



Women – the driving force in mission!

- >> When a woman takes her place
- >> How Victoria transformed a village
- >> Equal – of course!

WITH
PRAYER
INFORMATION
ON THE
INSIDE

IMPRINT

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In this magazine, we have used artificial intelligence to translate foreign-language reports and improve texts editorially.

In order to protect children or brothers and sisters in the faith who may be at risk, we have changed the names of people in this magazine without further indication.



Cover photo:
Woman from India

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Bequeathing a legacy



Many women were there, watching [the crucifixion] from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs. Matthew 27:55 (NIV)

Dear Reader!



God becomes human through a woman. Women are the last at the cross and the first at the tomb. They witness Jesus' last breath and are the first to proclaim his resurrection. When it comes to founding churches, they are at the forefront.

Already in Exodus 1:15-22, we read how God saves his people through women: out of reverence for God, the Hebrew midwives Shiphrah and Puah disobey Pharaoh's orders and save the lives of many Hebrew boys. Pharaoh's measures become more drastic in order to curb the number of Israelites. Once again, women thwart these plans. First, Moses' mother courageously hides her child. Then even Pharaoh's own daughter defies his orders and rescues a Hebrew baby from the reeds, bringing him to the royal estate to be raised. In the end, it is thanks to the curiosity and sharp mind of Moses' sister that he continues to be cared for by his mother as a baby (Ex 2:1-10). Five courageous women. All of them love God and thus make the liberation of the people of Israel possible.

Even today, women around the world live in challenging circumstances. And yet they too love God and play a central role in spreading the gospel. In this magazine, we introduce women who have received help through initiatives by EBM INTERNATIONAL: Noa Dichristin provides insights into a shelter in South Africa (page 11). We showcase strong women like Victoria from Peru, who is committed with her heart and mind to ensuring that women, men, and children are reached with God's saving message today (page 8). Andrea Klimt shows that the participation of women in mission has long been a core value at EBMI (page 18).

We invite you to discover the blessings of and for women in this magazine. Contribute with your donation to empower women and enable them to be a blessing to others (page 7).

Thank you very much for your commitment. I hope you enjoy reading this issue. Best wishes,

Stefanie Fischer-Desamours

Pastor of the Baptist Church in Berlin-Tempelhof and member of the honorary board of EBMI.



Please feel free to send us your feedback, suggestions or requests regarding the current magazine: www.ebm-international.org/feedback



WHO WE ARE

EBM INTERNATIONAL, founded in 1954 as the European Baptist Mission, works with 30 Baptist member unions and partners on four continents. As a mission organization, we share God's transforming love in about 300 projects so that people can live in hope.

In our global partnership with local Baptist churches, together we call upon Christ to bring

justice, renewal and hope to the world. We are committed to achieving this goal on the basis of equality through sharing and learning, giving and receiving.

More information on our website:
www.ebm-international.org/en/about-us

Interview: Elizabeth Mvula on the role of women in Malawi

When a woman takes her place, no community remains the same

Malawi is deeply patriarchal. Women are assigned a fixed role—traditionally by women themselves, but decisions are made by men. In such a context, it is difficult to change this way of life and thinking. Elizabeth Mvula, board member of EBMI, gives a touching and very personal account of how small changes are nevertheless possible and how she grew up understanding her role. The interview was conducted by Julia-Kathrin Raddek.

Julia-Kathrin Raddek (JKR): Elizabeth, you are a business-woman and you run an electrical company in Malawi. How did you get into this position?

Elizabeth Mvula (EM): My husband and I built the company together. He is an engineer, and I studied secretarial work. We met in college. After we got married, we talked about starting our own business. I took care of the administrative aspects, such as registration, while he contributed his technical expertise. We have been running “Duma Electrics” for 25 years now and employ around 25 people.

JKR: What do you do besides your job?

EM: In addition to my business, I work as a certified lifestyle and leadership coach for the International Coaching Federation. We are working on establishing our own Chapter of Coaches in Malawi by the end of February. I also reach out to church organizations such as the Baptist Convention of Malawi to offer leadership coaching.

JKR: Who is your coaching meant for?

EM: My coaching is for both men and women, because both need support in their personal development. Although a lot of emphasis is placed on empowering women, men often get left behind, which creates an imbalance. I’m particularly interested in school leavers and people who already hold leadership positions but lack the right direction or approach. I help them find their own way instead of living up to the expectations of their parents or other people. We also support them in dealing with life’s challenges so that they don’t despair when they suffer setbacks. In this way, we break down barriers and help women in particular to stand on their own two feet and be themselves.

