

Reports from the Street Evangelist for Women's Equality

Report from the middle of the ocean. On a cruise ship to the Bahamas. On vacation from being a street evangelist. There are 4 of my books in my luggage and 25 cards in my purse, but it is the 2nd day out and I haven't evangelized any.

"Hi, Shirley," I looked around and a young man is grinning at me. I don't know him. I stutter and ask if he knows me. He said he saw my name tag. His wife said he is always remembering names. I didn't realize I had been that close to him that he could read it. We exited the ship.

The next day, I hear "Hi, Shirley Taylor." There he is again. Beginning to feel weird. We laughed at that and as we began walking off the ship, I said, "I just figured you recognized me as the famous author." Then I handed him my card which I had in my pants pocket. We got separated and then on the pier, his wife had stopped and I told her that if she saw me again, that I would give her one of my books. We returned from our excursion that afternoon and Don and I found a quiet place on the deck. "Hi, Shirley." Definitely weird. This time it is the young man, his wife and his father. I told her that I had promised her a book, so I sent Don to our cabin for one.

Turns out he is military (10 years), in San Antonio where our son had been when he was in the military, had been to Iraq and Afghanistan. I explained what my books are about. His father (from Oklahoma) said, "Our pastor says we are head of our wives but we are not to lord it over them." Well, I have heard that crap before. I told him that the pastor was telling him that he had headship, and that my book explains why he doesn't.

The young wife thumbed through the book and exclaimed about all the scriptures in the book. I think she gets it. The husband didn't seem to have a clue. That was the last time I saw them. But I still have 3 books and lots of cards and it is only Tuesday.

Report from the street evangelist. Got off work early and went shopping, but still had an hour to kill before my hair appointment. Decided to go to the Christian Book Store with a new tactic. Been there before, of course, but they 'don't have space' for my book. Reread the "Glory of Sex" reference to Timothy Keller that it is on page 130 of my newest book. Stuck the book inside my purse. Going on a mission. Bet I don't have to look long before I find Timothy Keller's book and his glory of sex reference. Sure enough, there were 2 of them in the marriage section. Found what I wanted on page 237 and put the book back. Went to the counter and told the young woman there that I wanted to give her my book that she could put on the shelf. No charge, just don't throw it in the trash can (I wanted her to know it was valuable!). She took it behind the wall to the manager. While she disappeared, I stepped back and got the Real Marriage book referenced before and stood waiting for her at the counter. She

returned with my book and said they would have to review it. I asked her "Do you think that when a husband and wife have sex and climax that they are emulating the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?" I opened Keller's book and showed her where he says that. Of course she was shocked. I said, "This book has already passed review, but look what it says!" Then I opened my book and showed her what I said about what he said in his book. I took out my street evangelist card and stuck it in on page 130 of my book, and said "I call myself the street evangelist for women's equality."

Report from the street evangelist. I had just finished watching the movie "Suffragettes." Now, I don't want to go to prison for my work in women's equality, and running out in front of racing horses don't appeal to me. When the movie ended, everyone was sitting in silence as the credits ran. I could not let that young suffragette's life be in vain. I call myself a street evangelist for women's equality. So, standing up and looking at those still sitting, I said in a loud voice to those in the theater, "Women still are not equal in most churches on Sunday mornings."

Report from the street evangelist. The street evangelist made a house call today to Big Baptist Church where I attended for 3 years. Realized a few weeks ago that I needed to meet their interim pastor. He and I had worked for Baptist General Convention of Texas at the same time, but he was Associate Executive Director and I was a ministry assistant (a fancy name for secretary) 200 miles away. He didn't remember me of course but he knew my former supervisors very well so he gave me the courtesy of visiting with me today between the 8:30 morning worship and the 11:00 worship. As he sat down in the Atrium to talk with me, I said, "I call myself the Street Evangelist, and I make trouble wherever I go. I have already given 2 books to your members this morning."

It was this way. I went in the sanctuary and saw a gentleman sitting by himself at the far end of the pew, so I entered the pew and asked if this was anybody's special seat. All churchgoers know that regular members sit in the same place each Sunday. He said no, the woman in front turned around and greeted me and asked if I was a visitor. I told her my sister goes to this church. I gave her my card.

The man I was sitting by was talking with the woman sitting behind me about canning figs and his wouldn't gel. So I entered that conversation because you may remember that I can can figs. The woman behind asked me to visit their Sunday school as they have about 50 women with 4 women teachers whom she named. I gave her my card and she asked me what a street evangelist does and she guessed maybe I was located in Austin or San Antonio? I told her as a street evangelist I talk to people just like her and sometimes I give them my book.

