

The Evil Twins
of Racism and Sexism

False Rape Accusations:
Is Mrs. Potiphar to Blame?

Telling My Secrets
of Childhood Abuse

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Adventist *Today*

**HOW SMALL
DO YOU WANT
ME TO BE?**





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Is Mrs. Potiphar to Blame?

By Lindsey Abston Painter

Awhile back when Dr. Christine Blasey Ford testified against Judge Brett Kavanaugh, I wrote a piece for *Adventist Today.org* about believing women who share their stories of sexual assault.¹ Though I've written many controversial articles, about everything from gun control to my divorce, the response to this one surprised me the most. The number of people who worried that this "poor, vulnerable" federal judge would have his life ruined by false allegations against him was alarming and confusing to me. From reading the comments on my piece, one might conclude that every man is terrified at every moment, lest a woman make a false claim against him.

More than one of the angry comments mentioned the biblical account of Joseph and Potiphar's wife. By the time I finished reading, I had a headache from excessive eye rolling. As I went to search for some Advil, I stopped to ponder Potiphar's wife and Joseph.

Let's assume that Joseph was totally blameless; that a rejected woman, in her anger, accused him falsely; and he was consequently thrown into prison. That's a pretty sobering story.

But then I pull back my biblical lens and try to see the picture from a wider perspective. What about the women in Scripture who had every right to make an accusation of rape but *didn't*? Were there any of them?

Silly question. The Bible is full, from cover to cover, of stories of women being brutalized—some by villains, but many by biblical heroes. Bathsheba, for example, probably wasn't thrilled about the peeping-tom king who "requested" her presence in his bed and then killed her husband. And Moses commanded his army to kill all of the Midianite women except the virgins, whom the soldiers got to "keep for themselves." It doesn't sound like the Israelites bothered to secure consent from the captive virgins. Then we read how Lot offered his two daughters to be gang-raped—thanks, Dad!—and they were saved not by the intervention of their father, but by angels who struck the mob with blindness. More

than one of the beloved patriarchs had sex—and children—with their slave women. How consensual is sex with someone who literally owns you?

Of course, these biblical stories of countless brutalized women don't justify a false accusation by one woman. But it puts the story of Potiphar's wife into a larger perspective, doesn't it?

The False-Accusation Myth

President Trump famously said that "it's a very scary time for young men in America," implying that false accusations are rampant. But how common are they, really?

Since so many women never report their rape, it is difficult to get accurate statistics on rape or on false rape accusations. Analysts estimate that somewhere between 2 percent and 10 percent of rape accusations are considered false. The higher end of that range includes cases that lack enough evidence to convict the accused (okay, but remember the unprocessed evidence in thousands of rape kits found in police storage all over the country?²), cases in which the accuser changes her story or gives conflicting accounts (perhaps because she's gone through a horrible trauma), or instances when police unilaterally decide they don't believe the victim and report it as false (it happens more often than you'd think) or where the accusation doesn't meet the legal definition of rape (such as groping over clothing). Also, it is a common practice for police to threaten victims with legal consequences if their report is deemed false, thus scaring them out of completing their report.

The result? Just 2 percent of reported rapes—one in 50—are determined to be false because an accuser is judged to be *intentionally lying*.³

I'd have a hard time believing that a greater percentage of false reports were made thousands of years ago, when women were regularly raped without any legal ramifications or social stigma. So if Joseph were innocent, then Mrs. Potiphar's allegation would fall, *at most*, among that 2 percent. Although not

Sadly, many Christians have used the Bible as a tool to oppress women instead of continuing the Bible's trend of lifting them to full equality.

to be taken lightly, it's hardly representative of a common problem and is, therefore, a rather strange choice for such a popular cautionary tale. Assuming this event was documented accurately, Mrs. Potiphar would be the single exception among the literally thousands of women in the Bible who were *actually* raped.

Can We Assume Joseph's Story Is True?

But what if we don't take Joseph's story at face value? What if this is someone's—presumably a man's—biased or inaccurate telling of what happened?

I ask because I'm an Agency Trainer for a social work agency that deals every day with people at risk for violence. Part of my job is to train all employees how to document an incident so each report is clear, accurate, and would hold up in court if there were any type of dispute.

The writers of the Bible had no such training. They often recorded stories that had been passed down by many generations through oral tradition, and undoubtedly some of the stories contained inaccuracies. The Bible writers also told these stories from their own culturally influenced, patriarchal perspective.

These biblical stories of countless brutalized women don't justify a false accusation by one woman. But it puts the story of Potiphar's wife into a larger perspective, doesn't it?

I believe we're justified in questioning Joseph's testimony against Mrs. Potiphar, based on what we know about Old Testament men. They had serious moral and character flaws, and almost all of them had problems with women. David had Bathsheba, drunken Lot had his daughters, Abraham had Sarah and Hagar, Isaac had Rebekah, Jacob had sisters Rachel and Leah in addition to their handmaids Bilhah and Zilpah, and Joseph had Potiphar's wife. *Please note that most of these stories of Bible heroes tended to blame the women.* David sinned because Bathsheba took off her clothes to take a bath. Lot blamed his daughters for making him drunk so they could get pregnant by him. Abraham blamed Sarah and Hagar for their scheme to give him a

child. Isaac blamed Rebekah for favoring Jacob over Esau and for devising a scheme to rob the latter of his birthright. Jacob blamed his quarreling sister wives for further complicating his already dysfunctional family by offering their handmaids to him as concubines. Judah blamed Tamar for wearing a veil so that he didn't recognize her when he solicited a prostitute, but when she got pregnant with the heir she deserved, he finally admitted, "She has been more righteous than I" (Gen. 38:26, NKJV).

Even in Eden, Adam blamed a woman at the first sign of trouble. Eve may have committed the first sin, but Adam followed almost immediately with his own sin when he told God: "It wasn't my fault. It was this woman." It seemed to be a biblical trend for the men to blame a woman when things went sideways in their lives. So why not Joseph—or whomever wrote his story?

The Bible's Women

The life of a woman in Old Testament times was terrible. She was the property of a man, in no way his equal, and hardly even his companion. The tenth commandment, for example, forbade coveting another man's wife in the same breath as coveting a man's donkey or his cow, because she was hardly more valuable to him than a beast.

Another odd passage says that if a priest's daughter married someone who is not a priest, she could no longer attend family religious events (Lev. 22:12-13). Like all women of her culture, she went directly from being her father's property to her husband's.

Then consider this charming law: "If a man happens to meet in a town a virgin pledged to be married and he sleeps with her, you shall take both of them to the gate of that town and stone them to death—the young woman because she was in a town and did not scream for help, and the man because he violated another man's wife. You must purge the evil from among you" (Deut. 22:23-24, NIV). Notice that the man was being punished because he devalued another man's property.

Remember, too, that polygamy was common in the Bible. The number of wives a king had (hundreds, in Solomon's case) was something his chroniclers bragged about. Polygamy was never renounced in the Old Testament or the New, with the single exception of church elders (1 Tim. 3:2, NIV). Nor did Scripture prohibit concubinage, which meant bringing a woman into the family as a non-wife sex partner. The assumption throughout was that a man could "own" as many women as he could get.

Jesus threw off some anti-female social norms by speaking with a Samaritan woman and by accepting a drink of water from her. He spent time with Mary and Martha, even teaching them from the Torah. In general, women were treated better in the New Testament than in the Old. But were they treated well, as full human beings with full rights? It's hard to make that case. Even though Paul at times complimented women who worked alongside of him, he also wrote diatribes about women keeping their "place" that make me cringe every time I come across them.

Since the trend of the Bible was to treat women better as time progressed, we could make the argument that one purpose of Scripture was to help human beings mature from where their culture had stalled to a higher moral and ethical level. If we stop where the Bible stops, however, we stop the trajectory.

Sadly, many Christians have used the Bible as a tool to oppress women instead of continuing the Bible's trend of lifting them to full equality.

Potiphar's Wife

Potiphar's wife is the exception that proves the rule—the one false accusation in the midst of thousands of cases of abuse that men drag up to justify their fear that even if they behave in a perfectly gentlemanly way, they risk being falsely accused as a result of associating with women. This is the kind of nonsense that leads to draconian measures such as the "Mike Pence rule," by which the vice president refuses to be alone in a room with any woman except his wife.

Why are men so afraid of Potiphar's wife? Her story keeps popping up because it is, among the many instances of rape described in the Bible, literally the only story that supports the false-accusation myth. Yet if we take the overall testimony of the Bible rather than this one story in isolation, shouldn't women be many more times more afraid of men than men are of women? In fact, if we're basing our fear on stories from the Bible, shouldn't men be more afraid of other men than they are of women?

The fact that there's so much traction for men's fear, given the extent of actual danger, shows that despite the push of the #MeToo movement, there's pretty good evidence that patriarchy is barely diminished at all.

So do I blame Mrs. Potiphar for being the prime example of a false rape allegation that Christian men routinely quote? Not really. She is of so little importance to the person who wrote the account that she isn't even given the dignity of a name. Whether her rape accusation was false or

true, we may never know. What we can know is that women deserve to be believed when they tell someone about an assault. In rare cases we will be proved wrong after giving the benefit of the doubt to a woman who reports a rape. But wouldn't we rather be wrong 1 out of 100 times in order to be right the other 99?

Rape is the only crime where the victim isn't immediately believed when the crime is reported. If someone calls 911 and says, "A man just broke into my house, held me at gunpoint, and stole my valuables!" the responder's first reaction isn't: "Well, I don't know, that sounds rather dramatic. It could be that you misunderstood what was happening. Had the person you mentioned ever been to your house before? If so, maybe you somehow led him to believe he could take whatever he wanted."

No. We begin by believing the victim. Of course, we then conduct an investigation. Believing the victim doesn't mean that we don't follow the law or that we convict an accused person without due process. What it means is that we start from a position of compassion and belief.

As for Brett Kavanaugh, his experience is more typical than most men would like to believe. I believe he did attempt to rape Christine Blasey in 1982, when they were both teenagers. The accusation became public. It was embarrassing to him, but he was not denied a seat on the Supreme Court. So who was really the loser? Was it Kavanaugh, who had to pay the "price" of being nationally embarrassed but was still granted advancement into a very successful lifetime career? Or was it Blasey Ford, who has had a lifetime of recovering from the trauma of a crime that was committed against her body?

If we're going to talk about fairness, maybe we could start there. **AT**

¹ Lindsey Abston Painter, "Judge Kavanaugh in the #MeToo Era," *Adventist Today* Online (Sept. 25, 2018). Online at atoday.org/judge-kavanaugh-in-the-metoo-era/.

² Jessica Contrera, "A Wrenching Dilemma," *The Washington Post*, Feb. 20, 2018. Online at www.washingtonpost.com/news/style/wp/2018/02/20/feature/decades-worth-of-rape-kits-are-finally-being-tested-no-one-can-agree-on-what-to-do-next/?utm_term=.8fb166e0d204.