JKR: What helped you most in gaining self-confidence and trust in your own abilities?

EM: I had the privilege of coming from a well-off family. In my family, my sisters and I were just girls. Our parents



Coaching in Lilongwe – Empowered for life



Elizabeth with some employees in front of her company

never said, “You can’t do that because you’re a girl.” I never felt limited by my gender, but rather saw myself as a person capable of achieving anything. Once, when our door was broken, my father said, “Get the hammer and some nails and let’s get started!” I was not limited by my gender. This helped me develop confidence in my abilities. This was unusual in our surroundings, as I discovered when I visited cousins who were surprised by my attitude and behavior.

JKR: Were your parents raised in the same way? Do you know anything about your grandparents?

EM: I grew up with my maternal grandmother. She had a different mindset than most people of her time. My grandfather, whom I never met, was a court clerk, which gave the family a more structured and educated outlook on life. My father’s family came from a wealthy background. I consider myself privileged because I was exposed to many things that others did not have access to at such a young age.

JKR: Which person has had a particular impact on you?

EM: My father was the most important person for me. He worked in a labour union and encouraged me to read newspapers, listen to the news, get my things ready for the next school day, and he also prepared me for life. Unlike typical Malawian men, he was a very good cook and taught me

how to cook. He taught me to appreciate important dates and milestones in life, to be present at important (family) events, and to celebrate even small successes.

JKR: What role has the Christian faith played in relation to being a woman and leadership responsibility?

EM: There are many pastors in my mother’s family. We sang and prayed every day, and I knew all 300 songs in our hymn book by heart. My faith grew especially when I had serious health problems and was close to death. Since I was often the only woman in a male-dominated environment, I had to rely on my faith to know that I was there for a reason. I discovered that being a woman in the church is even more difficult than in other contexts, as I encountered people who preached one thing but acted in another way.

JKR: What are the biggest challenges facing women of all ages in Malawi or southern Africa?

EM: In our part of the world, people believe that a woman’s place is in the kitchen and that she should not speak at the table when men are present. I have met many brilliant and talented women. They all stayed behind the scenes for fear of speaking out. Women who frequently spend time among men are often considered ‘immoral,’ so many marry before they are ready. Others remain in toxic marriages to →



Learning a profession and implementing their own business ideas: support on the path to greater autonomy.

→ maintain social respect. Women often feel they must consult men before making decisions. Change is difficult to achieve because it is often women themselves who enforce these restrictions through cultural practices. Rituals and ceremonies are performed at different ages to prepare girls for their roles. This concerns their role in society, their physical and mental changes at the onset of puberty, their sexuality, marriage and motherhood. These initiation rites begin as early as the age of eight. So a girl learns very early on what it means to be a woman.

JKR: How do you personally deal with these challenges and how are you involved in the church in this regard? Can you name a specific project that has an impact on women's daily lives?

EM: I take a negotiation approach, making sure that we have the acceptance of older women and men before I take any initiatives. With the help of programmes supported by EBMI, we have empowered women to make their own decisions. Three encounters have particularly moved me: Firstly, a pastor's widow. After attending our course, she had the idea of growing her own vegetables. She had a piece of land, so she asked us for seeds, fertiliser and agricultural equipment. Three years later, she had built a house and planted a garden that fed her family. Secondly, there was the wife of a pastor who, after her husband's death, had to leave the home they had shared for 40 years. In Malawi, it is customary for the husband's family to claim ownership of the property, leaving the widow destitute. She returned and wanted to build a

church in her hometown. Although our church does not ordain women, she believed that she could also be a pastor and start a congregation. A third example was women who built a house for a woman who had lost everything in floods in northern Malawi.

JKR: What is your biggest dream for Malawian women?

EM: My biggest wish for women in Malawi is that they grow beyond what they are now, that they believe they are capable of anything, and that they recognise their ability to change the world. When a woman takes her place, no community remains the same. I want them to recognise how much they are already doing and to seize their potential with both hands, because they are the key to change in their communities.

JKR: Thank you very much, Elizabeth, for this very personal insight!

Elizabeth Mvula is a long-standing member of the honorary international board of EBM INTERNATIONAL. The interview was conducted by Julia-Kathrin Raddek.



Empowering women together

In many parts of the world, girls and women are still disadvantaged: they have poorer access to education, fewer rights, and hardly any economic opportunities. And yet they are the ones who support families, shape communities, and pass on life. As a Christian mission organization, we believe that God created women and men as equals. This attitude shapes our work. Together with our partners worldwide, we support women at all levels—in education, careers, leadership, and proclaiming the gospel.