I knew that I wanted to give a book to the woman in front of me, but I particularly wanted to give a book to the woman behind me with 50 women in her Sunday School class. I quietly unzipped my bag with the books so I could get them quickly. I knew that I had a split second to give one to the lady in front AND the lady in the back before they left. I had to make a double-play quickly.

The service started and then ended. I pulled out my book and I leaned up toward the lady in front and asked her if she would like one, and then extended my arm behind me and asked the woman behind me if she would. They both did.

Thus the confession to the pastor that I had given two books to the members because I knew that I had stirred up a hornet's nest. Oh, yes, I gave him a book, too.

Report from the street evangelist. It is not easy being me. Today was such a day. Went to mail an unsolicited book to a pastor who was indirectly mentioned in my blog today – you know the one “wives are witches?”* My cute Equal- No Buts address label was peeling off and the lady behind me in line at the post office pointed it out. (I might add here that I discreetly prominently display my label when I am in line to mail a book). She made the comment that I would want them to see who it was from. Then I handed her my street evangelist card.

At the counter they teased me about my book, since one of the male clerks is mentioned in my Women Equal-No Buts book. One said it must be humorous and I asked him if his wife reads books. He said not really. I knew he was Catholic. As the woman and I were headed out the door together, she said that she is the Women's Ministry coordinator in the local Methodist church and she asked me if I speak to groups. We went to my car and I gave her my Outside the pastor's door book because it is more inspirational.

We chatted and then I got in the car and left with her behind me. A light that I had never seen before came on and thinking it was the car door, I closed my door better. Now here is where I tell you how a suave street evangelist looks completely stupid. I pull out of the post office parking lot into a 20 mile per hour school zone with the light still on and looked behind me and my trunk is up, flopping. The lady is right behind me. It is a one lane narrow street. I signal and turn across the other side into the school circular driveway and get out and with all the dignity I can muster, I close the trunk. Then proceed right into the line of cars waiting to pick up school kids all facing me. I back up, find a parking spot, get turned around and finally get out of there. Somedays it is hard to be me.

(*www.bwebaptistwomenforequality.wordpress.com “Open Letter to Dr. Ronnie Floyd: wives are witches?”)

Report from the street evangelist. Just heard a great line from Lori on the Shark Tank, “You wake up every morning and don't say ‘who's going to let me’ but you say ‘who's going stop me.’” Case in point. Yesterday I shopped for shoes. Was helped by a very nice knowledgeable young Hispanic woman. After I paid for the shoes, I gave her my card and told her to always remember that she is equal – no butts.

Stopped by the bank to deposit my check and get some spending money. I apparently wasn't thinking straight because I forgot to sign it. The young Hispanic bank teller (do they still call them tellers?) pushed the deposit slip back to me because I had forgotten to sign it. When he asked for ID, I laughed and said, “Sometimes I forget what I am doing, or maybe I am just not smart enough.” When we finished I handed him my card and said ‘but this is something I do know what I am doing. I write books for women's equality.’ I left as he was reading the card.

Stopping here to say that when nobody else is within earshot, I turn into a street evangelist, other times I am just a secretary. I don't ask 'who's going to let me' but take to heart "who's going to stop me."

Report from the Street Evangelist. An elderly member of the church where I work came in with her daughter with groceries for the Thanksgiving baskets we give next month. I told the elderly woman that I wanted to give my newest book to her daughter. She was hesitant because she doesn't agree with dethroning male headship. And her daughter is a Baptist, and I suspected she didn't either. But I was pushy. I took it in the other room and gave it to the daughter anyway. She said that she is a conservative Christian. Well, maybe so. Maybe I am, too. But I don't think so. If she doesn't read it, she won't be the first one not to. But what if she does? What if she does a quick thumb-through and finds it says things she has begun thinking? Do we cling to labels such as conservative when our heart is telling us something different? Is there such a thing as a conservative Christian? Surely Jesus wasn't conservative. Why should we be? (Thanks to my friend who makes these book give-a-ways possible).

