

Reports from the Street Evangelist for Women's Equality

Report from the street evangelist. Went back to the auto dealer today to take care of business. Saw the young woman, Megan, who had explained our paperwork and was such a pleasure to work with. I had given her my Street Evangelist card when I left last week. A different young woman helped me today, but I saw Megan and she seemed glad to see me. When we finished, I told Megan that I had a book for her. She came to the counter and said, "For me? The whole book?" It is amazing how thrilled a person can be over a book! She was happy and said she was putting it in her personal things so nobody else would get it. I wish I had taken another book to give to Britney who helped me, but I just had one book. I did give her a card. One person at a time.

Report from the street evangelist. Bought a new car yesterday. Mine was 10 years old and it was time for safety reasons. The first salesman was named Allie, and she was very nice, but Mark called and said that Allie was going to be off Friday, so he would be the salesman. I called Allie to make sure this was ok with her. When I arrived, I found her manager and gave him my book Women Equal - No Buts with my card Shirley Taylor - Street Evangelist stapled to it. He promised he would give it to Allie. Does Allie want the book? I have no idea, but I am sure the title will interest her. Now I have to put new decals on this shiny car and a new bumper sticker. Because I am the street evangelist and now am driving around in a fancier car. (The regular people in town who see my car may wonder how much a street evangelist is paid!) The answer is Nothing!

Report from the street evangelist (and Equality Junction). As a co-founder of Equality Junction, I wrote a letter (with Jocelyn's agreement) to Sheriff Joe Arpaio of Arizona in which we protested the use of pink jumpsuits which tell men they are 'girlie' or 'weak women.' The good sheriff responded with this: "Dear Shirley and Jocelyn, Thank you for sending me your letter and comments. I will give your concerns to my staff for their review."

Report from the street evangelist. Time to make new Wills since there have been changes in our family since we last made Wills. The following letter I sent to the attorney explains why women are still battling this sexist thing.

Dear Attorney,

Oh, my! Imagine my consternation when I opened the envelope your office sent to our home.

Mr. and Mrs. Don Taylor

My intention is that my husband and I would be purchasing two Wills at the price of \$\$\$\$ total, but it appears that we are purchasing only one Will. The draft Will and other end of life documents sent are for DonTaylor only.

I have been lost in this process.

This is exactly what I was leery of when I decided to choose an attorney for our Wills, so I found an attorney who I believed would be sensitive to the equality of women because of the Methodist connection.

For the past eight years I have been battling sexist teaching in churches because religious institutions such as churches, mosques, and temples are the last holdout against women being treated equally. Truthfully, I did not expect to see such blatant example of male headship in my legal dealings. Implied possibly, but not actually arriving at my door.

Now, I am sure that you did not mean anything about this. I am sure that you thought that since the Wills are the same that we could just proof one set. But they are not the same. One is supposed to have my name on it. And that, therein, is a significant difference.

Signed [Shirley Taylor](#), Street evangelist for women's equality.

Report from the street evangelist in Ireland. Part 3. There was a couple from Abilene and this was their first trip abroad, so Don and I (being seasoned travelers) connected with them. I immediately surmised that they were Church of Christ members and that proved to be correct. At breakfast the next morning while Don was at the buffet, the husband was sitting beside me and said, "What does Don think about this?" Meaning, of course, my card that I had given them which declares to the world that I am a street preacher for Christian women's equality. "He is the one who opened my eyes to how women are treated in church," was my reply.

What does Don think of this? Don is like many men who sees injustice toward women and is in the struggle to change it. Think of the tour driver who was happy to give my book to his wife.

Then there was Eddie, the Irish history storyteller. Eddie had finished his stories. Knowing how hard it is to sell a book, I wanted to buy one of his books. I picked up a book on an old railroad in Clare, and told him that I write books. He asked what I write about. Women's equality in the church, I told him. "There is no reason women can't be equal in the church," Eddie, the storyteller said. "By the time the church gets around to treating women equally, there may be no churches left for them to serve."