Latin America – Building self-confidence

In social centers, we empower girls and young women through uplifting courses, pastoral care, and creative activities. They discover their talents, learn to stand up for themselves, and gain new perspectives on their lives.



Social centers in Latin America empower teenage girls

Africa – Paving the way to independence

Women acquire practical skills in training centers, such as sewing schools. Having their own income means more than just financial security for them – it gives them dignity, self-confidence, and new opportunities for their families.



Sewing schools in Africa offer women new prospects

India – Protection and education for girls

Children's homes and schools offer girls a safe place and promote their education. Many of them would otherwise be at risk of exploitation or of dropping out of school early. Subsequent vocational training enables them to lead independent lives.



Children's homes and schools give girls in India freedom

Easter campaign: Empowering women together

These initiatives are examples of more than 40 projects worldwide that educate, encourage, protect, and support girls and women. Your commitment at Easter is an important building block in financing this holistic mission work: because when women are empowered, more than just a single life is changed—entire families and communities are renewed. Your donation or offering strengthens girls and gives women new perspectives:

25
EUROS

provides a girl in India with one month of protection in a children's home – including accommodation, meals, and school attendance.

70
EUROS

supports a teenage girl in Brazil to participate in a course at a social center that builds her self-confidence and provides her with spiritual and pastoral care.

150
EUROS

finances a sewing machine for a young woman in Africa after her training – the basis for her own income and new prospects for the whole family.

Your donation empowers girls and gives women new perspectives:

Freikirchen.Bank eG (SKB Bad Homburg)
IBAN: DE69 5009 2100 0000 0468 68
BIC: GENODE51BH2
Reference: Easter donation 2026

You can donate quickly and securely online on our website, for example via PayPal, direct debit, or credit card:

www.ebm-international.org/spenden
Thank you for your gifts and your prayers!

How Victoria transformed a village

In the Quechua villages of the Peruvian Andes, the role of women is clearly defined: they take care of the home and children. Founding a new church independently is not part of that role. But with a love for the gospel and for people in her heart, Victoria sets out to do just that in the midst of the pandemic. Adrián Campero reports on how her ministry changed an entire village.

Machismo still prevails in large parts of Latin America. This is also true among the Quechua: women take care of the home and children, but men make all the decisions. Being respected and having a say in decisions are not a given for many women. Although there are women who hold positions of responsibility in companies and at the municipal level, quite often they are not respected nevertheless. This is changing where people are turning to the Christian faith. What is more, women are important proclaimers of the Gospel and play a key role in church planting. Victoria is one of these missionaries.

What does *machismo* mean?

The Latin American term *machismo* refers to an exaggerated, dominant concept of masculinity that emphasizes male superiority and devalues women.

Touched by the lack of prospects

Victoria actually comes from Andahuaylas, a town in the Andean highlands west of Cusco. Her husband is a teacher. When he was transferred to the Mariscal Gamarra district, they both found faith and were baptized. Through the work of Victoria's husband at the school in Llauqui and the friendships they made there, they learned about the challenges facing the small village. As in many Quechua settlements, these challenges are great: poverty and lack of prospects drive people to alcohol. Violence follows – in the family and in public. Victoria was touched by the living conditions in Llauqui and felt a deep desire to introduce people to God's transforming love.

Church planting during the pandemic

The timing for Victoria's missionary activity seemed extremely unfavorable. In 2020, in the midst of the uncertainties of the coronavirus pandemic, the 48-year-old wanted to bring the Good News to Llauqui. Adrián Campero, director of the

EBMI Quechua Mission, advised her to be cautious. But Victoria would not be dissuaded: "Brother Adrián, death has come to our village. In Llauqui, there are people I know who need Jesus. I will go there to tell them about the Gospel." So Victoria set off on a two-hour walk uphill to tell people about Jesus. Two weeks later, 20 people had already converted. In the midst of the pandemic, a new church was born.

Transformation in Llauqui

Victoria's commitment to the people of Llauqui sparked a comprehensive change. Women, men, and children found faith and were baptized. The village has just over 100 inhabitants and of these 70 have already been baptized. Around 80 to 90 people attend church services. These are currently held on the property of a man who was once considered the most violent resident of Llauqui. Through God's love, he has changed and is happy to host the services while the young congregation does not yet have its own building. He is not the only one who has changed. Domestic violence and alcoholism have declined significantly.



Victoria together with those being baptised from her congregation

People are happy about this new sense of security and care more for one another, especially for the elderly and sick. Victoria is highly respected and leads the church. This has also changed the general attitude toward women: less machismo, more respect and recognition.