³ According to the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice, the adjusted rate of false reporting is 2.1 percent. "Research shows that rates of false reporting are frequently inflated, in part because of inconsistent definitions and protocols, or a weak understanding of sexual assault." The report also admits that an estimated 63 percent of assaults against women are never reported to police. Online at www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/Publications_NSVRC_Overview_False-Reporting.pdf. According to Joanne Belknap, a sociologist, criminologist, and professor at the University of Colorado Boulder, that 2.1-percent figure for false rape accusations should be about 0.05 percent. See www.thecut.com/article/false-rape-accusations.html.



How Jesus Viewed Women:

Evil Temptresses, Household Drudges, or the Image of God?

BY SONJA DEWITT

TODAY, MANY PEOPLE SEE JESUS AS A SORT OF FOSSILIZED embodiment of ideal virtue—a conservative trying to return the wayward to “traditional values.” But the people of first-century Judea would not recognize that portrait. In fact, they would probably have laughed incredulously at it, for the Jesus of the Gospels was *far* from being a mild, conservative teacher of pious platitudes.

The common people saw him as a breath of fresh air—an energizing, if bewildering, force who swept through town healing and blessing and telling simple stories. His messages were so strange and counterintuitive that listeners often were left scratching their heads or, sometimes, exclaiming indignantly.

The religious leaders saw him as a radical, a rabble-rouser, and a troublemaker. A breaker of ancient taboos and a killer of sacred cows. Someone doing his best to undermine their traditional, righteous social structure—the ancient system of laws, regulations, and social organization given to them by God himself.

And nowhere was Jesus’ radicalism more evident, and more shocking and disturbing to his contemporaries, than in his interactions with women. In first-century Palestine, the status of women was only slightly above that of slaves. In fact, a typical slave’s lot was in many ways better. At a remove of over two millennia, it is nearly impossible for us to comprehend the severe repression and oppression women suffered in Jesus’ world.

Isolated, Mistrusted, Excluded

Historian Elisabeth Tetlow has concluded that ancient women were considered substantially inferior to men. She writes: “Male children were viewed as preferable to female children. Every morning each Jewish man prayed in thanksgiving to God that he had been created a man and not a woman.”¹

In Jewish writings dating from the time between the Testaments, Tetlow finds that “women were generally portrayed as temptresses and evil sex objects. Men were strongly advised to avoid all possible contact with women, except what was necessary for the procreation of children. Foreign women were thought to be especially dangerous. Moreover, rabbinic literature described women not only as evil temptresses, but also as witches and nymphomaniacs.”²

Women had little opportunity to disprove such theories, because Jewish culture kept adult females isolated from nearly all adult males. Tetlow writes that men were strongly advised not to have conversations with women and that “wives were generally to be confined to the home. In the presence of others, their heads had to be covered and faces veiled. When male guests were invited, women were not allowed to eat meals with their families.”³

Legally, women in Israel were considered the property of men. Their testimony was not accepted as evidence in court.⁴

Furthermore, Jewish women were excluded from education and even from study of the Torah.⁵ The Jerusalem Talmud notes the opinion of Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, a rabbi and scholar at the end of the first century and beginning of the second century, who stated, “Women’s wisdom is solely in the spindle,” and added, “The words of the Torah should be burned rather than entrusted to women.”⁶ He also said that “anyone who teaches his daughter Torah teaches her *tiflut*” [which is defined either as lasciviousness or as vanity and nonsense].⁷

Women were not allowed to actively participate in worship. They were not to recite the prayers at meals, and they could not be counted to make up a minyan (the quorum required to conduct a worship service). While any adult had the right, in theory, to preach in the synagogue, women were denied the opportunity to preach because they were physically segregated from men during services, and because they were not taught to read.⁸

Jesus the Revolutionary

If we do not understand Jewish culture during the intertestamental period, we can be oblivious to the revolutionary nature of Jesus’ treatment of women, expressed in numerous ways throughout the Gospels. By both his teaching and example, Jesus openly rejected the rigid traditional structures of society that oppressed women.

1. *Jesus traveled with women and allowed them to serve him.*

In a cultural setting where women rarely left their own houses and were not allowed to walk unveiled in public, several women were named in the Gospels as disciples who traveled in Jesus’ entourage across Palestine and served his daily needs (Mark 15:40-41). We can safely assume that other women, perhaps many who were not mentioned by name, also joined them.

2. *Jesus spoke to women he did not know—even foreign women.*

In a culture in which men were strongly discouraged from conversing with women, Jesus spoke to women regularly. Besides his own female disciples, he is recorded as speaking to the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:7-26); the sinful woman who washed his feet with her tears (Luke 7:36-40); the woman taken in adultery (John 8:3-11); the woman with an issue of blood (Mark 8:43-48); and the Syro-Phoenician woman (Mark 7:26-28).

What is even more extraordinary was that all of these women who were directly addressed by Jesus fell into one of three “forbidden” categories (women who were “fallen,” unclean, or foreign), making contact with them anathema for the observant Jew.

3. *Jesus allowed women to be his disciples and to learn from him.*

In an era when rabbis believed it would be better to burn the sacred books than to give religious instruction to women, Jesus allowed women to join the groups who listened to his teachings. Even more striking, Jesus took the time to share his teachings with women in more private settings. We are told explicitly that he taught his friend Mary of Bethany and that he encouraged her sister, Martha, to participate in study with him rather than engaging in the traditional “women’s tasks” of cooking and hostessing (Luke 10:38-42). He also initiated an extended one-on-one theological discussion with the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:10-26), and he debated with the Syro-Phoenician woman who begged him to heal her daughter (Matt. 15:21-28).

4. *Jesus touched women and allowed them to touch him.*

At a time when physical contact between men and women was strictly proscribed, and was supposed to be limited even between husband and wife, Jesus touched women and allowed them to touch him.

He took Jairus’ daughter by the hand when he raised her from the dead (Luke 8:41-42, 51-56). Even more shocking, he publicly acknowledged that a ceremonially unclean woman, who suffered from chronic menstrual bleeding, had touched him (Luke 8:43-48). According to the law of Moses, physical contact with her made Jesus ceremonially unclean until the evening, something good Jews avoided at all costs (Lev. 15:19).

But Jesus' most outrageous and scandalous action, from a first-century viewpoint, was allowing the sinful woman to anoint his feet. This offended Jewish sensibilities for multiple reasons: (1) the woman was a known prostitute; (2) she entered a room full of men, alone and uninvited; (3) she unbound her hair, in *public!* (4) she poured very expensive perfume on his body; and (5) according to Mark 14:3-9, she kissed his feet. Imagine the palpitations this behavior would have caused a good Pharisee in Jesus' time! It would raise more than a few eyebrows even today!

5. *Jesus commissioned women to be evangelists.*

The Samaritan woman at the well was perhaps the most successful evangelist mentioned in the Gospels (John 4:5-42). She told nearly everyone in her town about meeting Jesus, and many were converted (verses 39, 41). Mary Magdalene was arguably the first *Christian* evangelist, since Jesus deliberately chose her to be the first to share the news of his resurrection (John 20:1-18).

6. *Jesus explicitly rejected the rabbis' teaching that women were the source of lust and sexual sin.*

In an examination of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, one scholar explains: "Contrary to much Jewish thinking which tended to blame women for sexual sins, Jesus focuses all his attention on the male and the steps men must take to avoid falling into temptation. It is the man who looks at a woman lustfully in [Matthew 5] v. 28. It is the man who must tear out his right eye or cut off his right hand in vv. 29-30. It is the man who causes the woman to commit adultery in v. 32a or commits adultery himself in v. 32b."⁹

In a society that held women responsible for men's lust, Jesus laid the responsibility not on "lascivious women," but on those to whom it directly belonged: those who lust with their eyes and hearts.

7. *He rejected the common views on divorce.*

In Jesus' time, Jewish teaching on divorce was divided into two primary schools of thought: Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel. "[Followers of] Beit Shammai say, 'No man shall divorce his wife, unless he found in her unchaste behaviour, as it is stated [Deuteronomy 24:1], 'Because he found in her *'ervat davar'* [unchaste behavior].'" [Followers of] Beit Hillel say, 'Even if she spoiled his food, because it is said, *ervat davar.*' Rabbi Akivah says, 'Even if he found another [woman] prettier than her, as it is stated [ibid.], "If it happen that she does not find favor in his eyes."¹⁰

In a society where wives were considered an expendable commodity, to be exchanged at will for trivial reasons or even no reason at all, Jesus upheld the sacredness of the marriage bond, re-emphasized the equality of women in marriage, and reminded his hearers of God's original plan for marriage.

If we do not understand Jewish culture during the intertestamental period, we can be oblivious to the revolutionary nature of Jesus' treatment of women, expressed in numerous ways throughout the Gospels.

Jesus also reacted on a visceral level to the extreme injustice suffered by women, who could be divorced by their husbands on the slightest pretext yet possessed no right to divorce their husbands. In addition to the social stigma and humiliation they suffered, divorced women were economically helpless. Unmarried women in Jesus' time were not allowed to work, and they were not educated, so they had few skills. Often remarriage, prostitution, or starvation were the only options open to them.

Reviving a Forgotten Truth

Jesus' teaching on marriage represented an explicit rejection of *all* of the above-mentioned misogynistic beliefs. He went far beyond the conservative Beit Shammai teaching on divorce and thereby made his own teaching a sweeping proclamation of women's equality.¹¹ Buried within his revolutionary statements are multiple profound concepts that would have struck his hearers as shocking, even incendiary:

- By referencing the creation story, Jesus emphasized a forgotten truth: Women are equal to men. Both were created by God, and *both* were made in the image of God. This was in stark contrast to contemporary teachings that a woman was inferior, fit only to be a man's servant and the mere receptacle of his seed.
- Jesus made it clear that marriage was not created as a convenience for men, which they could discard at will, without guilt or responsibility. Instead, he presented marriage as a sacred

covenant made before God between two equal human beings, and he made it clear that breaking that covenant is a serious offense to God.

- By quoting the Genesis reference to a man “leaving his father and mother,” Jesus made a shocking countercultural statement.

At a remove of over two millennia, it is nearly impossible for us to comprehend the severe repression and oppression women suffered in Jesus’ world.

Modern readers can easily miss the fact that in first-century Palestine, as in most ancient cultures, a man *did not* leave his father and mother when he married. Instead, a bride left her family and came to live with her husband’s family (Matt. 19:3-10). Predictably, this was a painful, even terrifying experience for a young girl and greatly contributed to unequal power in marriage.

Jesus is reminding his hearers that, according to the sacred writings of Moses, it was God’s plan at creation that a *MAN* should also leave his parents, thus creating an independent nuclear household to which each party contributed equally.

- In referencing the command that a man shall “cleave unto his wife,” Jesus is overtly rejecting the Pharisees’ teaching that women are the evil temptresses to be avoided. He is emphasizing the visceral, unbreakable emotional and spiritual bond that should exist between a married couple. As a measure of how shocking this was to his hearers, even his disciples were disturbed and upset by this teaching.

- By quoting the “one flesh” phrase, Jesus was making a strong statement refuting the rabbi’s repressive teaching that sexual pleasure is sinful, even within marriage. By referencing the ancient Jewish tradition expressed so lyrically and passionately in the Song of Solomon, and more earthily in Proverbs, Jesus incorporated the multitude of Old Testament passages that compare the intimacy of marriage to the relationship between God and his people.