What happens when the backbone of the church, the women, drop out of church. Like the leaders, the men, have already done? Will there be a church left?

Report from the street evangelist in Ireland. Part 2. There were 14 of us including the tour driver. "Where are you from?" and then "what did you do?" We seem to categorize people by their geography and their work. "Church secretary" I said, knowing that it was the lead-in to where I wanted it to go. But I didn't give out my cards "Shirley Taylor – Street Evangelist for women's equality" just yet. It was too early in the trip, but I did tell them that I was very interested in women's equality in the church. They began pointing things out on the tour that had meaning to me, such as the Equality for Women sign in King John's Castle, under Brehon law, circa 700. See picture.

It was Monday when I gave each of them a card, including the tour driver, David. He took the card, read it and said, "My wife will love this. She is really into this equality." So now I knew who would be gifted with the only book I took. Yes. I signed it "To Maggie, from Shirley Taylor" and gave it to David for his wife.

David hugged me and gave me a kiss on the cheek when we said our goodbyes at the end of the tour.



Report from the street evangelist in Ireland. Part 1. First, you have to fly to Dulles Airport. Last week was awfully cold and flights were cancelled due to snow. Which is how I came to be sitting beside a woman attorney for a Catholic women's congregation in San Antonio who was chaperoning 32 kids on a trip to Washington DC. Their flight had been cancelled the night before and the tour company bused them to Houston to catch the flight I happened to be on.

For awhile we did not speak, but her daughter was sitting beside my husband and I could see they were a group so I asked the name of the group. A small Catholic school. Great opening! Now we have religion in the mix. -Did I ever tell you that in the 1970s, I took the Evangelism Explosion study? Well, one of the things we learned (which at the time I thought was silly), was to look around you and make note of a peaceful picture on the wall and tell the family something like, I see you like peaceful things. Some Blarney like that. That is useful now because that is what I do. – She is very much for women's equality and she said the priest Administrator of the 'congregation' was also. She went on to explain how they are helping women in Nicaragua and other countries to be independent. They help women in San Antonio support themselves and learn to be good mothers so they can pass that along to the next generation. This women's group has opened a therapy school, an optical school and are working on opening an osteopathic school of medicine. She said, "There is no scripture that says that women can't be priests. It is just tradition."

Minds are changing. The church is not. What happens when the people outgrow the church?

Report from Equality Junction. On Monday of this past week, Equality Junction sent a letter to Sheriff Joe Arpaio in Arizona regarding jail inmates being forced to wear pink jumpsuits to shame them by calling them 'little girls' or 'weak women.' At the time we did not know that one of the commercial ads running on the Super Bowl would be 'like a girl' which tells everyone watching that running and jumping and whatever like a girl is a good strong thing. That is in direct opposition to the message the Sheriff (and all the copycats) is sending. Will you pray with me that someone in Sheriff Joe

Arpaio's office will remember the letter and connect the dots that the message they are sending is harmful to girls and women? Letter can be seen at www.equalityjunction.com under Actions - Letters Sent.

Report from the street evangelist. My friend called and said "meet me in front of Panera Bread at 11:10 for lunch." I got there first and found a spot outside beside a large post on the corner and waited for her. I saw a blue SUV like hers turn in and the woman inside began waving at me. I waved back. But as she drove by to park I saw that her hair was long and my friend has short hair like mine. Soon a woman came hurrying across to where I was standing and stuck out her hand and said, I am Deanne. I shook her hand and said, "I don't think I am the one you are looking for. I am waiting for someone else." We laughed at that and she acknowledged that she wasn't sure because I didn't look like the person she was meeting. I took out my new Vistaprint cards and handed her a card and said, "I am Shirley Taylor. You have just met the street evangelist for women's equality in the church and in the home." She took my card and looked at it and then gave me her card and then the lady who she was waiting for arrived. I don't always stand on street corners, but if I happen to be there, I jump at the chance when it presents itself.

