A MISSIONAL MOSAIC

An anthology presented by the WoRTh Project:

WORKING TOWARDS A ROBUST THEOLOGY OF WOMEN ON MISSION
FOR THE GLORY OF GOD AND THE EDIFYING OF HIS PEOPLE, WITH THANKS TO ALL THOSE WHO PRAYED FOR, ENCOURAGED, AND CONTRIBUTED TO THIS PROJECT.
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History

In November 2013, a Task Force on the Role and Dignity of Women was mandated and funded by Encompass World Partners. I was privileged to chair the Task Force composed of 8* Encompass women missionaries. One of the major conclusions of the Task Force was that women in Encompass are “all in” regarding mission but would appreciate more opportunities to use and be recognized for their diverse callings, givings, and training. The Task Force itself was a strong affirmation along those lines.

When the women in the Task Force had finished their official work, Executive Director of Encompass Dr. Dave Guiles asked me to head up and recruit a work group to study and articulate a “robust theology of women” for Encompass, within defined theological boundaries. WoRTh is the result.

Our core work group consisted of Becky Schwan, Elizabeth Paul, Dr. Ron and Chery Boehm, and Gary McCaman, with help from Mike Jentes and Malcolm Stevens. We solicited input and written contributions from Encompass staff members** and Grace Brethren pastors. While our study was Bible-based, we read and consulted commentaries, books, articles, blogs, and other resources from a variety of currents that would, for the most part, identify themselves as evangelical.

Over the course of the past 18 months, each member of the core group spent unseen and uncounted hours of study, research, Skypes, discussions with others, and prayer concerning the biblical material and what has been written about it. We also have had the opportunity to examine our own experiences and teaching in the light of what we were learning. I think I can speak for the group when I say our understanding of the Scriptures on this topic has become more richly textured, our convictions more firmly established, and our practices more consistent. We have perhaps also become more respectful of those who see things differently than we do and more willing to graciously listen to another point of view.

As head of this group, I also affirm the strong commitment of each member to be faithful to what we understand to be biblical truth and practice. This journey has been a joy!

Special thanks to my husband, Paul Klawitter, who has informed and influenced this work in so many ways by his example, his scholarship, and his willingness to engage on the subject over the course of many years.

— Louise Klawitter for the WoRTh group

*Becky Schwan, Ginger Hock, Karen Foster, Jessica Robertson, Angie B., Elizabeth Paul, Linda McCaman, and Louise Klawitter. Wayne Hannah was the Encompass leadership liason. The group studied, affirmed, and advised on a number of subjects, including employment policies in consideration of the particularities of cross-cultural, often pioneer ministries.

**Throughout this anthology, some Encompass staff will be referred to by their pseudonyms for security reasons.
Purpose

This is an anthology that seeks to represent different parts of the mosaic of Scripture regarding how men and women on mission can work together for the greater glory of God.

Our hope is to encourage reflection, study, and thoughtful, prayerful practice of Scriptural principles among people on mission, whatever their contexts.

Our approach has been to explore and discover the richness of the Scriptural mosaic by looking beyond the several controversial passages in seeking the whole counsel of God. We have not been disappointed! We have discovered that by regarding the many varied stories of women throughout the Bible as individual tiles in a grand and glorious mosaic, an overall picture emerges. This picture gives cause to celebrate the Lord’s artistic designing of men and women, made in God’s image, as both equal and complementary, gifted by His Spirit to participate in the missio Dei, the work of God on this earth.

As church planters and cross-cultural workers, we are “boots-on-the-ground” theologians of a sort, not vocational scholars and academics, but practitioners. We do not primarily work within the established North American church but rather in church planting and cross-cultural ministries including church equipping, holistic ministries, and crisis response. We hope to bring some varied perspectives, a slightly different voice to the subject, and to enrich the conversation.

We firmly believe that our understanding and practice of biblical principles regarding women on mission is crucial to fulfilling our calling to make disciples of all nations. What we understand about the role of women is not only reflected in our practices, but is an integral part of our message, especially as we engage cultures with markedly unbiblical, at times shocking, values in this regard.

We also seek to promote unity in the Spirit alongside biblical diversity. In sharpening our focus theologically, we may better evaluate our practices to ensure that we are bearing spiritual fruit.