“May your fountain be blessed,
and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth.
A loving doe, a graceful deer—
may her breasts satisfy you always,
may you ever be intoxicated with her love”
(Prov. 5:18-19, NIV).

The High Status God Intended

In light of the deep sacred meaning invested in the marriage relationship throughout the Bible, it is clear that Jesus had good reason for the depth of righteous anger he displayed at the mockery made of it by the “spiritually enlightened.”

Since the Scriptures repeatedly use the marriage relationship as a symbol of God’s relationship to his people, it was a direct affront to God that men of his nation were misrepresenting the nature of his love, sacrifice, and care for his people. By their harsh and inhumane treatment of the women who were supposed to be most precious to them, they were bearing false witness against the character of God.

Far from being a conservative teacher who advocated traditional values and keeping women “in their place” (in the home), Jesus’ actions and teachings were intended to restore women to the high status God intended: as fully equal to men and as full partners in the ministry of restoring mankind to God’s image. **AT**

¹ Elisabeth M. Tetlow, *Women and Ministry in the New Testament* (1980), pp. 5-29.

² *ibid.*

³ *ibid.*

⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ *ibid.* See also the tannaitic midrash, *Sifre Devarim*, p. 46.

⁶ Jerusalem Talmud, *Sotah* 3:4, 19a.

⁷ Babylonian Talmud, *Sotah*, 21b.

⁸ Tetlow, *supra*.

⁹ Gordon Wenham, “Divorce in First-Century Judaism and the New Testament,” paper presented in Belfast, Ireland, p. 8, available online at www.wisereaction.org/ebooks/wenham_divorce_first.pdf.

¹⁰ Mishnah Gittin 9:10, from www.Sefaria.org.

¹¹ See www.myjewishlearning.com/article/ancient-jewish-marriage/

RACISM AND SEXISM: THE EVIL TWINS

BY DANIELLE BARNARD

WHEN ASKED HOW SHE HAS BEEN ABLE TO do the work that she does for survivors of sexual violence, Tarana Burke, founder of the #MeToo movement, said, “Love for black women enables me to do this work.”

I heard her say this in a crowded auditorium on the campus of Notre Dame University on February 26. She got visibly choked up thinking about the black women who loved her and who showed her how to love, and I began to cry, too, trying to catch the tears with my fingers before they rolled down past the rim of my glasses. I thought about the black women in my life who have loved me well. The black women who have stood in solidarity with me when I felt alienated, alone, and misunderstood. The black women who became my refuge, and around whom I could be fully myself. The faces of these women passed through my mind as Tarana Burke said: “I ride for black women. I can say that without excluding everyone else.” A ripple of affirmation and love coursed through my body.

Burke and the other black women in that room stand in a unique social location, which is what I address here.

Intersectionality

Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term “intersectionality” in a 1989 article for the *University of Chicago Legal Forum*. She gave several instances in antidiscrimination law where black women lost cases because of the courts’ inability to recognize the interconnections of race and gender.

Crenshaw writes: “The point is that Black women can experience discrimination in any number of ways and that the contradiction arises from our assumptions that their claims of exclusion must be unidirectional. Consider an analogy to traffic in an intersection, coming and going in all four directions. Discrimination, like traffic through an intersection, may flow in one direction, and it may flow in another. If an accident happens in an intersection, it can be caused by cars traveling from any number of directions and, sometimes, from all of them. Similarly, if a Black woman is harmed because she is in the intersection,

her injury could result from sex discrimination or race discrimination.”¹

Crenshaw claims that the needs of black women are often left unmet, not only by the courts, but also by feminist and civil rights leaders and movements that “deny both the unique compoundedness of their situation and the centrality of their experiences to the larger classes of women and Blacks.”²

What Tarana Burke understood, and I felt affirmed in, was that black women find themselves treated differently in society not only because of their race, but also because of their gender. Unlike white women or black men, who both have a certain level of privilege (white women because they are white, and black men because they are men), black women find themselves either pushed into one space because of their blackness or into another because of their womanness, but they aren’t fully recognized in either one.

Feminism and Black Women

Betty Friedan, in her 1963 book *The Feminine Mystique*, spurred a new wave of modern feminism that spoke to women who felt trapped and unfulfilled. Sharon Smith critiqued this classic work by noting Friedan’s lack of nuance when it came to race and class differences. Friedan was clearly only writing about the liberation of white, middle-class women, says Smith, “Yet she doesn’t deem it worthy to comment on the lives of the nursemaids and the housekeepers these career women hire, who also work all day but then return home to face housework and child care responsibilities of their own.”³

The women for whom Friedan wrote are under the thumb of the patriarchy. But the way the patriarchy has impacted *their* lives

is not the same as it is for black women or other women of color. What liberation is there in having the freedom to work when having to balance it with all of the demands of motherhood? What does feminism do for women who have had to defend their womanhood against the unwanted sexual advances of slave masters and white bosses?

So although both black women and white women share womanhood, the problems of womanhood for each look quite different. The agenda of feminism serves one privileged subset of their disadvantaged population while ignoring the needs of another.

Black Men and Black Women

Black men have been the face and leaders of various antiracist movements within the United States. This is not because black women are not present, but because black women have not traditionally held leadership roles in these movements.

I see the alienation of black women most often in the area I'm most familiar with: the black church. While fighting for racial equity, black men also find themselves perpetuating patriarchy. Black churches today in both Adventist and non-Adventist settings limit where a black woman can exercise leadership. For example, she may be allowed to be a deaconess and read Scripture from a smaller podium below, but she can't preach. I can recall an instance a few years ago when I visited a church, and although I am a licensed minister in that denomination, I had to sit several rows behind the "real ministers," because the pastor did not recognize women as preachers.

We see this play out within Adventism, where regional conference leadership gives lip service to race and gender equality while hiring only one or two women within an entire conference, or by placing only one woman on the lineup for an event full of male speakers. At the local level, in congregations largely made up of women, preachers glorify the male perspective while using sermon illustrations and subtle turns of phrase that present women as mere objects. Church leaders routinely police the bodies and appearance of black women, causing them to live in constant shame, but these leaders do not hold black men to the same standards. Such demonizing of the Bathshebas while praising the Davids reinforces the idea that black women's bodies are not their own, that they are naturally offensive and must be corrected.

Where are the black women in regional conference leadership? How can we push for racial equity when a vital segment of our race is left behind? The progress of black men does not equal progress for black women.

At the Intersection

So where does that leave the black woman? It leaves her at an intersection. In the individual fights against racism and sexism, we seldom get a nuanced view of how the black woman, found in the crux, is affected.

If you are looking for a diagnostic in order to understand these issues, study the effect on the black woman, for it is in the intersection of racism and sexism that the claims of black women get bypassed and ignored.

For example, look at the differences between how the victims of white USA Gymnastics national team doctor Larry

Nassar and the victims of black pop music star R. Kelly are portrayed in the media. Both groups of young women were targeted victims of sexual violence, but one group of predominantly white women are portrayed in the media as victims, while the young black women who have survived R. Kelly are viewed as "fast" or asked why they were around him.

Another case in point is the tendency for media stories about black female Senator Kamala Harris to lack the title "Senator" that is typically used to distinguish other U.S. lawmakers. Harris is often referred to by the media as Ms. Harris or simply by her last name, while male Senator Cory Booker is referred to as Senator Booker and white Senator Elizabeth Warren is referred to as Senator Warren.

Black women stand at a unique intersection where they are simultaneously connected to and alienated from other women, as well as black men. So when Tarana Burke spoke about the love of black women enabling her to do the work she does, I understood. When she says that she rides for black women without excluding anyone else, I understood.

Because in this fight against the twins of racism and sexism, I ride for black women too. **AT**

¹ Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum* (1989), Article 8, p. 149. Online at chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8.

² *ibid.*, p. 150.

³ Sharon Smith, "Black Feminism and Intersectionality," *International Socialist Review*, Issue 91 (2013). Online at isreview.org/issue/91/black-feminism-and-intersectionality.

HOW SMALL DO YOU WANT ME TO BE?

BY KIRSTEN ØSTER LUNDQVIST



I'VE NEVER BEEN PETITE. NOR DAINTY. BEING OF VIKING STOCK, I never will be. And that should be fine.

Diversity is good, we are told. As long it fits in the box. Sometimes it doesn't.

Size and appearance shouldn't matter, but it does. The diet and cosmetic industries are rich because of expectations of what women should look like. Small, they say, is what we should be going for.

For centuries, Chinese women bound their feet to be smaller, as a sign of beauty; this practice crippled them, limiting their movement and making it almost impossible for them to walk. Thankfully, we don't do that anymore.

But are we not still binding women into making themselves smaller?

Now I'm not talking just about appearance. I'm observing that women are encouraged to be something they are not, to make themselves look or be smaller than they are.

Shouldn't we by now know—and be—better?

Fitting the Role

I'm a pastor. And I'm a woman. This set of attributes is difficult for some people. In whatever culture I work (right now I'm pastoring in New Zealand), some people always seem to be uncomfortable with my presence—not *who* I am, but *what* I am. Balancing cultural biases is always tricky, but this appears to be a constant: that in our denominational culture, women clergy are performing a balancing act of trying to be faithful to God's calling and gifting in their lives while simultaneously navigating people's perceptions—not only of what that should look and be like, but if they should exist at all.

Probably you are familiar with the research showing that the same qualities admired in men are typically considered problematic in women. For example, a man who uses certain expressions is regarded as exercising leadership, but a woman who says those words is seen as bossy. People even use different adjectives, based on gender, to describe identical characteristics: the man is "strong" but the woman is "bitchy," the man is "forceful" while the woman is "angry," and the man is "passionate" whereas the woman is "emotional."

Like the dieters and the women with bound feet, I have in my 20-plus years of ministry witnessed women—particularly those serving as pastors—making themselves metaphorically *smaller* to ensure they don't offend anyone.

In many congregations, women get an underlying sense that they're expected to show gratitude just for being allowed a seat

at any decision-making table. Please understand that I'm not talking about the need to be courteous—that's a given. No, I'm talking about women (especially female pastors) needing to make themselves smaller to get the chance to step into a position of leadership, even though they have trained for it and are qualified for it.

So how small must women pastors get in order for the men to be comfortable with our presence in the Adventist church?

Too Strong?

Just asking such a question is confrontational, and as I write, I wonder if I should remain silent. I'm conscious that some will read this, find it too uncomfortable, and disregard everything I say. I am at this instant fighting the urge to package this idea more tentatively, more softly, so that more people will find it acceptable.

When I've talked to women in other professions, they've voiced resounding recognition of this type of experience. In the article "What It Takes to Be a Trial Lawyer If You're Not a Man" in the September 2018 *Atlantic* magazine, Lara Bazelon tells how many male attorneys routinely file a motion against their female opponents to "preclude emotional displays" during the trial—implying that the court can't trust a female attorney to state her case without crying and carrying on in order to unfairly influence the jury.

The playing field isn't equal, says Bazelon. "I was practicing law differently from many of my male colleagues and adversaries," she writes. "They could resort to a bare-knuckle style. Most of what I did in the courtroom looked more like fencing. Reading over my old trial transcripts, I am taken aback by how many times I said 'Thank you'—to the judge, to opposing counsel, to hostile witnesses. And by how many times I apologized."