Report from the street evangelist. Got off work early today. Stopped by H.E.B. grocery store. Put my 7 items on the counter. Asked the young woman if she had to work late and she said she was leaving at 7:00 pm but had a 2 hour drive to get home. I said, you don't do this everyday, do you? She said no. She is a college student and is going back home for the holiday. I wished her a Happy New Year and handed her one of my cards with my books picture on it. She looked at, and hopefully this weekend she will remember that she met a woman working for her equality in an ordinary place.

Report from the street evangelist. Got 4 hugs today from a young woman who was so delighted to get my book! I had business with her company and talked with her this morning. Her office is on my way home, so I decided to stop by and give her a Christmas present. She has been there since this summer and I had already given her predecessor a book, and I was SURE that she would love to have one, too. She asked me if I believed that Jesus taught that women could be preachers. Apparently she believes that they can, and I do, too, so that got me another hug. She told me that her boss and the company she works for believes in women's equality. I knew that her boss did because he bought one of my first books. Whenever I give one of my books away, I am spreading the word that you want spread. I wish you all a Merry Christmas!

Report from the street evangelist. A Christmas party. Last night there were about 35 people around a table for a Christmas party. I have a large purse so I casually tucked one of my books inside. Among the guests were a couple who go to the church my brother attends, a couple just starting a new church (old couple), and a young couple who just broke ground on their new church. All male headship churches. Ok. I steered the conversation where I wanted it to go, and brought out my books to show the first couple. She doesn't like to read for pleasure, but thumbed through the book and read some of the titles "Pulpit Bullies" and so forth. She returned the book. The couple sitting next to them looked at the book but expressed no desire to look at it, and I had read their vibes and didn't expect

them to. A woman sat beside me, and I showed her my book. She liked it. I autographed it and gave it to her, and she said, "My niece will love to read this." Yes! Pass it around. We then played the "White Elephant" gift exchange, and I can guarantee you that the woman who went home with my free book got the best deal of the night.

Report from the street evangelist. At the library today, I went over to the desk of a new assistant manager who I have spoken to several times, but had never carried on a conversation with her. I said, "Let me tell you who I am."

Now, that takes courage, or audacity! Because I am really nobody except whom I have decided to be. I told her I was going to be speaking to the Northern Colorado CBE Chapter Saturday. We talked about books and she asked me if I had read the book by the new Nobel Prize winner, Malala, the Pakistani girl who was almost killed because she wanted equality.

It is a good book and I highly recommend that you read it if you haven't.

Then I said something that startled her (I like to do that.) I said, "We are only a few steps away from doing that to women ourselves. In all the Baptist churches around here they have a statement of faith that says that women are to graciously submit to their husbands. And that women can teach children and women, but cannot preach to men."

Most times when I talk one-on-one with someone, I give them a copy of my book Women Equal – No Buts. But this time I didn't. After all, the library has all three of my books.

Report from the street evangelist. I read far too much. Whenever I read a book that shows how women have been treated and I see the same thing today, I write the author. Some write back. I encourage you to write authors to commend them when they get the message out to the reading public that is mostly women. I got this letter today from Kristin Harnish who I had written to commend her for writing about the need for women's suffrage and how it is still needed today in the churches. Here is her reply to me.

Dear Shirley -

Thank you so much for your note. It comes at the perfect time. I'm finishing the revisions to The Vintner's Daughter sequel, which really delves into the struggles women faced in the late 1800s and their fight for equal rights in and outside of the home. So, your kind words just encourage me to keep plugging away!

I applaud you for your commitment to modernizing your churches. Although I'm Catholic, I have many friends who belong to other Christian and Baptist churches, and I'm always surprised at how some of these churches promote equality, and others seem to be stuck in a turn-of-the-century mindset. We Catholics have our share of problems, too....but together, I do believe we can make a real difference.

Congratulations on your book and your website. I'm inspired by real women like you who are leading the charge for churches to start viewing women as first class citizens - just like the men! We have so much to contribute, and I believe the Lord is calling us to do just that!

Best wishes,

Kristen Harnish