More missionaries, more churches

Among the Quechua churches, there is a great desire to reach more of their people with the gospel. The church in Llauqui is already supporting further missionary work. Victoria is not the only missionary in the region. The mother of three coordinates a team of



Church festival in Llauqui

missionaries in Mariscal Gamarra. In many places, women are bringing the Good News to the people. The goal is to continue investing in discipleship and training leaders who will then go on to plant churches. That is why women and men are being trained at the Quechua Bible Seminary. At the same time, the Quechua Baptist Union in Peru is empowering women in leadership.

Missionaries like Victoria are paving the way for this perspective: with her talent and passion, she is a role model for others and shows how important women are in proclaiming the



Church service in the garden

gospel and planting churches – and thereby bringing entire villages into contact with the transforming love of God.

According to a report by Adrián Campero, head of EBMI missionary work among the Quechua people in Peru



NEWS

News, dates, and information about our mission work



Cuba – Summer Bible school reaches many children

Amidst great social and economic hardship, the Cuban church in Abel Santamaría was able to organize a summer Bible school for more than 120 children from surrounding areas. A dedicated team of 25 volunteers worked hard to help the children deepen their understanding of God’s love. The summer Bible school during the holidays was a real refuge in these challenging times.

EBMI at the opening event of the BEFG Federal Council Conference on May 13

As usual, the General Council of Evangelical Free Churches (Baptists) in Germany will take place in Kassel on Ascension Day weekend. We are honoured to be part of the opening event and invite all conference attendees and guests to join us for an evening centred around the theme “**Blessing moves ... worldwide.**”

- Inspiring international stories of blessings
- Learning together from missionary contexts
- Insights into EBMI’s theology of mission and self-understanding

Date: Wednesday, May 13, 2026

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Location: Central Hall of the Kassel Kongress Palais,
Holger-Börner-Platz 1, 34119 Kassel

If you would like to attend only on Wednesday evening and are not registered for any other day, please register with us by April 28, 2026: +49 33234 74441 or promotion@ebm-international.org

You will then receive a name tag in the foyer of the entrance hall, which will grant you admission!

Please note: There will be no traditional mission meeting in the run-up to the main conference this year.

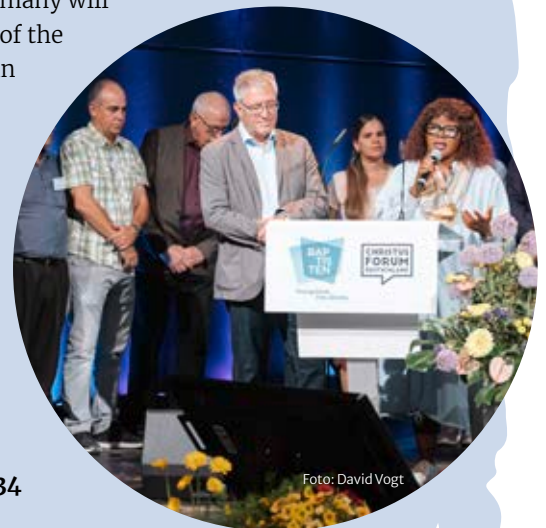


Foto: David Vogt



India: Mobile eye camps for those in need

Together with the Christian Medical Center Pithapuram, the Baptist Resurrection Church in Tallarevu organizes eye camps several times a year. Sick and needy people are transported to the camp, receive an eye examination, and are treated in the hospital if necessary. More than 290 patients were examined, more than 60 pairs of glasses were issued, and 56 operations were performed, enabling women and men to see again.

Ndawo Yakho: A shelter for women and children

Many people associate South Africa with a dream vacation destination with beautiful landscapes, species-rich national parks, and good wine. The country's turbulent history, marked by colonization, apartheid, and corruption, stands in stark contrast to this beauty. The consequences of this history can still be felt today. It manifests itself in violence—all too often against women. Noa Emily Dichristin traveled to South Africa in 2025 to learn about initiatives that help women affected by violence. The aspiring lawyer reports:



Noa (left) talking to a member of staff at Ndawo Yakho

My parents were missionaries in South Africa. We lived there from 2006 to 2011. As is usual for a missionary child, when we moved to Germany in 2011, I left part of my heart and sense of home behind. I always wanted to go back, and at the end of 2025, the time had come. At least for a short time. In the years before, my life and environment in Berlin had strongly influenced my political thinking: gender-based and domestic violence became issues close to my heart. So I thought, if I'm going to South Africa, I'm going to do it properly. For seven weeks, I worked intensively with survivors, victims, and perpetrators of gender-based violence.