In a church setting, the cultural gender bias may even go up a notch. I've heard comments about a female pastor's dress, pitch of voice, physical appearance, marital status, and choice of sermon topics or illustrations. I've seen male church leaders ignore suggestions and comments that female leaders make at board meetings, classes, or gatherings.

Here's the litmus test: would church members behave the same way if the pastor had been a man instead of a woman?

Religious Mansplaining

The word "mansplaining" is relatively new, having entered the vocabulary around 2008, according to Elizabeth Aura McClintock, Ph.D.¹ Mansplaining is when a man explains something to a woman in a condescending or patronizing manner. Although

the word is new, the concept isn't. Mansplaining, writes Dr. McClintock, "is problematic because the behavior itself reinforces gender inequality. When a man explains something to a woman in a patronizing or condescending way, he reinforces gender stereotypes about women's presumed lesser knowledge and intellectual ability."

Within our Adventist church is an ongoing and very public debate about the value of women pastors, and to a large extent, we who are being talked about remain silent. Could this be another way in which we are trying to make ourselves smaller in our church culture? Women pastors read and listen to people's opinions and pontifications about us, but we tend to stand aside, because it is seen as problematic if we choose to engage.

Recently I conducted an unscientific poll in a global Facebook group of women pastors in the Adventist church, where I asked the question: "Have you ever had to make yourself, your ideas, or

Will women ever be accepted in the church for who they were created to be? Or will they always be seen in the context of how they relate to men?

your professional skills 'smaller' so that men you work with didn't feel threatened?"

It took less than 12 hours for a clear pattern to emerge in the answers. A large majority admitted that yes, this was their experience. Here are some of the comments I received from these women pastors:

"Often. If you want to be accepted in the group or have your ideas recognized, you have to ever-so-subtly become smaller. The phrase 'correct me if I'm wrong, but...' often precedes my comments or suggestions."

"I make a conscious effort *not* to do this. However, if you are in a role with assumed authority, I find it's necessary to be mindful of this dynamic."

"I'll often phrase as a question something that could be taken as confrontational if phrased as a statement."

"I have worked to remove 'Just' or 'I wanted to' from sentences, [since these] words tend to self-minimize what I want to assert."

"I do have to boost male egos. It often feels manipulative, to make them think that it is their suggestion. For example, at a board meeting I said, '...because you are such a man of God, I know that you would never agree to such shocking behavior.'"

Accepted for Who We Are

In my informal poll, a woman pastor shared: "Once a man said (as a compliment to me), 'S has a man's brain!'" Comments such as this make me wonder, Will women ever be accepted in the church for who they were created to be? Or will they always be seen in contrast to or in comparison with men?

For example, when male pastors preach about women, they most often choose the context of how women relate to men. Think back to one of those rare sermons about a biblical female. What biblical woman was mentioned or preached about? In my experience, most of these women are spoken of in relation to either motherhood or prostitution. These seem to be the two main choices, even though the Bible contains so many more women's stories—and so many more sermon topics that relate to women.

Just as women pastors are happy to preach about the men described in the Bible, believing that lessons are applicable to both genders, wouldn't it be wonderful if male pastors would strive for equal relevancy when they preach about women in the Bible? Have you noticed that most male pastors bring out the biblical women's narratives only on Mother's Day? Too often the congregation must quietly sit through sexist pseudo-theological ramblings from the pulpit on how women are to become someone's good wife or mother.

We would be enriched as a church to hear more narratives of women in the Bible. And the more we preach a larger view of the Bible's women, the more we will add validation to women's voices in our church sphere.

Can we collectively move to a place where women are recognized not only by how they relate to men, but as partners of equal size, value, and worth? Can we treat female voices, as diverse as they are, with equal respect in the conversation?

And shouldn't Seventh-day Adventists, especially, know better—in a church where our co-founder and most significant voice was a woman? **AT**

¹ Elizabeth Aura McClintock, "The Psychology of Mansplaining," blog post for www.psychologytoday.com (Mar. 31, 2016).

TELLING MY SECRETS

BY CHRISTY K. ROBINSON

SEXUAL ASSAULT, IN WHATEVER FORM IT takes, is not about sex. It's about violence, power, and betrayal. Keeping the secret that one has been violated can prevent healing and recovery.

It happened to me when I was learning to walk, at the age I was coloring Noah's animals in Sunday school and learning to ride a tricycle.

I had to be mature far too quickly. I didn't learn to play or dance or be silly. Adults praised me for my maturity, for having such polite manners, and for being a caregiver to my chronically ill mother when my father was at work. When she was having an asthma attack and struggling for air, I pushed a chair to the five-foot-high oxygen tank, climbed up and turned the valve, then put the mask on her face. I wasn't yet 2 years old.

I was sexually molested by my mother's uncle from a time before I could remember. He lived in Los Angeles, and we lived in Phoenix, but he'd come to visit for holidays and long weekends. He was a veteran living on disability for his arthritis, so he came often. He groomed me with a Pixie doll and took me to the drugstore for decaf coffee at the soda counter. (Yes, I drank Postum and Sanka as a preschooler because my parents, and Uncle John, were from Minnesota, where coffee was the elixir of life.) For years, I remembered only that he had touched my private areas, and that was bad, and I hated it.

Reporting the Molester

One day when I was in fifth grade, I told my mother that Uncle John was touching me, had done so every time he visited, and

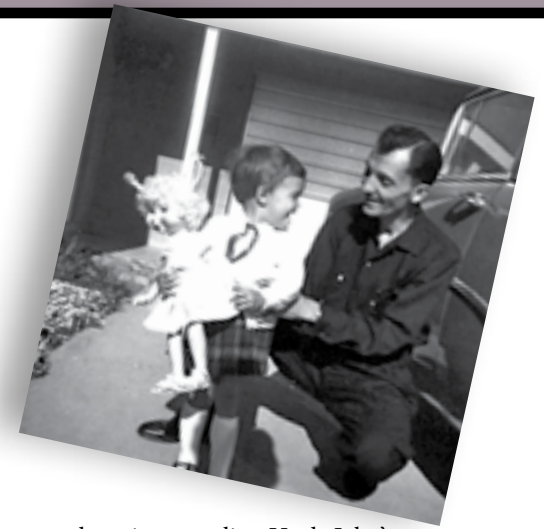
I was very uncomfortable about it. I had been embarrassed to tell until I wore my first flat bra and John invaded that space, too. Perhaps John threatened me; I don't remember. A lot of things have disappeared from memory.

My parents had a terse conversation outside with John and banished him. They called the police, and we were sent a female officer who was probably a secretary or dispatcher, since there were few female police officers in the late 1960s. She asked a few dispassionate questions of me, took a report, and that was it. Since I held back on how intrusive Uncle John had been, saying merely that he'd touched me under my panties, neither my parents nor the policewoman considered it a sexual assault. Uncle John was a "sick" man with a dirty mind, and we didn't discuss it again. They probably thought I'd forget.

There's a form of molestation called "fingering," where the molester inserts his fingers into the victim's vagina or rectum. That is rape. That's what the Stanford swimmer, Brock Turner, did to a woman and consequently served three months in jail. That's what Uncle John did to me on every visit, until I was almost 11 and on the verge of puberty. Using his superior authority as an adult, he'd put me on his knee and finger me, front and back. It was mortally embarrassing, and his adult power overwhelmed my own self-worth and right to privacy and dignity and personal space.

Lingering Consequences

My mother and father tried to protect me from the fallout, not wanting to put guilt on me, but my experience affected the whole family. When they reported



my molestation to police, Uncle John's siblings (the aunts and uncles who had helped raise my mother) gave her the cold shoulder, and while the police were half-heartedly looking for John, his siblings sent him to Hawaii to live for a few years. This wounded my mom very deeply, and she wept about it.

My brother remembered that our family had an anonymous bomb threat and that Uncle John may have stalked our neighborhood once or twice. He'd injured his back years before, and arthritis had given him a deep hunch, so he was easy to spot. As an 11-year-old, I would stand in the dark behind the sheer curtains of my bedroom window and watch the street and sidewalks under the streetlight, fearful that one of those dark figures walking a dog might be him.

My parents did the best they knew to do in those days. Our Adventist church believed that psychologists and psychiatrists could control your mind and implant in it ungodly things—or urged false memories. Only recently have we learned that sexual abuse lies dormant or festers for years or decades if not treated in therapy.

In school I was a serious child, not one to play with the other kids much, because I wasn't good at playing games and was afraid of not being good enough. Several teen girls asked if I was pregnant, because I was one size larger than they were. I heard them in the restroom, saying I was stuck up. I changed for physical education in the restroom stalls, from elementary school through college. And because these schools were Adventist, I never learned to dance.

I didn't understand why until I was 40-something, but I never learned to play. I mistook play for practicing the piano and reading books. I wasn't interested in making up stories about dolls or toys, and I didn't play sports or even enjoy board games.

Considered Easy Prey

My mother warned me to never tell family secrets—not to friends, not to other relatives, and definitely not to people at the school or church. But already I'd had a sense that knowledge was power and that revealing my secrets would render me powerless. I kept a stoic face when teased or criticized, and I never let a tear fall that might give away my pain and let someone dig deeper. Telling sexual secrets would make me appear to be damaged goods, or a

he continued to prey on girls outside of the family, because only one woman will talk about it. She was 6 years old when John raped both her and her friend. "He was inside my body," she said. Her little, innocent, first-grader body. Her mother was one of the siblings who sent John to Hawaii to hide from police. This cousin grew up to be promiscuous and had strained relationships with the enablers. At age 78 now, she has no desire to forgive John, who has been dead for 30 years.

Today, perhaps because of the #MeToo movement, sexual abuse survivors have come forward by the millions, and there's power in numbers. There's also a lot more enlightened sympathy, for what it's worth. But misconceptions persist. In 2017 and 2018, the women who alleged

sweeteners. When you live a temperate Christian lifestyle, you don't self-medicate with alcohol or drugs; instead, you comfort with food. In my case, it didn't have to be a lot of food or even fattening food to gain weight.

I prayed for healing. I didn't want to be fat. I wanted to be beautiful and intelligent and desirable. I wanted to marry a godly man and have children. But I gained anyway and, as a consequence, was not asked on dates. I was told I had a pretty face (implying that the rest of me was not pretty) and that men thought of me as a sister, but not as a girlfriend or wife. The jobs I might have been offered were given to others who "fit in" with societal norms of beauty.

Peer-reviewed medical research has shown that adult "women with documented histories of sexual abuse were more than twice as likely to be obese as their non-abused peers."² Based on a meta-analysis of 23 studies with a total of 112,000 participants, one research team calculated that "the risk of obesity was 34 percent higher among adults who had been subjected to abuse as children than among non-abused adults."³

Medical research also shows that survivors of childhood sexual abuse often have lifelong sexuality issues (i.e., promiscuity, celibacy, fear of intimacy), substance abuse problems, and eating disorders (self-medicating with food is part of it). Some of us gain weight not because we're lazy and eat a dozen donuts every day, but because some part of our brain packs on the weight and refuses to let us lose it, despite our best efforts. Stress adds pounds. Actress Rosie O'Donnell realized, after her heart attack, that she had gained weight as a result of being raped by relatives. Over her vulva was a fold of fat called an apron, which she felt protected her from later assaults.

