



Daughters Shall, Daughters Do

*"I will pour out my spirit on
all flesh; your sons and your daughters
shall prophesy."*

JOEL 2:28

Thousands of years ago the prophet Joel proclaimed a message that would ring like a clarion call for centuries to come. It would empower godly women around the world to stand against bias, comfort them when misunderstood, and encourage them to serve their God regardless of how their culture received (or failed to receive) them. Joel spoke for God simply but powerfully, saying, "I will pour out my spirit on *all flesh*; your sons *and your daughters* shall prophesy..." (Joel 2:28, emphasis added). Yet to this day, the church still debates the role of God's daughters.

As my friend Kelly Bean says, "Stories are life-changing, debates rarely are." So, as I promised in the last issue, this column will be not about the debate but about two women who have claimed Joel 2:28 as their mandate and are thereby set free to do Christ's work, both globally and locally, both inside and outside the church.

A house church pastor for the past 17 years in Portland, Oreg., Bean understands Joel's call as both an invitation to all God's children to fulfill the needs of his kingdom and the authorization for all of us to speak his words of healing and hope. This daughter does just that in a ministry model she has dubbed "the team of three." Groups of three people take the lead in planning the house church gatherings so that Bean is not perceived as the chief but rather as a

fellow sojourner. This group of friends and fellow spiritual travelers is composed of men, women, and children of all ages; it includes young singles, divorcees, and married couples; artists, mechanics, teachers, computer geeks, and nurses. It is a mosaic of the diversity offered by the human race.

For Bean, Joel 2:28 was "especially encouraging a number of years ago when being a pastor in my context seemed like a pipe dream. I felt a call but had no idea if it could ever be realized, but I held on to hope when I read this and other Bible stories of women in leadership."

Thanks also to Joel's message, Rachele Mee-Chapman of Seattle, Wash., was able to see herself as the pastor, lead cultivator, and prophetic visionary of Thursday PM, what she calls "a neomonastic incarnational community," a group of God-seekers who, although not yet all Christians, "are trying to develop a rhythm of living that allows us to stay connected to God and present to the world around us." As the community's website states, "We are explorers. We are people who want to worship God, and talk to God, and listen to God. We are people who readily admit we are not entirely sure what that means. ... We uncover ancient practices and make them our own. We say, 'I was wrong.' We look twice at something that catches our eye. We seek."

Mee-Chapman describes her multiple roles as host, listener, cook, and teacher of children. She allows herself to learn from her neighbors, who she says "are often better 'Christians' than I am!"

As a recent church planter myself in south Florida, I claim the biblical truth that there is "neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). Although the Scriptures never portray women as second-class citizens,

our male-dominated religious system still promotes a biblically misinterpreted female inferiority. But the demeaning attitudes of this system do not reflect God's heart. Through Joel, God told us *then* and reminds us *today* that daughters *shall* prophesy. Thankfully, today we hear and know of many daughters who *do*.

Many other stories are as yet unwritten by daughters who still dwell in Shallville, and it is to them that Bean and Mee-Chapman prophetically speak out encouragement and counsel. "Do what is in your heart," says Bean. "Seek mentors everywhere. Don't fight about it, just do it and remember that you were made for this!" Mee-Chapman says, "You have permission! God has given it to you in Scripture and in an outpouring of gifts onto you. As a prophet I stand here and call you out! Find your way, whether it is small, hidden, and unofficial—or whether it is carving out a path through official channels."

Be obedient to the One who called you. And be encouraged by those who support your call, whatever that may be, by joining with networks like the Center for Emerging Female Leadership (www.cefl.org) or the Emerging Women's Leadership Initiative (www.emergingwomenleaders.org). As T.D. Jakes is famous for saying, "Woman, thou art loosed!" Daughter, go do! ■

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