The national emergency¹

Every nine minutes, a woman is raped in South Africa.² Every 2.5 hours, a woman dies in South Africa as a result of gender-based violence. That is the reported figure. The estimated number of unreported cases is 14 times higher. And these figures only include those who do not survive. Half of all South African women experience sexual violence in their lifetime.³ Four out of ten women in South Africa are raped at least once in their lifetime, and one in four men in South Africa has committed at least one rape. Approximately 50 child rapes are reported every day. One in three children experiences sexual violence before finishing school. In

most cases the perpetrators come from the child's own environment. This violence is a major reason for high HIV rates and the resulting strain on the healthcare system. In November 2025, gender-based violence in South Africa was declared a "national disaster" by the South African president.

Origins of violence

Social conditions in South Africa are terrible. The gap between rich and poor is growing. The differences between white and black South Africans are growing. There is a lack of social and medical care, as well as food, work, and education. There is a lack of support for families: pregnant mothers, →

Footnotes:

- 1 Data also available at: womenforchange.co.za/about-us/
- 2 www.daserste.de/information/politik-weltgeschehen/weltspiegel/sendung/swr/2013/suedafrika-vergewaltigung-100.html
- 3 www.lpb-bw.de/fileadmin/lpb_hauptportal/aktuell_dossiers/frauen/unterrichtsmaterial/Frauen_AB5_Madisa.pdf



Foto: Noa Emily Dichtstein

The Red Chair Campaign draws international attention to victims of gender-based violence against women

→ newborns, schoolchildren. Psychological problems are left untreated, if they are even recognized. Yet the fragile everyday life alone causes considerable trauma. Crime is on the rise, and with it gender-based violence. Frustration is taken out on the family at home. Or on strangers. It is difficult to pinpoint the origin of the violence. What is certain, however, is that it is deeply rooted in the structure of society. South Africa has an incomparable history, marked by racism and violence. The aftermath of apartheid, poverty, and social inequality exacerbate the violence.

At the same time, South Africa is strongly patriarchal. Violence against women is a massive structural problem. There is a deeply rooted macho culture in which a woman's consent is often considered less valuable. Traditionally, men are considered superior to women. Politically, socially, and within the family. It is rare for women

to hold positions of power. The role of women is characterized by oppression and violence. Women are objectified. They must bow to the will of men, especially their husbands. Violence and fear are everyday experiences for women in South Africa. They and their children develop survival strategies, while trauma is part of their everyday burden.

A comprehensive protection system

Due to the high incidence of gender-based violence, there are many contact points and support systems for victims and survivors. Society is aware of the problem. The Thuthuzela Care Centers, for example, are contact points for rape victims, offering free and immediate medical, social, educational, police, psychological, and forensic support. There, clients receive comprehensive care and, if necessary, post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) medication to prevent infection

in the event of possible contact with HIV. Many of the survivors have made it their life's work to help others—this is their strategy for dealing with their own trauma. Compared to other countries—some of which do not even recognize the concept of gender-based violence—this may sound progressive, but given the numbers, it is a necessary step.

Ndawo Yakho: A turning point in the lives of Amahle and Luthando

In Johannesburg, I visited an EBMI project: the Ndawo Yakho women's shelter. Women who experience domestic violence find protection there. Together with their children, they receive basic care for a period of six months, consisting of accommodation as well as social-educational and psychological support. This gives the women the opportunity to start a new life.

I met Amahle at Ndawo Yakho. She has been living at Ndawo Yakho since 2022. At that time, her son, Luthando, was eight years old and she was pregnant with her second son. She had experienced all forms of violence at the hands of her sons' father. Amahle's story is special because after her six-month stay at Ndawo Yakho, she did not leave the women's shelter, but started working there as a house mother. She and her two sons continued to live there. I got to know Luthando, who was eleven at the time of my visit, a little better. He witnessed the violence against his mother and was also abused by his father. As a result, Luthando suffers from significant physical and psychological limitations. In third grade, he was still unable to write his name. After many discussions between the staff at Ndawo Yakho, social workers, and psychologists, Luthando transferred to a special needs school. There he blossomed, learned quickly, and gained self-confidence. The little boy who previously could not write his name won his first award for mathematics. Shortly after



Lively, free, and safe—children at Ndawo Yakho

my visit, Luthando went on his first church retreat, where he was able to draw inspiration from new encounters with peers.

Dangerous and beautiful

Amahle and Luthando’s stories were both the most beautiful and the most difficult part of my trip. It broke my heart to see how far-reaching the consequences of gender-based violence are. At the same time, it gave me a lot of hope to see the great work being done in projects like Ndawo Yakho and the power that comes from commitment, awareness, and the courage to take action.