I'M A GROWN WOMAN NOW, STRONG AND FIERCE, AND I CAN FIGHT BACK ATTACKS. I CAN PROTECT MY TENDER, WOUNDED INNER CHILD. I NO LONGER NEED THE BODY ARMOR I'VE PUT ON SINCE MY TEEN YEARS.

slut, in the eyes of a potential husband.

When I went to a new high school, I had to have a physical exam. Because we didn't have much money that year, Mom took me to the county health clinic instead of our family doctor. I was only 13, but the male doctor did a "breast cancer exam" and said something derogatory about my areolas as he pinched my nipples.

In later years, health providers taking my medical history would ask about physical or sexual abuse, which I denied because I discounted, even to myself, Uncle John's assaults as "molestation" since he hadn't raped me with his penis.

Imagine my shock when I learned recently that Uncle John had not only finger-raped, but also penis-raped several of his nieces and great-nieces and their friends, from 1947 until at least 1969, when my mother blew the whistle among the family members. We don't know if

sexual assault by Judge Roy Moore and by Judge Brett Kavanaugh were ripped apart for not reporting their assaults decades ago. Yet at that time, in the '70s and '80s, keeping secrets was the sensible thing to do, because abusers prey on the vulnerable—women and children who are already traumatized or helpless. If the victims had reported the attacks back then, they'd have risked further harm to themselves or their families; they would likely have been shamed for leading a man on; and other abusers would have found them easy prey.

A Self-Protection Tactic

A kept secret, however, is like a thin blister of skin over an abscess. Keeping the secrets meant that I couldn't heal and grow. It meant that in order to protect myself, I gained weight. A lot of weight, despite constant dieting, fasting, and using artificial

Our Deepest Desires

Keeping family secrets repels love and acceptance and makes abuse victims feel that we must please others at all costs. I've spent most of my life trying to compensate for not being "enough"—whether that meant being the popular girl in school, or a wife to be chosen and cherished, or a high wage earner, or the best church musician, or the best author—the best *something*.

I worked my way through university with long hours and academic scholarships. After a serious injury, I began teaching and freelancing from home. When my mother died and my father remarried, he devoted himself to the new wife and put his and my mom's estate into the new wife's name, disinheriting me and emotionally distancing himself from me. I worked longer hours and earned less pay than a man in my position, and the chairman of the board still wanted to know which man I was related to so he could place me in a niche. Rejection and not being accepted (or hired) because of physical appearance is part of the experience of abuse survivors.

Keeping secrets makes us try to prove ourselves useful and lovable—not only in human eyes, but also in God's eyes. As a single woman, I was lectured again and again on the verses in Psalm 34 about delighting in God and *then* being given the desires of one's heart, as if God is holding out on me until I attain some benchmark of faith.

Dutch professor and theologian Henri Nouwen wrote in *Life of the Beloved*: "Aren't you, like me, hoping that some person, thing, or event will come along to give you that final feeling of inner well-being you desire? Don't you often hope: 'May this book, idea, course, trip, job, country, or relationship fulfill my deepest desire.'"

My deepest desire has been to be cherished. To be loved for every reason and no reason.

Finding Health and Healing

Donald Trump's tape boasting about his grabbing women's genitals and trying to "f---" a married woman gave me waking nightmares. Comments by those who affirmed his speech and actions filled me with anxiety, fear, hatred, and physical pain. I suspect it was a form of post-traumatic stress. This brought back memories I'd banished for 45 years.

Then, as I was making my low-calorie breakfast one morning, I had a momentary vision of a grizzly bear standing on her hind legs. God spoke to me in that flash: I'm a grown woman now, strong and fierce, and I can fight back attacks. I can protect my tender, wounded inner child. I no longer need the body armor I've put on since my teen years.

I began to tell my secret to a few close friends, then to others who were also #MeToo survivors. There are millions of us, men and women.

Although I didn't realize it then, I began to lose weight. I wasn't trying any harder than I had already. I didn't weigh myself for two months, by which time I'd lost 20 pounds. After age-related medical tests and some serious oral surgeries that required a high-protein liquid diet for several weeks, I lost another 20 pounds. With most of my medical issues resolved, my meds were reduced or eliminated, which let me lose more weight.

I continued to tell my secret, and friends have congratulated me and validated my weight loss and improved health status. Although I keep hitting plateaus, my doctor is pleased with my overall progress. I've lost the equivalent of an adult person's weight, and I still need to lose a child's body weight. I've decided to write a book about the journey from childhood rape to adult recovery and healing.

Empowered to Help Others

One of the many debilitating effects of childhood sexual abuse was my perceived disconnect from God. I didn't know how to love him or other people. I vowed that I would obey God and honor him the best I could, even though my emotions were drained. He slowly healed that problem, however, as I volunteered with an interfaith group that helps Hispanic refugees, and as I donated plasma and platelets to strangers, and as I got involved in other outward-focused activities. I've cultivated gratitude for the many ways my friends and my God have blessed me, and that has brought me to a place where I can add passion to being a blessing to others.

The following scripture contains a powerful promise from God:

"You *survivors* in Israel,
listen to me, the LORD.

Since the day you were born,
I have carried you along.

I will still be the same
when you are old and gray,
and *I will take care of you*.

I created you. *I will carry you
and always keep you safe*"

(Isaiah 46:3-4, CEV, emphasis added).

I now know that I'm a cherished daughter of God who can think and act for herself, and I can be as fierce as a bear. My God-given talents and intelligence are "enough." I can, by telling my secret, help others heal and learn to protect themselves. That, in turn, strengthens my own recovery. **AT**

¹ Lyn Yonack, "Sexual Assault Is About Power," *Psychology Today* (Nov. 14, 2017). Online at www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/psychoanalysis-unplugged/201711/sexual-assault-is-about-power

² Aaron Levin, "Obesity, Childhood Sex Abuse Show Strong Link," *Psychiatric News* (Aug. 3, 2007). Online at psychnews.psychiatryonline.org/doi/full/10.1176/pn.42.15.0023.

³ Erik Hemmingsson, "Childhood Trauma Could Lead to Adult Obesity," Karolinska Institutet (Sept. 2, 2014). Online at ki.se/en/news/childhood-trauma-could-lead-to-adult-obesity.

GOD OF THE WIDE, OPEN SPACES

BY MELISSA BROTTON

*“Out of my straits I called upon the LORD;
He answered me with great enlargement”
(Psalm 118:5, JPS Tanakh 1917).*

*“For the long breath, the deep breath, the breath of a heart
without care,—*

I will give thanks and adore thee, God of the open air!”

—HENRY VAN DYKE, 1904¹

HAVING GROWN UP IN NORTH DAKOTA, WHERE WIND RUSHES WILD for miles across flat plains and low-rolling hills, where you can watch the sun slip to the very bottom of the sky beyond either wheat stalks or snow-mantled fields, I find a satisfying sense of identity in its vast, open spaces. In this expanse of air, sun, and field is a burning sense of an eternal far and wide. Even more than that, it is home.

This may be why I am not such a fan of *narrow* spaces. “Tight places” are not typically desirable, but some of us feel more intense discomfort than normal, say, when scrunched between two people on an airplane flight or in an elevator. In such situations, people like me experience a special sense of “space invasion.” Granted, some of us have wider personal boundaries than others do. And, of course, we understand that *certain* people—close family members or friends—are permitted to enter inside our personal space, but most of the time we find ourselves on guard when it comes to strangers or casual acquaintances. As one of these poor souls, I tend to see myself with a deed to at least one foot of portable space on each side of me. I luxuriate in this space and the freedom of movement it affords me, but I feel discomfort when hedged in.

Perhaps everyone feels a little this way. The biblical psalmists have written much of God’s deliverance from *strait* places. The English renderings for the Hebrew *metsar* (strait) include the literal and the figurative. The visual image in Psalm 118:5 brings to mind good old winter days in North Dakota. We would bundle ourselves in snowsuits with caps, hoods, scarves, and mittens, then wobble and hop like moonwalkers across the drifts until one leg broke through the top crust of snow and got stuck deep down. Sometimes you would end up pulling your bare foot out of your boot and socks. Brrrrr. (And, aside from “oof-dah,” that was about all you could say through your muffled mouth.)

But perhaps Martin Takac could provide us with a more drastic example of getting stuck in a cold place. In 2017, the 38-year-old Denali climber from Slovakia stepped onto a weak snow bridge and fell at least 40 feet into a crevasse. As if things were not bad enough, he got wedged tightly into the deep ice at the bottom, trapped like the filling in a human sandwich. Fortunately, another group of trekkers witnessed his fall. Spotting him in the frozen deep, they realized he was still alive and began rescue efforts. They worked for nearly 15 hours by chipping away the ice until a relief crew came in with power tools. During the time it took to free him, Takac was face-down, rendered silent, unable to move at all, and completely reliant on others. At one point he lost consciousness. The team kept at it, and eventually Takac was delivered from the ice and flown to a hospital in Fairbanks, where he was treated for hypothermia, broken ribs, and other, critical injuries. While recovering, Takac expressed deep gratitude to those who tirelessly worked to get him out. “They returned me back home on this planet,” he said.²



Figuratively, of course, we understand *strait* to mean *any* state of inescapable hardship or situational constriction, such as dealing with an overly controlling manager, feeling squeezed between tasks with limited time, or being cinched by a short money belt. Many times the strait place has to do with an injured human relationship of some kind, but feeling stuck can also take place entirely in our own mind. As poet John Milton's Satan laments,

"The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n"
(*Paradise Lost*, Book 1, line 253).

Likewise, the 18th-century poet William Blake wrote of the "mind-forg'd manacles" in *Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience*, lamenting the loss of imagination with the advent of science, but I'd like to broaden his metaphor to include the constricting chains of past mistakes, failures, worry, fear, or despair that limit our ability to see beyond a troubling situation. These thought-chains can keep us locked for a long time.

Fortunately, the Psalmist does not leave us without an alternative space, for contrasted with the *strait* place is the *broad* place, in Hebrew *merchab*—that expansive space of freedom where God wishes to place us. To me, the ultimate image of freedom is traveling west at high speeds across the wide, open spaces of Montana on Interstate 90. The state's varied landscape, east to west, provides unparalleled vistas. In summer months, golden safflower fields in the east give way to purple mountains in the distance. At Billings, gentle grasslands sprawl before the jagged Beartooth Mountains. North of the Absaroka Range, at Big Timber and Livingston, an isolated chain of peaks surges 7,000 feet high across Park and Sweet Grass counties. This is the Crazy Mountain range, foregrounded by rolling foothills and

clean-swept plains. In the flushed pink of sunset, the scene is breathtaking. There is a sense of eternity, of vast sky and field and mountain stretching on forever.

In our psalm we see that God wishes to take us out of the narrow, confining spaces where we have lodged ourselves. If we allow him, Jesus will chip away the ice, so to speak, and then bring in the power tools. Through his Spirit's voice on the heart, he whispers possibilities we hadn't considered. He applies the ointment of his grace to soothe and soften our hearts, to wither our inflated egos, to reveal "great and mighty things" we didn't know, to revive our compassion toward those who hurt us, and to provide escape from difficulties—even if we got ourselves into those scrapes in the first place.

