ at a women's conference. I will preach there also. I have a brother in the Lord who already calls me his deaconess. So what am I saying? I am saying hang in there and let us all speak out for women's rights, but in the time being just allow God to use you how ever He calls you at this very moment.

I agree that the word for the front to the back was given to be spoken to those who stand in need of it. Now whether or not I have Pastor before my name makes no difference to me. Because God has called each of us as ministers...So go out there and preach sister....Preach the word to the lost and unbelieving and you know what His word will not come back null and void.... I stand in His present and on His word of authority...

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I've read information on your website and resonate with what your organization is about.

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Please remove me from your mailing list. Thank you and God bless you.

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Please remove me from your emailing list. You are endorsing an unbilical arrangement. I will look forward to no more contacts from you or any of your associates. There are those who build and there are those during a time of the need to build who insist on selfishly destroying. Your work will in fact be divisive and destructive and the lost world will find another reason to scoff. Thanking you prayerfully ahead of time for your cooperation.

Pastor, there is no good time for women to speak up. If I waited until a good time, that would never happen. It seems that it is not divisiveness to keep a woman in her place, but to allow her freedom is.

I will remove your name. Thank you for letting me know.

Shirley Taylor
bWe Baptist Women for Equality

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I'm unsure how you acquired my email address and though I fully support equality for all individuals, I believe we may differ in recognizing differences in mutual and complementary roles. Without knowing much about your organization, I can only hope and pray that your efforts for equality are not comparable to the men of the other extreme.

I pray God's blessing on you as you continue to seek Him day-by- day, and grow in your love for

him and for those who have yet to know him. Please keep God's love in you for the lost your primary mission.

Mutually submitted to our amazing God,

Thanks for your reply. I was standing in a large Baptist church yesterday singing praise songs with all the congregation. I looked at the young women in front of me and all the college kids over to the side, and wondered if they knew that their church would let the women go only so far, and no further. Tears came to my eyes as I grieved for those young woman who are being told that just because God made her a woman she cannot serve Him fully as He calls her - not in this church. The pastor challenged them to be the voice for their generation. How much voice do the girls have?

I have no idea what is meant by "the men of the other extreme." Pardon my lack of knowledge.

I really do appreciate your replying. That was thoughtful of you. Please take a moment to look at my website. I am not a radical. Just a woman who became convinced in 2000 that women are getting the short end of the stick.

We may share similar frustrations with the "conservative" politicians of the SBC, and my comment assuming you may be as extreme as the "men of the extreme" may have been hasty since I have yet to read your site. However, at an initial perusal I felt I was able to grasp enough of your perspective.

Just out of curiosity (and some irony), I am currently reading "Biblical Eldership", have you read it?

I believe that women should be equal with men in spiritual matters. I had to think long and hard about women pastors, but came to realize that there is only one definition for equal - and the SBC doesn't have it right.

I have not read Biblical Eldership. If it is a book that recognizes women's role as equals, then it is probably a good book. If it goes into contortions to describe why women should be kept in their place, as the Trinitarians try to equate women submitting as Jesus and the Holy Spirit do to the Father, then I wouldn't care to read it.

On this I stand, as Martin Luther said.
Thanks for the dialogue. I appreciate the opportunity.

Shirley Taylor

Thanks for the dialogue, Shirley. I too enjoy a little banter to keep the sword sharp. But I fear we may end up slicing each other to pieces if we carry on too long. ;-) For example, I would be quite hesitant to use Martin Luther's words for anything short of his intended defense of salvation by faith.

Yet, I appreciate your convictions and will submit to you as my sister in Christ as in reverence to the Lord. If we, God's children, can't live in harmony amid disagreement or degrees of difference in understanding, how would ever want to be a part of our family?!?

And we are family! It is in this that we can have agreement in God's sovereign grace, I sincerely hope. For also as Martin Luther said: in charity. Press on, my sister, that our heavenly Father might receive all glory.

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I reply to every letter received. All letters and responses are not listed here. Please continue to write.