For seven weeks, I was able to listen, learn, see, and experience South Africa. I have never met people with such warmth. In my interactions with others, I quickly forgot the everyday suffering. My conclusion from this stirring time: People in South Africa live

dangerously, and yet it is the most beautiful country in the world.

*by Noa Emily Dichristin
Noa is 23, lives in Berlin, and is in her 10th semester of law school, specializing in juvenile criminal law and criminology. She is dedicated to promoting human rights.*



The Ndawo Yakho shelter

The shelter, which is run by the Baptist Convention of South Africa, can accommodate up to 20 women and children seeking help. Among other things, they are provided with safe accommodation, psychosocial counseling, medical care, and pastoral care. Joint activities such as handicrafts or cooking strengthen the sense of community and help to develop self-confidence. The facility works closely with the South African Council of Churches, social services, the police, and local hospitals. The aim of the initiative is to empower women and their children so that they can participate with confidence in society.

Responsibility instead of discrimination

In India, many women still experience discrimination and violence. But there are ways to bring about change: Together with the Salvation Army, EBM INTERNATIONAL empowers women—in children’s homes, through education, and in leadership roles. Lieutenant Colonel Jashiben Khristi shares insights from her ministry.



Education paves the way to a self-determined future

The status of women in India is still strongly influenced by centuries-old traditions. For a long time, girls were primarily regarded as future wives and mothers. Education played hardly any role—many were married off at an early age, often to significantly older men. Widowed women not only lost their social status, but often their rights as well.

Practices such as child marriage and widow burning are now prohibited, and according to the constitution, women are legally equal to men. Nevertheless, the everyday lives of many women show that true equality is still a long way off in India.

Disadvantaged in society

The Global Gender Gap Index 2025, which measures progress in gender equality, ranks India 131st out of 148 countries. Women in India have less access to education, are more likely to be affected by violence, and have poorer opportunities in the labor market. If they belong to a low caste or are

Dalits or Adivasi (untouchables), they experience double discrimination: because of their gender and their social background.

These social patterns are also reflected in many churches. In the large, traditional churches, women make up the majority of the congregation. They are involved in children’s and women’s work, but leadership roles and preaching in church services remain off-limits to them.

In regions of India where violence against Christians is on the rise, women are particularly affected: sexual assaults against Christian women or slander and violence against female missionaries are a means of silencing the voice of Christians in the country.

The Salvation Army’s unique approach

Catherine Booth, co-founder of The Salvation Army, believed as early as in the 19th century that women, just like men, are called to spiritual service. She

coined the principle that women are empowered by the same spirit and created in the image of God.

To this day—especially in India—women are encouraged and trained to take on responsibility in the church and society: Bible study groups tailored specifically to them demonstrate their value, strengthen their faith, and enable them to take their first steps toward responsibility. At the same time, several programs aim to reduce the disadvantage of women at the social level and to counter the social consequences of discrimination: Prevention, legal advice, and intervention in cases of slavery and human trafficking are just as much a part of this as charitable work among the poorest groups such as women in prostitution, or victims of gender-based violence.

Refuges and new perspectives

EBM INTERNATIONAL works with the Salvation Army in India to support various children’s homes, especially for girls, and soup kitchens. Twenty-two

girls live in the “Ray of Hope” home in Vandsda in the state of Gujarat. There they are safe from child labour and human trafficking and receive a solid education. The Christian faith teaches them and confirms their value. As young women, they are ready to start training or studying and lead independent lives. The soup kitchen programs in cities such as Kolkata go beyond simply distributing food: women in particular are given the opportunity to stand on their own two feet again through starting up small businesses or further training.

Called to serve at all levels

Jashiben Khristi has been part of The Salvation Army in India for more than 33 years. Her story shows how consistent support empowers women to take on responsibility.

Jashiben grew up in a small village in the state of Gujarat in a devout

Christian family. When she converted at the age of 14, she developed a desire to enter full-time ministry. In 1990, she began as a cadet in The Salvation Army and was appointed lieutenant two years later. Since then, her career has been marked by increasing responsibility and further training. Her heart burned to serve children and women: Jashiben ran children’s homes and women’s shelters, studied social work, gained international experience, and took on increasingly senior roles. Children and women living on the margins of society have always been particularly close to her heart. Through her support, many of them found new courage and the path to an independent life.

Looking back, she sees God’s guidance in all of this, but also the goodwill of her parents and superiors, who believed in her and confirmed her spiritual calling.

Women shape the future

Today, Jashiben herself accompanies young women on their path towards responsibility. She knows from her own experience how crucial encouragement, education, and trust are. When women discover that they are gifted and called by God, more than just a single life is changed: social transformation takes place.