But we have a part to play, too. We can continue in our human strength to shake off the manacles or make an exchange of our own (distorting, cycling) words for God's (clear, unchanging) Word. Believing that I have access to Jesus' active love, embedded in Scripture, is a chain-breaker, for he answers me "with great enlargement" (Psalm 118:5, JPS Tanakh 1917). Through my internalizing of God's Word, and his enlarging of my heart, Jesus sets me in the broad place, where I breathe again and redefine my experience through the lens of his grace.

A new vista opens—

Down a wind-whipped road and across a glorious plain. **AT**

¹ Henry Van Dyke, "God of the Open Air," *The Poems of Henry Van Dyke* (1911 edition), p. 60.

² Dermot Cole, "Denali Climber Who Survived 15 hours in a Crevasse Says He Is Grateful for a New Life," *Anchorage Daily News* (June 20, 2017). Online at www.adn.com/opinions/2017/06/20/denali-climber-who-survived-15-hours-in-crevasse-says-he-is-grateful-for-a-new-life/.

LILLIAN FORD AND THE MAKING OF A MISSIONARY LEGEND

By Lisa Clark Diller

I GREW UP WITH STORIES ABOUT Lillian and Orley Ford. Lillian was my father's great-aunt, and she and her husband made a profound impression on him during their visits to his home in Arkansas when he was in elementary school in the 1950s. We had Barbara Westphal's young adult novel *These Fords Still Run* on the shelf in our home, and the adventure stories and humor with which she portrayed the Fords formed my sisters' and my ideal of what a good missionary should be like.

Lillian Gertrude Shafer didn't know she was going to be the quintessential missionary. She was in the first generation of Adventist college students to form the Student Missionary Volunteers at Walla Walla College, where she met a fellow student, Orley Ford. They were both part of the South American "band" of an early version of Young People's Missionary Volunteers (MVs), and in 1917 they married and headed to

Peru, where they spent three years, followed by 10 years in Ecuador. After a long furlough in 1930-1931, they moved to Central America and lived the rest of their lives there. Orley died in 1972, and Lillian lived until 1990.

By the time of Orley's death, the Fords had become legendary back in the United States. Not only were two books written about them for young readers, but their mission reports and public speaking were regularly cited as the inspiration for other North Americans to spend part of their lives in Central and South America. The church leaders in Central America named several institutions after them.

Behind the Legend

I began researching Lillian Ford as part of the new *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists* project.¹ I started out wanting to do a little family history and to put the legend into historical context. What I found surprised me in its complexity and challenge. While some

of the heroic elements of the mission story became even more compelling upon closer analysis, I also found some deeply human moments. Lillian had not sprung into Adventist sainthood fully formed. However, her intelligence and thoughtful engagement—both with her faith and the cultures she lived in—were more impressive than what I had read or heard.

The Shafer family had become Adventists when Lillian was very young. Her older brother and sister joined the church first, and most of the family followed them. Significant to the entire Shafer family was Lillian's older sister Pearl Shafer Evilsizer,² whose strong commitment to the church—and to hospitality and love—formed the culture of their family identity. Lillian lived with Pearl for part of the time she attended Walla Walla, and this relationship remained deeply significant.

The most surprising and gratifying element of discovering Lillian



Ford's life was that she wrote a book about her early years! In spite of the awareness my father's family had of their aunt's work and ministry, by the time of my childhood, none seem to have known that she had herself told the story of their time in Peru and Ecuador. *In the High Andes* was published in 1932 as authored by "Mrs. Orley Ford." It appears to have been written during their 1930-1931 furlough before they moved permanently to Central America. This was a crisis moment for the couple in

their faith and work. Lillian's account proved very helpful, both in giving her own perspective on working for God in another country and in revealing some of her own personal maturation.

In the High Andes

In the High Andes appears to have been written for a general Christian audience. Lillian consistently uses the word "Christian" as opposed to "Adventist" throughout the book, and she never mentions any Adventist distinctives, such as the Sabbath or

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dietary principles.³ It is an introduction for a general Protestant audience, and the Southern Publishing Association customers who purchased it would not have needed to know anything about Adventists, nor would they have learned anything about them from reading it.

This book is full of anthropological and sociological observations. Like most North American travelers around the world, Lillian Ford saw the people she was serving as less sophisticated than she was, and she sometimes used words to describe them that were denigrating: "heathen," "savage," and "superstitious." The body of her work, however, shows an admiration for the culture of the place that is full of nuance, and her analysis of some of the political realities was

quite different from that of many of the Protestant missionaries at the time.

In the High Andes included a survey of the geography, history, politics, and sociology of Peru and Ecuador. In addition to describing the change in altitude and the mountains, flora, and fauna, Lillian tried to explain the demographic diversity of these countries. Her political and social biases come through in the categories she provides: calling the mountain people “conservative” and “fanatical” and the coastal people “liberal” and “progressive.” These differences, she said, made forming unified national governments challenging. Such laden descriptions are modified in many ways by the particular stories she

Cultural Observations

As with most Protestant missionaries in this period, she allied herself with elements of the liberal governments. For instance, she described Ecuador’s modernization project this way: “As General Gorgas went to the disease-infected port of Guayaquil to clean it and rid it of its dreaded fevers and plagues, so the missionaries have gone into its homes and are changing vice-filled, sunken human beings into clean, happy men and women.” She insisted that Indian lives were much better once they had been taught more about sanitation and housekeeping, or after proper paving and city planning had come to the city. “The Bible is finding an entrance into a few of the homes,

Perhaps most interesting for her reading audience, she includes a chapter with a personified “Mrs. Inca” and shows a typical day from a native mother’s perspective. In this chapter Lillian provides names for the children and describes what they did and ate throughout the day. She seems to assume that the buyers of this book may never have had any information about the Andes culture and would need all of the details she could give them in order to gain a sympathetic understanding of this part of the world.

Lillian and Orley identified with and wanted to serve the indigenous people of the land rather than those of Spanish descent. Lillian

While Lillian saw herself on the side of modernization, she and Orley were committed to opposing the way modernization projects exploited the native peoples of Peru and Ecuador.

tells, in which the mountain Indians she lived with were much more sympathetic than the residents of the coastal, European-dominated cities. She also gives a quick history of the Andes—from the pre-Inca civilization to the politics of the prior 40 years, showing her preference for the Liberal Party, which had allowed for religious freedom. Protestantism in Central and South America was associated with capitalism and modern progress, and the liberal political parties frequently encouraged immigration from Protestant countries.

and that is why religious liberty is coming in.... Wherever the Bible and missionaries go, civilization follows.”⁴ Liberty of all kinds, including political and economic emancipation, interested her, even if it was the freedom of the gospel that she prioritized.

Like an oral historian, Lillian Ford recounts legends about the local mountains or stories about how Christianity first came with the Spaniards to Peru/Ecuador—and she doesn’t make fun of or undermine those traditions. This straightforward anthropological description was not always typical for travel literature, nor for mission stories.

uses the many stories of the Indian leaders and converts who were treated badly—homes burned, false arrests, beaten up, and even children killed—to encourage her readers with the strength of character that these inhabitants of strange lands possessed. She was consistently inspired by the Indians and what they had to go through to stand up for their religious and economic rights. While Lillian saw herself on the side of modernization, she and Orley were committed to opposing the way modernization projects exploited the native peoples of Peru and Ecuador.

Many of Lillian's stories portray how much violence the Fords and their Indian allies received at the hands of the landlords and "Peruvians" and "Ecuadorians," her way of describing people who identified as white or European. She also explains debt peonage and says that literacy was opposed by the ruling classes, because educated Indians might no longer be willing to live under such grim conditions of servitude. In fact, one of the reasons she gives for the opposition by the landlords to the Fords' work in Ecuador was that the Indians asked Orley to have power of attorney to make sure their communal land had secure title so that the landlords couldn't exploit them.

Political Realities

It appears that the value of their political work contributed to some small successes in baptisms and attendance at churches and the growing faith of the Indians. When the Indian communal land was given back after public prayers to God to restore it, Lillian says that at least 200 went to the public praise service. When local landlords tried to expel the Fords, hundreds of Indians signed a petition to the Ecuadorian president protesting this and explaining all of the work the couple had done for them. Even though most of these petitioners were not joining their church, they were identifying with the mission and its work for them.

One of her final chapters included a description of a revolt by the Indians against the government oppressors. The stated purpose of the revolution was to "wipe out the white population of the country and set up a government of their own

that would give justice to the Indian." Lillian absolutely sympathized with the Indians and agreed that the government was exploitative. But in the racialized language and realities of the time, she identified with the "white people" opposing the Indians who were "on the warpath and were like wild dogs thirsting for blood."⁵ As she tells this story, her own personal danger in the situation appears to have shaped her language and ultimately determined who became her allies in the conflict. While "friendly" Indians did assist the Fords, Lillian leaned more on the protection of the Ecuadorian soldiers of European descent than on the goodwill of the indigenous community.

Appreciating Her Subjects

In explaining the way their work developed, Lillian Ford gives a great deal of credit to the indigenous Christians who supported them and indicates that the discipleship of locals was what led to any conversions or commitment to Protestant faith. Most helpfully for the modern researcher, she often gives the Indian mission workers' names, rather than gliding over them as "locals" and robbing them of agency and full credit.

Ford's writing demonstrates attentive and even scholarly investigation into the communities in which she lived. She had matured over these years, describing her transformation from idealism to reality as the pain set in regarding the difficulty of what they had to do and their necessary separation from family and friends. She constantly credits God with sustaining them and working miracles to effect conversions. In many of these ways, she was typical

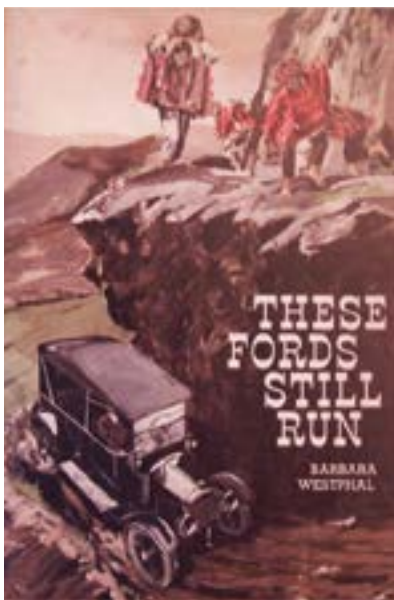
of the missionaries of that time, but her writing demonstrates a thoughtful, candid assessment that was less accessible in the missionary writing of a later generation.

A Crisis of Faith

Most challenging for the Fords was a crisis of faith they experienced before and during their furlough in 1930. Significantly, this crisis and its implication for the Fords' employment in the Adventist Church entered the record only because Lillian Ford's sister, Pearl Evilsizer, wrote about her worries to Milton Kern, who had been the organizer for the Missionary Volunteer movement. Apparently during their time in Ecuador, Lillian and Orley made a friend who introduced them to D. M. Canright's book denouncing the work of Ellen G. White. Confronting these ideas for the first time—and with no one to discuss them with, since they had been serving alone most of the time since they had left for South America in their early 20s—the Fords began to doubt everything they had been taught. This caused them immense anguish, and they honestly shared these doubts with several people over the course of their time back home in the United States.

