

Mission/Vision

We value women and their response to God's calling in their lives and will put up no barriers to women serving God in the same capacity as men do.

Special points of interest:

- Prejudice against women in our country
- Baptist churches need to enter 21st Century in women's rights.
- Don't quote the Apostle Paul unless you know what he actually said.
- You can help change your church's By-laws to allow women deacons.

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Open Letter to Baptists

bWe—Baptist Women for Equality for Women Deacons and Women Pastors

January 2009

bWe—Baptist Women for Equality

This letter is for you if you believe women should be able to serve in your church fully according to God's calling in her life.

Even if you think everything is all right in your church, please consider those other churches where women can be Ministers to Children, Ministers to Youth, Ministers to Women, can be on all committees which make church policy and pertain to theology, and financial matters, but who cannot serve a piece of bread and cup of juice.

Do you know why your

church does not have women deacons? It can be found in the "the cold heart of the church" which is your church's By-laws. Church By-laws can be changed. When women decide that enough is enough, the cold heart of the church will be changed to include women as Deacons and accept women as Pastors.

I invite you to email this Open Letter to your church family and Baptist friends. Women in Baptist churches are beginning to wake up to the fact that our denomination is out of touch with us.



Shirley Taylor is a life-long Baptist. She was a ministry assistant in the Church Starting Center of Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT) and worked in the Field Office in Conroe, Texas for over 14 years. Shirley and her husband Don have been married 47 years and have two sons, and three granddaughters. Shirley is committed to promoting women in leadership roles.

The cold heart of the church—the By-laws

The cold heart of the church is found in its By-laws. It is where the church decides that women cannot be deacons. Every church has By-laws. As a church member you have a right to have a copy of or to see what your church has in writing as to why women are not allowed to be deacons. These By-laws are voted upon by the

members of the church and are public knowledge. They can be changed. Churches change By-laws whenever they want to institute a new policy or adjust an old one. A sample copy of a church's By-laws that reflect the qualifications and duties of deacons can be found on the internet. Go to <http://www.churchplantingvillage.net>.

No woman wants her church to argue over whether or not she is scripturally qualified to be a deacon or Pastor

**We have held
on to this
Middle Eastern
discrimination
against women
far too long**

But what about 1 Timothy 3:8-13

1 Timothy 3:8-13 (NIV)

⁸ Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. ⁹ They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰ They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.

¹¹ In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.

¹² A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well. ¹³ Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.

Men could and did have more than one wife at a time in Paul's day. In our own country, some men do even now. What he said wasn't against women, it was against men, and their fleshly lust.

Paul was speaking in a time

where women were the property of men, had little education, and could not publicly speak to men who were not members of their family. We have held on to this Middle Eastern discrimination in our churches against women far too long.

Women in the United States had hardly any rights until the 20th century. Women today take their equality for granted, and foolishly give it up because of a misinterpretation of the Apostle Paul's words.

**The Civil Rights
Act of 1964
opened the
door for women**

Did you know

-Many jobs were off limits to women before the 1964 Civil Rights Act.*

-Before then, companies could require married women to quit their jobs when they became pregnant.

-If a woman's husband died, she had no credit record of her own. (1980)

-It was not until 1980 that the

U.S. Census allowed women to be listed as "Head of Household."

-Giving away the Bride harks back to the Middle Eastern culture where women were the property of men.

-Wearing a veil during a wedding is a Middle Eastern culture custom which did not allow other men to look upon the face of the bride.

*The Civil Rights Act of 1964 is mainly thought of as a law that was designed to end discrimination of Blacks. And it was, but the wording says "because of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. This opened the door for women to take on sales jobs with higher commissions which were normally given only to men, and a host of other positions that we accept as normal today.