Report from the street evangelist. Going to a funeral today at a small Baptist church for one of Don's retired co-workers. Another co-worker is the pastor of the church. Looked on their website. Listened for 30 seconds to his sermon and I starting sputtering and spitting and yelling for Don to come listen. The preacher said God says men have authority in their house. (Knew it wouldn't do any good to tell that pastor about women's equality, so decided to write the SBC president). Don has no idea what I will say when we go anywhere. I promised that I wouldn't say anything at the funeral that would embarrass him. Changed purses and did not add any books or cards. Going incognito. About 10 former co-workers were there. Sat behind one of the wives. She turned around and told me that she loves to hear about the travels of others because she doesn't travel. I had never met her before. I began telling her some of the places I had been, and told her that I still work, and where, and that I write books. Began digging around in my empty purse. Found a street evangelist card and give it to her. She said I need to speak at her church. Told her that after the funeral I would give her a book.

We went to my car and I got a book. Asked her who the pastor was now at her church. I knew him, of course. Had even typed his resume for him when I the ministry assistant for his uncle at BGCT (9 years)! Didn't tell her that, but did tell her I knew him and asked about his family. Had a good time talking. Then I gave her a book for him. Then Don said to give him "Outside the pastor's door" because he would like that. Ok. So I gave away 2 Women Equal – No Buts: Powered by the same Source" to a church member and a pastor. Oh, by the way, I also wrote a letter to Dr. Ronnie Floyd president of the SBC and offered a bunch of women in answer to his prayer for a holy breakthrough, "*And yes, we also need pastor-leaders by the thousands to rise up and lead forward toward gospel advancement beginning in their towns, cities, across America, and the entire world.*" Told him we are trained and ready.

Report from the street evangelist. Stopped at the Bali store for some unmentionables. A very nice young lady helped me with my purchases. I was the only customer when I checked out. She made a comment about being blessed, so I figured she was Christian. She asked if it was my birthday month because there is special if it is. Just missed it, I said. I am 72 years old and still work. She asked me where. I told her I am a church secretary. I paid and then handed her my street evangelist card and said, "I'm conservative in my choice of underwear, but radical in my belief that women are equal – no butts." She laughed and said, "That was perfect!" I asked her if she reads books. She said she didn't. She

assured me that she reads at church, just not books, but she knows she ought to. I left the store wondering if I had my book in the car, and if I did, I knew I giving her one. Now, why would you give a book to someone who doesn't read books? I got my book and took it back into the store and told her that one of the joys of writing books is to give them to people. She said, "Oh, I will read this! I promise you, I will read it." That is why you give books to people who 'don't read.'

Report from the street evangelist. Had to make an early morning stop before work to buy 2 pies for a funeral lunch at our church. As I was going out to my car, I saw an elderly man and woman coming in. She looked at me and I knew that I had known her at some point. She said, "Don't I know you?" Then I remembered that 20 years ago I had been a member of the church she still goes to, so I had known her very well back then. They asked what I was doing now? I gave them my street evangelist card and told them I had written some books and I would love to give her one. She said she doesn't read much, but I wanted to give them a book. He said she needed to go to the restroom, so he walked out to the car with me. He said he had been a Baptist for 79 years and now he is 90. I opened my trunk and took out a book and signed it. He said, "Our daughter would like this. She lives across the street. Her husband is strong-willed (another word for a jackass?) and she might be thinking that women need to be equal.

Report from the street evangelist. Went to the doctor. He asked me how long I had been at the church where I work. Told him 9 years tomorrow. He has a special interest in that church since he and his twin brother (who is also a doctor) attended there, and his grandmother did until she died a few years ago. He said his grandmother was a church secretary for 20 years. I told him I am going to Los Angeles next week for a women's equality conference and then I handed him and his PA my street evangelist card. They both expressed an interest in my books and so I went to my car, got them each a book "Women Equal - No buts: Powered by the same Source" and signed it and gave them one. I also gave the doctor my book written at the church for the church newsletter, "Outside the pastor's door: Reflections of a church secretary." He said his grandmother would have loved the book.

Report from the street evangelist. Finally decided it was time to get the sticker for my car so I can enter our subdivision easily when they begin road work in a few weeks. Stopped by the Association office and got the form. A new person in the office. Filled out the form and took it back this morning. Brought along one of my books Women Equal - No Buts: Powered by the same Source. Got my sticker and introduced myself and told her that I write books for women's equality. She is (drum roll!) a Baptist! (Well, that is always a good guess around here). She told me that she goes to BBC (Big Baptist Church) but has not joined yet, just didn't feel comfortable with it. She and her husband like the church, ok, but.... I told her I had worked for the Baptists for almost 15 years and had been a Baptist for 53 years and write about Baptists. This makes the 5th book that I have given to members/attendees of that church.