Evilsizer was beside herself with grief over her sister's loss of confidence. She felt that both Milton Kern and William Spicer, who was then president of the General Conference, should meet with the Fords to restore their faith and answer their questions. Whether or not Kern did this, his letters reveal that he was

quite confident that the couple was trustworthy and would not choose to continue as missionaries unless able to set aside their misgivings. Furthermore, Kern wrote to some of the church leaders in Central America to reassure them that the Fords had recommitted to orthodoxy, since rumors had traveled there already, and the conference leaders were no longer sure they wanted Lillian and Orley to be transferred to Guatemala. Orley's letters to Kern reveal an embarrassment that his misgivings had caused so much trouble, as well as gratitude that his uncertainties



about Ellen White had been assuaged.

Her sister's role in this drama must have caused tension for Lillian Ford. During this furlough year, the Fords were recovering from tropical infections, attempting to get their children caught up educationally, mourning the loss of Orley's mother, and earning money for their return trip. Lillian was writing her book, presumably to assist with the latter need. The Fords had come to stay with Pearl Evilsizer for much-needed rest. The elder sister's persistent letters to their bosses, escalating in her suspicions of Orley and concerns that the Fords only be sent to places where they had companions to support their faith, appear in many ways to be a betrayal of confidences and a stirring

heard of such things. He maintains strong assurance in their spiritual maturity. Kern's letters are a model of supportive, wise, and discerning leadership.

Romanticizing the Story

The General Conference's handling of this situation, from the distance of 79 years later, is masterful. Although Lillian Ford's maturity had to deepen tremendously during this year, she and Orley decided to commit the rest of their lives to ministry for the Adventist church in Central America and never to return to the United States. They did visit from time to time, of course, but from this point on, their compass was set; the challenges of theology, material comfort, and family loss (they buried

In explaining the way their work developed, Lillian Ford gives a great deal of credit to the indigenous Christians who supported them and indicates that the discipleship of locals was what led to any conversions or commitment to Protestant faith.

up of trouble. She admitted that she might have been overreacting because of her deep love for her sister, who had always been her favorite of the children she had raised.

Kern himself, in his letters to Spicer and to Orley Ford, maintains a strong confidence and lack of real worries. He explains how young the Fords were when they went and how shocking to them Canright's writing must have been when they had never

three young children) could never alter their devotion to Central America.

And yet, as time went on, Lillian's story became more romanticized. Perhaps this is understandable, but it is the task of the historian to try to fathom and portray the subject as she would have recognized herself

at the time. The contrast in accounts is especially stark when we compare Lillian's own record of her life with the novelizations that occurred later and that formed so much of her legend.

The evolution starts with her own agency. According to *In the High Andes*, Lillian locates her calling through the mentoring of a teacher at Walla Walla; she explains that she met Orley because she was already committed to South America, and they decided to "throw in [their] lot together."⁶ By the time Barbara Westphal wrote her iconic *These Fords Still Run*, Orley had become the primary agent and needed to find someone he could marry who wouldn't be against leaving the country. Eileen Lantry's 1990 children's book *Mission in the Clouds* centers on Lillian Ford, but it makes her a reluctant and fearful partner who must be encouraged with Bible verses and convinced to do anything challenging.

Westphal's novel focuses on brave adventures and escapes, but Lillian's own story tells more of what went on in her head and how hard it was to learn to be by herself when Orley was gone and that she had few friends. Lantry portrays Lillian Ford as "shrieking" with fear, horrified by dirt in the homes she inhabited, and in general needing to be hauled along each time Orley felt the call of God to do something.

Still more significant is the role of motherhood versus other mission work in each of the three books. Lillian herself only briefly mentions the loss of two of her children (the third premature death was yet to come in 1930), although she does tell

stories that include her children. She quotes extensively from the letter sent from local supporters to the president of Ecuador, in which her work as a teacher and midwife are as significant as Orley's medical work and public advocacy. The school had been a large part of their mission, and she was the teacher and organizer of that element of their ministry.

The Real Lillian Ford

Westphal was clearly quite taken with Lillian Ford's gifts and contributions. She describes her as quitting her role as midwife and teacher upon their return to the field in 1931 and transitioning to the making of promotional materials and leading youth work. Lillian excelled at programming skits, games, music, and crafts for Pathfinder events and other youth activities. Lantry's account suggests that Lillian started teaching in the Andes only in order to distract herself after the second infant death. Furthermore, Lantry creates a fictional conflict for Lillian Ford during the illness of her youngest child over whether or not she should continue to minister with the youth or concentrate on motherhood, her "greatest mission field." While the later date of Lantry's story allows for her to include Ford's astonishing workload in retirement during the 1980s, the obvious thesis of her book is far from the argument Ford made for herself regarding how she followed God's calling and the methods he used in her life.

I found myself much more inspired by the Lillian Ford that I found through historical research than by the legendary one that had filtered to me through family lore and missionary novels. Her evolution over time in terms of finding what work she fit best, the way she allowed her faith to grow through challenges to it, and the way she completely identified with the communities she lived in, seemed a benchmark for best practices in international gospel ministry. She was not perfect, and yet her joy in service, especially in Central America, comes through in her words and the descriptions of those who knew her best. She deserves to be called a hero—one who grew over time, made mistakes, and inspires us with a confession of dependency on God for grace and strength. **AT**

¹ This exciting scholarly project under the leadership of Dragoslava Santrac needs contributors. Many of you should consider researching and writing on a topic. Find options at adventistpeace.typepad.com/esdana/, and contact the editors at adventistarchives.org.

² Although later family members have used the spelling *Evilsisor* for their surname, Pearl signed her papers and appeared in federal census records with the spelling *Evilsizer*.

³ It is clear that she means "Protestant" when she writes "Christian," as the opposition to "Christian" work came frequently from Catholic leaders, and she sets those two groups in contrast.

⁴ Lillian Ford, *In the High Andes* (1932), pp. 40-41.

⁵ Ford, pp. 179, 184.

⁶ Ford, pp. 4-5.

REDISCOVERING WOMANHOOD IN A CULTURE OF DOMINATION: A Reflection on Genesis 1:27

BY OLIVE J. HEMMINGS

THE 2018 ACADEMY AWARD FOR BEST DOCUMENTARY (SHORT SUBJECT) WENT TO A film called *Period. End of Sentence.* Set in a rural village outside of Delhi, it depicts Indian women fighting a deeply rooted stigma against menstruation, so strong that girls must leave school at the onset of puberty. Buying pads in the few shops that sell them in the village was so shameful that many girls and women settled for clumsy and unhygienic means of managing their monthly periods.

But when the women acquire machines to make sanitary pads, they begin to erode the stigma. Not only do they gain economic independence, but they are able to give young girls hope for completing their education and developing their talent and abilities. Given the chance, these women intend to put an end to a life sentence of domestic confinement and economic dependence.

The Stigma of Womanhood

All over the world, females suffer the stigma of womanhood. Girls are kept out of school. Eight-year-olds are married off to 60-year-old men. Women suffer in abject poverty as they fend alone for their children. They are excluded from leadership roles in church and civil society. Men have a sense of entitlement over women's bodies and women's decisions.

If we feel smug here in America, just remember that even rich and powerful women here wait for men to offer them marriage and crown them with their identities. When I was a student in college, I was dismayed to hear the fiancé of one of my theology classmates advising some first-year girls

to always limit their education to a degree that is one step lower than their husbands-to-be, in order to preserve the men's fragile manhood.

It is frightening to observe the extent to which some women capitulate to these forces. Doesn't it boggle the mind that so many women helped vote into the presidency of the most powerful nation in the world a man who publicly demonstrates so little respect for womanhood, and who regards women as disposable? Doesn't it boggle the mind how a church with a 60-percent-female membership still excludes women from its highest and most sacred offices?

Who Reflects God's Image?

I remember counseling a young female student about her behavior at the college campus where I was teaching. I reminded her that she is created in the image of God and must act accordingly. Another teacher, the wife of a theology professor, overheard our conversation. "How dare you speak of women as the image of God?" she demanded. It is men, not women, who are made in God's image, she told me.

Even today, decades afterward, I cringe when I recall the incident, her countenance and demeanor. I took up the matter with her husband, my colleague in the theology department. "Does your wife really believe that?" I asked. He lowered his head in embarrassment and did not reply.

This entrenched idea goes way back to ancient traditions. Writes Korean theologian Chung Hyun Kyung, the myth persists that

"God is man, Man is God
You are a woman, woman, woman."¹

This myth continues to keep womankind on the margins, in danger, poverty, and suffering, languishing over unrealized dreams—what could have been.

My colleague's wife believed that the Bible supports the idea that only men, not women, reflect God's image. She was referencing 1 Corinthians 11:7, which says that man "is the image and reflection of God; but woman is the reflection of man" (NRSV). But is this what Genesis says?

Genesis Creation Stories

Two creation stories are recorded in Genesis, narrated consecutively in chapters 1 and 2. The first story ends at 2:3 and is generally regarded by scholars as later than the second story, which ends with chapter 2. Most readers see the two stories as complementary without noticing contradictions.

Yet they are, in fact, very different from one another in how they define humanity. In the first story, human beings are created in the divine image, and God gives *them* (not *him*) dominion over the Earth. In the second story, the creature God brought forth on the sixth day is male (not male and female), and the female is derived from him. This second story sets up the case for identifying the Hebrew word *adam* (defined as *humanity* in 1:27) as male—and the female as an accessory—in addition to the case for male domination after the Fall.

Which story helps us to nurture and restore the image of God in humankind? Is it the first story of mutuality, or is it the second story of domination?

Paul answers the question when he addresses a gender controversy in the Corinthian church in 1 Corinthians 11:1-12.

The Corinthian Women

In Corinth, the liberating light of the gospel had led women to resist their subjugation by relinquishing one particular sign of subjugation: head covering. When a counter-resistance developed against women asserting their independence in this way, church leaders wrote to Paul.

Paul first placed before them the cultural ideology that justified male domination (sometimes euphemized today as "male headship"). In 1 Corinthians 11:3-10, Paul at first seemed to ignore the Genesis 1 account where both male and female bear the divine image. He drew on the Genesis 2 account of creation, which appears to assert that it is the man who is in God's image, and woman is the reflection of the man. This was the interpretation of my colleague's wife, as previously mentioned, which is drawn from verse 7.

Many believe this is Paul's argument. It is not. Paul disagreed with it. In classic Socratic rhetorical style, Paul first put out the argument that was creating the problem: the argument for male headship. He let everyone look at it for what it was worth. But then he overthrew the culturally entrenched story and opted instead for the inclusive Genesis 1 account of creation and the interdependence of men and women: "For the first woman came from the first man, and now all men come from women, and everything comes from God" (1 Cor. 11:12, paraphrase). Consequently, "a woman ought to have authority over her own head" (verse 10, NIV), and it was enough that her "long hair is given to her as a covering" (verse 15, NIV).