**Hear
a woman
preach**

Good Reading

Bread Givers, by Anzia Yezierska, 1925 (Persea Books)

The End of Manners, by Francesca Marciano, 2008, (Random House Publisher)

Founding Mothers, the women who raised our nation, by Cokie Roberts, 2007, (William Morrow & Co. Publishers)

A Thousand Splendid Suns, by Khaled Hosseini, 2007 (Riverhead Books Publisher)

Links

www.fbcdecatur.com
(hear a woman preach)

www.bwim.info/
www.mainstreambaptists.org
www.baptisthistory.org/
Go to
contissues/deweese3.htm

www.baptistwomeninministry.org
www.bwimnc.org

At the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem, women cannot pray with men and recently the orthodox Jews demanded a separate entrance for women. They say that the men cannot concentrate on their prayers because they hear the women praying. They say the voice of a woman is enticing.

Women cannot sing with men in the synagogues. The women sit behind the men to worship.

We are not very far from that. Ask a woman what she thinks

of a woman preacher. She won't call her voice enticing, but what she will say is this: I think a woman should be able to preach, but I don't want a woman for a pastor.

The reason is that we don't like women's voices. We are accustomed to hearing the authoritative voice of a man in the pulpit and still hold those prejudices.

If God listens to a woman's prayer, then He must like women's voices.

If God listens to a woman's prayer, He must like women's voices

Baptist Faith and Message 2000

In 2000 when the Baptist Faith and Message came out I wrote the President of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and asked him what had women done that Baptists had to re-write the 1998 BF&M. That was when I began to realize that we Baptists hold women in total disregard compared to how Jesus felt about women.

The Southern Baptist Convention has shown a mean-spirit toward women and they

are getting ready to do it again in June 2009. There is a motion to amend the SBC's constitution to disallow affiliation by "churches which have female senior pastors."

We allow women to become Ministers to Children, Youth Ministers, Ministry to Women and education. Women serve on committees where their voices are heard alongside of the men. By these things, we have already compromised our

views on women in authority.

If we truly believe that women should not have authority over a man, then we should not allow women any voice in church matters.

However, the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 does not say only men can be deacons, it just says that women are not to be pastors. The decision remains in the hands of the individual church.

The SBC has consistently shown a mean-spirit toward women

Two-part salvation plan for women

1 Timothy 2:11-15 (NIV) A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. But women will be saved through childbearing—if they

continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.

When the Apostle Paul is quoted as saying that he does not permit a woman to speak in church, we stop short of what he actually said. He gave a reason why women should be quiet in church. There is not a reasonable man or woman in church today who believes what Paul went on to say. Paul said that women will be saved in a two-step salvation plan:

having a baby and being good.

Women are tired of being bullied by men in Baptist churches with selected quotes from Paul.

Women are tired of being bullied by men in Baptist churches with selected quotes from Apostle Paul

How you can help

If you would like to be a part of **bWe Baptist Women for Equality -- for Women Deacons and Women Pastors**, which seeks to bring Southern Baptists into the 21st Century, please contact me by email. 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, sisters, and granddaughters find the freedom Jesus has promised them and for them to be able to serve a cup of juice and piece of bread in their Baptist church.

Please forward this Open Letter to Baptists to all your Baptist friends and neighbors.

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Questions to ask

"You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel." Matt 23:24 (NIV)

Instead of churches arguing whether or not they want to have women as deacons, we should be asking these questions.

-What are we are afraid of?

-What about other denominations that love the Lord and also allow women to be deacons, elders, and Pastors?

-What about other Southern Baptist churches that allow women to be deacons and Pastors?

-Why do we think that if churches are released from this Middle Eastern view of women

that our churches will be full of homosexuals, liberal social views, etc?

-What damage is it doing to our young girls and women in the church today who feel the call of God?

-Are we afraid that men will drop out of church if a woman is the pastor?

-Why do we send women to the mission field if they "cannot have authority over men."

-Just what do we hope to accomplish by hanging on to this rejection of women as deacons?

-Are we afraid of losing our denominational beliefs – what will it do to Baptists if we do change?

-What will we say to God when He asks us why we didn't use the people He has called?

Since we allow women to be the voice to our children to bring them to salvation, how can we deny them any position God calls them to fill.

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Equality for women is not theirs to give, but ours to claim.