

Finding Freedom as a Woman in Christ

DALLAS, Mar. 25 /Christian Newswire/ -- This Sunday, a woman somewhere in America will don the literal head covering of 1 Corinthians 11 and depart for church, where she will be expected to remain silent. In another church, a woman will stand before the congregation to deliver the sermon. Most of us will fall somewhere between these two extremes -- no head covering required and free to teach children or other women or to accompany the church choir, as long as we remember that some spiritual gifts are off-limits to us. In this climate, many women are spiritually suffocating, unique giftings and God-given callings crushed by a male-dominated church culture determined to keep them in their place -- regardless of what God is doing.

For author and ordained minister Ruth Conard, these feelings of rejection and confusion are all too familiar. "I have been in all kinds of churches, and it seems God is pretty consistent for men," she says. "They don't have to change their clothes, all offices are open to them, and they have been redeemed from everything. The truth is that for women, the verdict on these issues changes from church to church." Despite the contradictions in opinion within the church, Conard believes that God is consistent in His love and His plan for women. In *Designer Women: Made by God*, Conard inspires women to rise up and embrace God's unique design and purpose for them by examining the biblical accounts of women who were mightily used by Him.

Designer Women was written for the average woman in the pew trying to make sense of her calling and function in God's kingdom. As she shares some of her own struggles in ministry, Conard offers special encouragement to those who have been told that who they are -- the woman God designed them to be -- is not acceptable. Grounded by well-researched theology, *Designer Women* challenges the domineering attitudes that have been passed down for generations. Conard also includes biblical examples of the negative female tendencies that women should avoid.

Conard's own journey to spiritual freedom was over thirty years in the making. After serving on the mission field, she enrolled in seminary at the age of 55, and graduated after five years of night classes with a Masters of Divinity. At age 60, she preached her first sermon.

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