

Reports from the Street Evangelist for Women's Equality

Report from the street evangelist. Just had to have a hamburger for lunch today, so I left at 11:00. Waited in line and ordered and looked around to find a place to sit while it was being prepared for takeout. Sitting alone on the bench was the man who was in front of me in the line. I said "can I share your bench." Now I know something that he doesn't know. I know that this conversation will get around to women's equality. He was 20 years younger than I am, dressed well, with an easy smile, and we began a stranger's conversation. My name is Shirley, I said. His name was James. "I don't want you to think that I am hitting on you," I said. He said, "and the same here." I told him that my husband and I have been married for 54 years. I was sure he could add 20 (18 actually) years to that and he knew that I am old enough to be his mother. I handed him my card. Yes! Of course, I did. It is not going to take long for him to get his food and I have things to say. Seeing my picture he asked if I was in real estate. No, I work for women's equality, I said. 'This probably keeps you busy,' he said, and I confessed that it does, and it hard work because so many people believe that men are to be heads of women. "That is Muslim!" he said. Bingo. He got it. I didn't have a book and he said he more of a non-denominational Christian. His food came and he left. Satisfied. One more person heard the word of women's equality.

Report from the street evangelist. They were 30ish, a man and a woman. He was Italian, a Roman Catholic, and spoke with an obvious accent. She was in college and was taking a course on women's equality. They were in my office asking about setting up a Bloodmobile. The young woman said "Are you wearing purple for Cancer Awareness Day?" She pointed out that both her partner and I had on purple and neither of us were aware that we were supposed to wear purple that day – and she knew it, but did not have purple on. Purple. I reach behind my desk and pull down my two books from the bookcase. *Dethroning Male headship: Second Edition* has a purple cover. I laid them facedown and told them I would love to give them a book each. The young man said, "I went to a Baptist school for a year and they told me that men were higher than woman." They both said they had been talking about just that thing before they got to my office and they thought it was a "God thing" that they had stopped by and met me. The young man said that in his church, women are revered because of Mary. He also said that "women should be priests." His wife is from Mexico and he said that they treated each other as equals. He seemed to have a deep understanding of what we were talking about. They both promised to read their books. I told him how hard it was to get Baptists to understand they were equal because they were so indoctrinated. He held up his book and said "One person at a time." Yes. Two in this case.

Report from the street evangelist. Beautiful day and Don and I went for a drive. Drove to Woody's Smokehouse. Ate barbeque for lunch and went into the women's room to wash the sauce off my face. I turned to the woman standing at the sink beside me and asked 'how are you today?' she replied 'I guess I am fine.' That was unusual so I looked at her and 'you are not sure?' and she told me that her husband had just been diagnosed with terminal cancer. They were on their way home from

M.D. Anderson having just learned the awful news. I put my arm around her while she told me her story 'he's only 52!' I wrapped both arms around her while she cried and I asked her if I could pray for her. Ministry happens in the most unexpected places.

Report from the street evangelist. Giving my books to small town libraries, 6 books so far this weekend. Called a small library in East Texas. Told them who I was and that I was born and raised in that town. Offered them my two books free of charge. Told them they are Christian books. She replied "Oh, good! We get requests for Christian books all the time." I bet they never get calls for these kind of Christian books.

Report from the street evangelist. Got a \$50 card for Christmas and decided to use it at a busy restaurant Friday morning. For some reason, there weren't many people there. Our waitress was very attentive and we struck up a conversation. We talked about her little boy and how he loves to play with trucks in the sand. I told her that we still have the Tonka trucks our sons played with when we first moved to the country. Her husband is in the marines and many of the decisions for their marriage fall to her. She said he had asked one time "can I wear the pants some time?" I gave her my street evangelist card and told her I would bring a book for her "Women Equal – No Buts: Powered by the same Source" when I stopped by at 8:15 on Monday morning. This morning I arrived at 8:12 and asked for her. She saw me and a great big smile filled her face. She was holding a tray with a carafe of fresh hot coffee when I handed her the book. "I didn't know if you would remember" she said. Of course I remembered. This is what a street evangelist does. Each person is very important.

Report from the street evangelist. "Maybe God meant for me to come here to get your book." Since installing Windows 10, the computer and printer weren't speaking and the tech man had just fixed it. He was big, fashionably dressed, with a shaved head. This young African American man was at least 6'7" and he was holding "Dethroning Male Headship: Second Edition" in his huge hand. I had asked 'are you married' and told him that if he were I would give him a book for his wife. He said he had been married, and might be again soon. I handed him my book and he laughed (as they all do) at the cover. He said he would like to read it and he likes to read. Then he told me something very interesting. He said his grandmother had 'preached' at her church but then a pastor came in and told her that she couldn't do that anymore because women can't preach. He said he thought about that when she died and her funeral was at that church. He said that at her funeral, the pastor apologized, even though he was not the one who had told her she could not preach. The young man said there were many women preachers in his family. He promised to let me know about the book.