This is not the only instance in which Paul opposed the culture of domination. In Romans 16 he greeted his fellow workers and apostles, among whom he listed women and slaves;² and in that same chapter, Tertius (who is a slave) signed the letter (verse 22).

Jesus and Mary

In opposing a culture of domination, Paul mirrored Jesus. The internal evidence of the canonical Gospels suggests that Mary Magdalene was one of Jesus' closest and most beloved disciples. However, she has become more commonly known either as a prostitute whom Jesus pulled out of the gutter or as Jesus' consort, neither of which is taught in the

Bible. This is because as the gospel morphed into the male-dominated religion of Christianity,³ church leaders did not want to affirm that Jesus had an intellectual and spiritual relationship with a woman comparable to what he had with the 12 men who followed him.

In Luke 10:38-39, we read about Mary sitting as a student at Jesus' feet, as only male disciples were allowed to do. At the resurrection she addressed him as "Rabboni" (John 20:16, NIV), as a disciple would address the master teacher. In the fourth Gospel, three people are listed as beloved by Jesus: the siblings Mary, Martha, and Lazarus (John 11:5). Verse 2 of this passage also tells us that Mary is the hitherto unnamed woman who anointed Jesus' feet before his death (Luke 7:36-50).

Jesus and Paul were both aware of the extent to which Scripture is laden with manmade traditions that distort and alienate in the interest of power and control. Both appealed instead to the everlasting law of love and justice.

All of this leads to the conclusion that Mary Magdalene was a major disciple.

A Hermeneutic of Suspicion

In 1 Corinthians 11, Paul applied a hermeneutic of suspicion to the distorted creation account by making that bold contradiction to it. Jesus applied a hermeneutic of suspicion in the Sermon on the Mount with his repeated use of "You have heard that it was said....But I say to you" (see Matt. 5:21-48, NRSV). By saying "Moses

commanded you" and then contradicting it, he showed that it was Moses—not God, as they assumed—who had made these rules (Matt. 19:7-8). In vain you worship God, he told them in Matthew 15:9, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men—commandments such as stoning the adulteress, expelling the eunuch, stigmatizing those you don't like, and forbidding women from touching anything sacred.

Jesus and Paul were both aware of the extent to which Scripture is laden with manmade traditions that distort and alienate in the interest of power and control. Both appealed instead to the everlasting law of love and justice.

We, too, must apply a hermeneutic of suspicion to any idea, regardless of the source, that does not make sense deep in our hearts. Many myths perpetuated about women dim our light, clip our wings, and take away the power inherent in our creation. For example, one myth says that women are too emotional to lead, which is interesting, considering the oft-celebrated Twitter tantrums of the current (male) leader of the free world. Another myth says that women do not have the intellectual capacity for mathematics and technology. But today we have thousands of female mathematician and engineers, and it takes only one successful woman to demonstrate that gender does not determine intellectual capacity or technical ability.

In *Period. End of Sentence*, the very thing that makes womankind uniquely like God is used to subjugate women. There is astonishing irony in the fact that a woman's reproductive capacity—her ability to bring into existence another human being, as God did in the beginning—is so threatening to men that they created a cultural taboo about menstruation. This demonstrates the extent to which reality is turned upside down. It also underscores the need for a hermeneutic of suspicion toward anything that attempts to define, confine, and predetermine women's destiny.

Paul places a hermeneutic of suspicion on the traditional interpretation of Genesis 1 and 2. He says that "everything comes from God" (1 Cor. 11:12, NIV). We know that for sure.

A World Struggle

Chung Hyun Kyung's theology affirms that
*When our blood is shed each moon cycle,
 That blood does not make us ritually unclean.
 It is blood that is meant to nurture and bring into form*

the human race.
 And if we labor in childbirth,
 It is an honor to suffer for the survival of the human race.
 Our blood,
 our body—broken through pain
 and the metastatic tumors of patriarchal oppression—
 Of these all humans partake.
 Thus, sacramentally,
 We identify with Christ as no other can.⁴

Chung Hyun Kyung argues that a woman's self-knowledge comes from the unique experience of "bearing the cross" that a culture of domination has placed upon womankind. Ironically, it is along this road to Calvary that a woman may discover her true self, for there she meets Jesus, the son of God, her brother in suffering.⁵ There she realizes that she is the daughter of God—like Jesus, the express image of God. Chung argues that this story is the motivation to struggle against all of the forces that subvert the true identity of womanhood and try to shut out her light.⁶ When a woman comes to know and accept that she is the divine image, then she can define man not as a god standing over her, but as a fellow mortal to whom she gives birth, and whom she loves because he is her son, her brother, her lover, her comrade in arms.⁷ The story ends in triumph.

An African feminist classic, *The Will to Arise*,⁸ shows how African women are reclaiming their identities that got lost in the shuffle between African tradition and a colonialist culture of domination. If we are to arise, says this inspiring volume, we must know who we are and rediscover our true selves buried beneath traditions, taboos, myths, and fear. And women *must* arise for the healing of the human family, our men and children, our churches, our nations—for the world. We must write our own stories based not on ideologies of domination, but on the nature of our lived experience. We women must know the power inherent in our creation. God is not the rescuer, but a woman's "Supreme Center" who is struggling with her toward full self-realization.⁹

This is a different kind of power. Woman is not the moon depending upon another's light—the reflection of the man; rather, she is the sun that fosters life.¹⁰ Woman must struggle to be the sun again. This is not "power over,"

which is the power exercised by the oppressors of Christ. Instead this is the power of Christ: the sun, the light that rises above the darkness and ignorance and oppression to show the world what it means to be human.

Women may yet save the world, if we will—"the will to arise"
"Struggle to be the sun again"
A world in trauma
We can save it if we will
But we must know who we are.
By the grace of God we close out the noise of this world
And in quietness with God
We rediscover our light.
And our struggle becomes the struggle
Of the cosmos
*Longing to be free.*¹¹

We women must address this chronic cultural problem, because only we can change our circumstances. Yes, these efforts are often stymied by socioeconomic forces that rely on tradition, ideology, and stigma in a culture of domination, which may even give us a false sense of security. Yet, as these voices from Asia and Africa show, all over the world today women are fighting against the odds and are demonstrating that it is we who have the power to change our own circumstances and map out a peaceful destiny for ourselves, for our children, and for the world. **AT**

¹ Chung Hyun Kyung, *Struggle to Be the Sun Again: Introducing Asian Women's Theology* (1990).

² Paul also greeted Quartus (meaning "fourth") and Tertius (meaning "third"), who wrote the letter for Paul. Slaves in the Roman Empire were not given names but were, instead, numbered.

³ Karen Jo Torjesen, *When Women Were Priests: Women's Leadership in the Early Church and the Scandal of Their Subordination in the Rise of Christianity* (1993).

⁴ By the author, based on Chung, pp. 66-70, reflecting the upside-down reality of patriarchal domination over female reproductive capacity.

⁵ *ibid.*, p. 53.

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 70-71.

⁸ Mercy Amba Oduyoye and Musimbi R. A. Kanyoro, eds., *The Will to Arise: Women, Tradition, and the Church in Africa* (1992).

⁹ *ibid.*, p. 50.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 51.

¹¹ By the author, based on Oduyoye and Kanyoro.



NEWS BRIEFS

BarelyAdventist (barelyadventist.com) is a satire and humor blog on Adventist culture and issues. It is written by committed Adventists who have no interest in tearing down the church but don't mind laughing at our idiosyncrasies.

Ben Carson Exonerated by the Mueller Report

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Minutes after Robert Mueller, special counsel for the Department of Justice, released the detailed report of his counterintelligence investigation, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) held a press briefing. It announced that HUD Secretary Ben Carson was fully exonerated of all accusations that he had been snoozing on the job.

Speaking in the department's briefing room, a long procession of HUD aides hammered home their message that after 22 months

of investigation, there wasn't a shred of evidence to support the persistent accusations of office-napping.

"Wild stories have described Secretary Carson sneaking pillows into his office and installing pricey sound systems for ambient noise, featuring whale sounds, tropical rain, and Hope Channel Family Reunion reruns to help him catch some ZZZs," said HUD representative Estella Durmiendo. "That was not cool."

According to Durmiendo, Carson wanted to assure the American public that he takes daytime naps only on Saturday mornings, during sermons that last over an hour.

"Flee to the Hills" Plan Ready for Uber Riders

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. — Ridesharing platform Uber has added a "flee to the hills" button for Adventist customers to use during the Time of Trouble. Officials said that Uber created the button after the transportation network company learned that many Adventists were doing elaborate logistical planning in anticipation of having to make their escape. Church members desperate to flee will have the option of using Uber to carpool with other Adventists, or they can opt to get their own private ride. A "premium escape" package will be available for Adventists with gold watches. Uber officials warn that all "flee to the hills" options will likely be expensive, since surge pricing will automatically take effect in the event that Adventists want to skip town en masse.

Sex, Violence, Drugs Prompt Scripture Ban

Adventist World — Adventist Book Center outlets will no longer carry copies of the Old Testament, due to what the stores call "stratospheric levels of sex, violence, and drug abuse" contained in the volume. The decision was made after multiple complaints from customers about tales of gruesome murders, incest, and ill-advised drunkenness

that make frequent appearances in between begats, commandments, plagues, and prophecies. Scores of customers have complained that significant portions of the Old Testament are un-Adventisty and that the Song of Solomon is straight up R-rated. The last straw came after a horrified parent demanded a refund on his Bible after his tween son excitedly described how the heroine Jael drove a tent peg through Sisera's temple.

Trivia Show to Relieve Adventist Confusion

SILVER SPRING, Md. — Hope Channel has just launched a new trivia game show titled "Who Said It—EGW or the Bible?" The show is an effort to clear up Adventist confusion about the origin of favorite quotes and ideas.

"Far too many of our members are convinced that their most treasured 'memory verses' come straight from Scripture when, actually, they originate in a compilation of cherry-picked Ellen White quotations," said Hope Channel promotional copy for the new show. "We're delighted that our Messenger's writings are still on the lips of the faithful, but Adventists don't do themselves any favors when they try to pass off lesser light as anything other than it is."

Contributors



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BIBLE CREDITS

Scripture quotations marked (JPS Tanakh 1917) are from the 1917 Jewish Publication Society translation of The Holy Scriptures According to the Masoretic Text: A New Translation with the Aid of Previous Versions and with Constant Consultation of Jewish Authorities.

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EDITORIAL PHILOSOPHY

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor or the editorial board. One of the purposes of this magazine is to encourage dialogue between those of differing viewpoints within the Adventist Church. Thus, we will publish articles ranging throughout the conservative-liberal continuum.

Adventist Today



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Get ready to be surprised. A uniquely optimistic group of Adventists will be coming together to fellowship, to be inspired, and help write a Christ-centered, progressive next chapter in the Adventist story. It won't be the same without you.

Our theme is ***Christ Challenges Culture***.

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Brenda Billingsy • Dilys Brooks • John Brunt (Respondent) • Alex Bryan • Jennifer Deans • Linda Emmerson (Reader) • Marlene Ferreras (Respondent) • Karl Haffner • Michaela Lawrence • John McLarty • Chris Oberg
Joey Oh • Kendra Haloviak Valentine • Don Veverka • Emily Whitney • Nicholas Zork & Band (Music)

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