According to a report by Lieutenant Colonel Jashiben Khristi In western India, she is responsible for leadership development, social work, and education for The Salvation Army.



A driving force in church work

When women in Türkiye come to faith in Christ, new freedom enters their lives: they actively shape their faith and live out relationships from their new perspective of faith. This has a radiant effect and leads more people to Jesus. Hürrem Carolin Keskin shares some insights from Turkish churches.

The vast majority of women in Turkish Baptist churches have an Islamic background. There, women and men traditionally practice their faith separately. It is the men who gather in the mosque, while the women pray at home. There is also a specific order at funerals: the men stand at the front and the women at the back.

Because of this influence, women are very enthusiastic about being able to participate in Christian worship as a whole family. They play a very important role in church life. Their ideas for reaching new people are creative. They sing in the worship team, play guitar or piano, are responsible for catering, organize women's meetings, and hold leadership positions in the church.

In the Baptist church in Adana, for example, the pastor's wife, Meryem Çakmak, is very active. She organizes cooking, cleaning, evangelism

campaigns, and the distribution of food packages to those in need. After the earthquake in 2023, she helped coordinate and carry out relief efforts. She is thus a great help to her husband, Pastor Şahin Çakmak.

Since a year ago, the church in İzmir-Buca is having women's meetings again. This time just among us women is very valuable. In this safe space, many women open their hearts and share their sorrows.

Advocate for the Christian faith

Many people in the congregation come to me with concerns that relate to my role as a lawyer. For many members, it is very important that they have a Christian funeral service and are buried in a Christian cemetery. In recent years, I have helped many members to write their wills. In some families, only one family member comes to faith. When that family member dies,

the family takes care of the funeral. In Türkiye, 99 percent of the population is Muslim, so a Muslim funeral is prepared, partly because they are ashamed to admit that there is a Christian in their family. Although they know that the deceased was a Christian, they perform a Muslim funeral and burial service.

A woman in our church is worried that the same thing will happen to her. She has been divorced from her husband for a long time, and her son does not accept that she has become a Christian. He has often told her that he will bury her according to Muslim rites. So she asked me to help her write her will to ensure that she will have a Christian funeral and that our church will conduct it.

Other women come to me with questions about how Islamic religious instruction is handled at their children's





Committed to humanitarian work – Meryem from Adana

schools. In addition, many Syrian, Persian, and Arab people seek me out to discuss their questions about residence permits in Türkiye.

A young doctor finds God

At the end of 2024, a young doctor joined our church. She is married and her child was almost one year old at the time. She had already done some research about Christianity on the internet and had also visited other churches. Finally, she wanted to get to know our church. We got along well right away. She had many questions about the Christian faith. We talked with her for many hours, and she came to church regularly. We quickly began classes on faith and baptism. The young mother was always very interested and inspired by God’s Word. Her joy and enthusiasm impressed me greatly. Unlike other women, she was open and full of joy from the very beginning about being able to study God’s Word. Sometimes we invest a lot of time, talk a lot, build a relationship, but the spark doesn’t catch on—but here it was

different. She became a great joy to the whole church. Her husband only came to church sometimes and listened. But he was glad that his wife and child felt comfortable with us.

Finally, in May 2025, she was baptized. Her husband also attended, and you could see that he was happy too. Shortly after her baptism, they had to move to Istanbul. Young doctors like her are transferred to other cities by the state. At first, she was unhappy about this, but the family quickly got used to Istanbul. I myself studied in Istanbul and was part of a church that was very close to my university. Now they also attend this church. A few months later, we received some great news: her husband is now attending church regularly and has started baptism and faith classes. What wonderful news!

This family showed me once again that the whole work we do belongs to God and that the Lord takes care of everything. We didn’t have to invest

very much effort for them. God worked in the hearts of this family. Sometimes we think that if we try hard enough, people will come to faith, but it is not possible through our strength, but through God’s strength. What happened to this family is a miracle of God.

For the future, I hope that women will continue to actively serve in the churches and, of course, that more women will come to faith.

According to a report by Hürrem Carolin Keskin Hürrem. She is a member of the honorary board of EBM INTERNATIONAL, and also a member of the Baptist church in Izmir-Buca and works as a lawyer.



Equal of course – Searching for traces in the recent history of EBM INTERNATIONAL

The fact that women participate equally in missionary work is not a matter of course in every part of the world. How is EBM INTERNATIONAL positioned in this regard? Andrea Klimt, who has accompanied and supported our missionary work for many years, takes a closer look.