Report from the street evangelist. Pick one, I said, as I laid out my two books to the man who had come in to get a new key to replace the one he lost. I talk to him about twice a year but never see him as he is part of a group that uses our facilities for the Camellia Flower show. He picked up "Dethroning Male Headship" and starts laughing. I ask if he is married. He said yes. He said he thought his wife might like that one. Most men laugh when they see the title. That is also what I told the

Christian women's radio host during my interview before Christmas. For some reason, most men laugh. Actually, I do, too. I love the cover.

Report from the street evangelist. Water was in the crisper bins and all in the bottom of the refrigerator. Time to call the repairman. He arrived while the pastor and a church member were talking. Being a street evangelist is covert work. I don't give my books away while anybody else is around. So that was the farthest thing from my mind but the kitchen is only a few feet from my office. As the pastor and the gentleman went out the door, some comment was made by me of course about Fuller Seminary and that they were for women in ministry. I also said that I have a one-track mind and that is all I am concerned about. It isn't really, but I have made a joke of it. We are currently looking for a children/youth director and I had pulled up some examples of job positions from Fuller's and Houston Graduate School of Theology website. So they left. The repairman gave me the bill and I told him I would like to give him a book free of charge, no obligation. I reached back and pulled "Dethroning Male Headship" off my bookcase and he said, "Will you sign it?" So I signed it and he went on his way. He certainly saw the title and must have had some thoughts about it.

Report from the street evangelist. Spur of the moment decision to buy a jacket for my son for Christmas. Went to the Outlet Mall where I wonder how they stay in business because there are never any shoppers when I go to a store. This time was no different. A young black woman helped me select the jacket and we talked about buying clothes and we talked about Mothers and sons and daughters. Her mother wants her to move in with her. She is not married but has a 3 year old daughter. Paid an outrageously high price for the jacket. Then I handed her my card and said, my name is Shirley Taylor and I call myself the street evangelist for women's equality. She listened as I told her that I want her to know that she is equal in the church and in the home. I told her I am a church secretary, and she commented that I must spend a lot of time in church. I told her I would like to give her my book. Went to the car and got it and brought it in and this is where this gets interesting. I asked her what her name is and she said "Reed." I replied that that is not a usual girl's name. She agreed and then said she is teaching her daughter to be equal. She said that every Sunday at church the little girl is always raising her hand and answering the pastor's question. I asked her what her daughter's name is and she said "Casey." She said that she didn't want her daughter to be treated differently because of her name and her race, and that having a name that could be male or female, or black or white, gave her that chance. I told her that that was the most equal statement that I had ever heard. I told her I was touched by that. She told me that I had no idea how much that book I gave her meant to her.

Report from the street evangelist. Yesterday I came across a young woman in Canada who is writing a blog about biblical equality, but she still believes that husbands are heads of their wives. She is just beginning to have her eyes opened. She is more for partnership and oneness and unity, than 'equality.' Well, those are not exclusively equality words, so I made 2 comments on her blog. Then I contacted her by facebook PM and offered to give her my 2 books free. She sent me her address and I put them in the mail to her this morning - 30 minutes after I heard from her! This was in her PM to me: "Am I saying something wrong in the comments? What do you think? I know the bible clearly says the

husband is the head of the wife but I think that means he's to be a source of provision and nourish and love his wife... Nothing about authority at all." I told her that actually the bible does not say that men are heads of women because that would mean that Jesus shares his headship with males and that Paul himself would never say that. When the post office asked me the value of the books for the Customs form, I said that they were invaluable and I could not express it in dollars because it was books for women's equality. But I put a price on them anyway of \$20.00. Then I paid my \$16.00 to send them to Canada! Now those are some valuable books.

Report from the street evangelist. Beautiful day for a drive so Don and I headed west, final destination Navasota. An old town with a statue of LaSalle in the middle because this is where he was murdered by his men who wanted to get home to France and Navasota seemed far out of the way. Passed the library. Hmm. Asked Don to turn around so I could put my books in their library. Went inside. Only 3 people inside - 3 African American women librarians and they were happy to have my books. Explained that I call myself the street evangelist. One woman came out of her office and accepted the books and said, "I can't wait to read this one." I told them that I had stood up in the theater a few weeks ago and told everyone that "Women are still not equal in most churches on Sunday morning," and explained how hard that was to do. Had a delightful time. Gave them 3 different books to shelve. Need to put more books in my car now and more cards in my purse.

Report from the street evangelist. The electrician was back today at work. He is about 25 and cute as a 25 year old can be. "Are you married," I asked. What did he think – that I had a granddaughter I wanted to set him up with? He said that he wasn't. I said that I was asking because I had a book that I would have given to his wife. He said, "but I might be getting married." I reached behind me on the shelf and got my "Women Equal – No Buts: Powered by the same Source" book and asked him what her name is. I signed it and handed it to him. He said he would give it to her. She reads, he said. If nothing else, the title of the book will get her attention.