“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last.”¹

— Jesus

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.”²

— Jesus

¹ Jesus, from John 15:16, NIV
² Jesus, from John 17:20-21, NIV
Colin and Colleen Andrews
Colin E. Andrews (MA, Intercultural Studies, Grace Theological Seminary) and his wife, Colleen, have worked in Central and Southeast Asia for over 18 years. They have been involved in holistic discipleship among the least-reached people of Asia. They currently lead a multinational and bi-vocational team in a major city in Southeast Asia. They currently have three children in college and one high schooler at home.

Ron and Chery Boehm
Ron and Chery Boehm planted three churches and engaged regional church planting (GBNAM & VisionOhio) the past 16 years. Ron received his Doctor of Ministry degree in 2014 focusing on the ministry contributions of the wives of church planters. Chery, a mentor/coach to women, served on the board of Women of Grace USA in leadership development.

Jayson Georges
Jayson Georges (M.Div., Talbot) served in Central Asia for nine years with his family. He is the founder/editor of HonorShame.com.

Susie Hobert
Susie Hobert and her husband, Dave, have served in church planting in France for over 35 years and is mom to three grown children.

Mike Jentes
Mike Jentes is a follower of Jesus, husband to Dr. Mindi, father of four amazing children, church planter, missional leader, shepherd, and networker. He currently serves as the Coordinator of Mobilization Initiatives with Encompass World Partners and is also a pastor at Los Altos Grace Brethren Church in Long Beach, California.

Becky Julien Schwan
Becky Julien Schwan (BA, Grace College) grew up at the Château de St. Albain in France, and has ministered in England with her husband, David, for the past 26 years. They have helped plant two churches in southeast and southwest Birmingham, using Guitar Clubs as a way to meet people and build community. They have three grown children and two grandchildren.

Tom Julien
Tom Julien (M.Div., D.D., Grace Theological Seminary) and his wife served as missionaries in Europe for 28 years, during which time they began a ministry at the Château of Saint-Albain, a center for evangelism, training, and church planting. From 1986 to 2000 Tom served as Executive Director of Grace Brethren International Missions at Winona Lake, Indiana. He is currently involved in leadership training. He has three children, five grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.
Paul and Louise Klawitter
Paul Klawitter (DMin, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary) and Louise (MA, Biblical Theological Seminary) have been married for 34 years and have served in France in church planting since 1987. Still living in Dijon, France, Paul is currently Director for Church Planting for Encompass World Partners, and Louise serves as one of the strategists for that Network. They have two grown children living in France.

Gary McCaman
Gary McCaman (PhD candidate from Prodola/South African Theology Seminary) and his wife, Linda, served with Encompass World Partners in Argentina and are currently serving in the U.S. with Encompass in training of new missionaries and other areas. They have two grown children.

Kurt Miller
Kurt Miller has been a church planter and church-planting mobilizer for 40 years. He currently serves as Director of Strategic Partnerships for MetroGrace, a church-planting ministry in Philadelphia.

Elizabeth Paul
Elizabeth Paul has served in Central Asia over ten years, is working on an MA from Grace Seminary and soon to complete her Master’s in Kyrgyz Philology. She enjoys driving through the mountains in her car affectionately named “the Iron Yak.”

Malcolm Stevens
Malcolm Stevens has recently retired from a full-time career in education. He still continues to pastor a small church in central England and is heavily involved in counseling and training others.

John F. Smith
John F. Smith (DMin, Grace Theological Seminary) has served as lead pastor of Grace Church at Willow Valley (Lancaster, PA) since 1989. In addition, he serves as an adjunct at Lancaster Bible College and as a chaplain for the West Lampeter Township Police Department. John and his wife, Sharon, have been married for 38 years and have three married children and eight grandchildren. John currently serves the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches as a member of the Grace College and Seminary Board of Trustees.

Holly Wismer
Holly Wismer and her husband, Michael, live in Lancaster, Pennsylvania with their two children. She has been blessed to serve as the Director of Equipping and leader of the Global Outreach Team at Grace Church at Willow Valley and as a member of the Encompass World Partners Board.

Larry Orme
Larry Orme is Executive Pastor at Penn Valley Church Network and Campus Pastor of the Telford, PA location. He is married to Judi and is father to four grown children and grandfather to nine.

Barb Wooler
Barb Wooler (MA, Cross-Cultural Ministry, Grace College) has been serving with Encompass World Partners as a missionary since 1985. She formerly worked in the Central African Republic among the Bayaka Pygmies, in literacy, and in Orphan and Widow Care (Project Hope & Charité). She is presently serving as Director of Crisis Response for Encompass.