“The incontrovertibility of equality” should be the goal in the context of promoting women. That’s what I learned over 20 years ago during my training as a business coach. Measures and programs should become obsolete over time because equality between men and women will in the course of time be taken for granted. Something that was far from self-evident in the normal working environment was a reality at EBM—at that time still without the “I.” There, I found this was axiomatic in various areas where it might not necessarily have been expected. Looking back, I set out to discover how evidence of equality was a matter of course within EBMI.

Trace number 1: Who actually chairs a meeting?

Once a year, the delegates of the member unions meet at the Mission Council to discuss and decide on common concerns. For a long time, the meetings were chaired by the president and vice president, who were often also involved in the content. It was therefore suggested that a chairperson should lead the meetings. That was a good idea. Of course, a woman was also the chair: Brigit from Switzerland guided us expertly through simple and difficult topics. It was regretted by all that she ended this work after a few years for personal reasons. Since then, both women and men have been entrusted with chairing the meetings.

The active participation of women was also a matter of course. However, it was not always the case that national Baptist Unions delegated women, so that overall there were often more men than women involved. In my view, the participation or leadership of women



Equal participation – Andrea Klimt at the Mission Council 2004

was never questioned, but was naturally based on mutual respect and listening to one another. Of course, not everyone always agreed and there were heated discussions, but these were not based on gender.

Trace number 2: “Task Force” – with women and men

At the turn of the millennium, a task force was set up. Its purpose was to consider how EBM could better fulfill its mission in the future. Of course, two women were part of the team: Anita from Austria and Linda from Sierra Leone. Both had previously been repeatedly delegated by their associations to the Mission Council, where they had “stood out” through their constructive contributions and cooperation. Their commitment and love for the mission were decisive factors in their selection for the task force. Their gender was not an issue. A major success of this working group was that the difference

between giving and receiving countries was eliminated. All participants were now “member unions.” The separation was overcome in favour of a natural equality.

Trace number 3: Women on the international board

It was therefore a logical consequence that members from all member unions could now be elected to the executive committee, the honorary board. As before, commitment and love for the mission in one’s own union were decisive factors, but not gender. As far as I can remember, there have always been women in the leadership of the EBMI. After the aforementioned change in attitude, this also included women and men from partner unions in Europe, Africa, and Latin America (later also from India and Türkiye). Gender was not an issue here either—equality was inevitable.

Trace number 4: Influential Missionaries

In an intercultural context it has always been possible to achieve more than within one's own culture, where it may have been questionable whether a woman could perform pastoral duties, especially whether she could preach. However, a missionary in her country of service could certainly take on pastoral duties such as pastoral care and preaching, not only alongside her husband, but also as a single woman.

This was then considered an appropriate contribution to the Kingdom of God and not a disruption of the established order. Names that come to mind here are Esther, Käthe, Christina, and Regina. There were and are many more. When they were on furlough, female missionaries were naturally allowed to present their work in some churches and also to preach.

Trace number 5: Learning from each other in the projekt:grenzenlos (No borders)

projekt:grenzenlos was developed in Austria in 1999. From 2000 onwards, several South African teams worked in Austrian churches in cooperation with the Baptist Convention of South Africa, the Convention of Baptist Churches in Austria, and the EBM. While the churches in Austria were still discussing whether women were suitable, permitted, or called to pastoral ministry, the women's teams involved in the project were warmly welcomed there—even for the ministry of preaching. Their names were Jackie and Helen or Busisiwe and Tabinki. Like their male colleagues Kleppie and Thabiso, they were naturally treated as equals and were just as welcome.

Where do the traces of the incontrovertibility of equality lead?

There are more possibilities in intercultural encounters than within a

single culture. In the context of mission, there has often been and still is more room for women to get involved. Where people are seen as individuals, it is not gender but the name that is important. What counts and is valued is the contribution made with commitment and heart.

*by Prof. Dr. Andrea Klimt
Andrea is the rector of the University of Theology in Elstal, co-founder and honorary pastor of the projekt:gemeinde in Vienna, and one of many women who have shown decades of commitment and passion for missionary work.*



Women and men sharing responsibility for EBM INTERNATIONAL



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In our global projects, we want to share God’s transforming love so that people can live in hope. Together, we bring the gospel to people—in word and deed.

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Whether in church planting or theological training, in working with children, providing medical care, or ensuring food security, your gift gives people practical help, new perspectives on life, and hope in faith in Jesus Christ.

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Formulating one’s last will and testament often raises questions and uncertainties. People may feel they are “too young” or do not want to deal with the subject of death and dying. However, a legally valid will preserves what was important to you during your lifetime.

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www.ebm-international.org