



Unstoppable: Empowering the Next Generation of Women Around the World

By Marion Medina

The following is derived from an interview with Michelle Quinn, Vice President Of Business Development at Constellis, “the largest and most diverse non-financial risk management company in the United States.” For a deeper dive into this subject, be sure to listen to 4word’s Work, Love, Pray podcast episodes in March.

“...there was a wedding celebration in the village of Cana in Galilee... The wine supply ran out during the festivities, so Jesus’ mother told him, “They have no more wine.”

“Dear woman, that’s not our problem,” Jesus replied. “My time has not yet come.”

But his mother told the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” - John 2:1-5

You probably know the end of this story. It’s Jesus’ first miracle in which he turned ordinary water into a vintage Cabernet. What you may not have thought about is that in spite of his initial hesitation, Jesus performed this miracle at the insistence of his mother. Jesus obviously had high regard for his mother – as he did for all women.

Michelle Quinn spends her days working to bring stability to “fragile states, conflict settings, and war zones” around the world. But in addition to her day job, Michelle is champion for women’s empowerment. The question that drives Michelle forward is, “What might happen across the globe if we rewired relationships between men and women so mothers could speak freely to their sons and fathers could value their daughters’ voices.” How might the world be different if we all acknowledged the dignity of every human person and the uniqueness and value of all women?

Created in the Image of God

All people were created in the image and likeness of God and have inherent worth and dignity. Our value is not determined by our job title, the amount of our paycheck, or our gender. Our value is given by God, and this has always been equally true for men and for women.

Consider the women of the Older Testament – women like Esther, Deborah, and Ruth were fierce and fearless. They were bold because they were pursuing God’s purpose and believed that God valued them and had called them to be part of something bigger than themselves.

And think about the way Jesus treated women. In a patriarchal, male-dominated culture, Jesus included women among his disciples (Luke 8:1-3). Jesus affirmed a woman for choosing the posture of a disciple instead of slavishly adhering to societal expectations (Luke 10:42). And

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Jesus engaged women in his mission to take his Good News to the world in the power of his Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-21). Women and men are equally important in God's redemption story. But that doesn't mean that we are exactly the same.

The Heart of a Woman

Women are often led to believe that they need to behave like men in order to advance professionally. The truth is that God has created women with unique characteristics that are blessings and a "salve to the world." In general, the heart of a woman is sensitive, receptive, and generous. Women reflect the heart of Jesus who came to "bind up the brokenhearted" and spread the Good News of God's restorative Kingdom (Isaiah 61a;1-2). These are gifts that women all over the world naturally possess, and these are gifts that the world needs.

Michelle has seen that when micro finance loans and grants are given to women, they often achieve a better result than men who are given similar opportunities. A woman will take a modest grant and do great things because her end-goal is the betterment of her community and the stabilization of her village. Women tend to want to see their children, their family members, and their villages thrive. And because women leverage micro-loans and grants for these larger purposes, they are more likely to succeed in their ventures.

And Michelle has also observed that women are naturally wired to stabilize and protect. She says that she has never seen a setting, a theater, or nation where a woman cannot have a dramatic impact if she is "heard, respected, included, engaged, and given the tools she needs" to live out God's purpose for her.

Michelle's work is to preemptively find and forge solutions in unstable nations before the conflict escalates to a "kinetic" stage that requires military intervention. She says that by the time a fragile nation reaches the kinetic stage, the cost in both resources and lives is tragically high.

Women are a key piece to avoiding these kinds of kinetic interventions. Michell has observed that women are "tremendously effective" at diplomacy because they have an instinct for the "timing and modality" of their messaging. According to Michelle, there is a wealth of data that shows that when women are empowered to negotiate a peace treaty, the treaty will stay in effect longer.

And in war-torn countries it is often the women who will be the heroes who rebuild their nations.

Unstoppable Women

So, what can we do to empower women around the world to reach their God-given potential? Well first, we need to think globally. Women in developed nations have it good compared to women in many other places in the world. We have laws that value women and rights that we take for granted. This is both a privilege and a responsibility. So, work to become aware of what



happens to women who don't have education, clean water, medication, finances, ownership rights, or even the ability to choose who they marry.

And then ask what empowerment looks like to God and begin to advocate for women around the globe. You may have heard the quote: "Preach the Gospel at all times; when necessary, use words." Michelle says that it is time to use our words to elevate other women. And the opportunities are all around us.

So volunteer! Find an organization in your city that's doing something for displaced, oppressed, or trafficked women and find out how you can help. Find an on-line academy that's providing education for women in other countries and offer to be an e-mentor or an e-coach. In all these ways, you can remind women that they are worthy and have dignity in the eyes of God - and that message can be life-changing.

We can all be world-changers! Pray, and then move out and help bring change to other women. How can we doubt that God will work miracles and give us what we ask of him when our goal is the betterment of all women. This is God's story and God's dream for the world.

Michelle says it this way: "If not us, then who? If not now, then when?" Leverage your God - given power as a woman and charge the hill!

Discussion Questions:

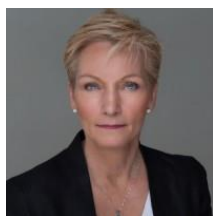
How does Jesus' treatment of women shape your ideas about your own worth and dignity?

Have you ever tried to stifle your unique gifts as a woman in order to "fit in" or advance in a male-dominated environment? What effect did that have on you?

How have you observed the natural tendency of women to "stabilize and protect"?

How are you seeking to stay aware of the situations of women around the world?

What might God be inviting you to do in response to this study?



Michelle Quinn has worked in high-threat theaters and post-conflict operations for more than twenty years, providing a broad scope of security, operational, Logistics, and training solutions for the Department of Defense, Department of State, Department of Energy and Other Government Agencies. At Constellis, Michelle is focused on critical U.S. Government missions and programs, both CONUS and OCONUS. In all of these roles and across the years, Michelle has led on the imperatives of Women, Peace, and Security (WPS), and has been an unwavering voice asking, “What might be possible in building peace across the globe, if we engage, include, empower, and give voice to the other half of the world’s population?” Michelle joined at Constellis in 2021.

Michelle currently serves on the Board of Directors of the International Code of Conduct Association (ICoCA), holding the Americas Security Industry Pillar/seat for Private Security Contractors. She also serves on the Boards of The Friends of the American University of Afghanistan and Eagle Online Academy, supporting the undying educational needs and dreams of Afghan women and girls. Michelle chairs the International Stability Operations Association's Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Working Group and stewards ISOA's formal WPS Certification program for the private sector. Michelle is privileged to be member of www.4wordwomen.org. Most importantly, Michelle is the proud mother of four fearless, fierce, world-changing daughters, all out-and-about the world accomplishing great things.



Marion is the Director of Programs for 4word.

Marion served in pastoral ministry for 17 years at three local churches including, most recently, Willow Creek Community Church. During her church ministry, she incorporated her organizational development skills with her practical knowledge of effective discipleship to create growth strategies that focused on the equipping and mobilization of congregations on the mission of Jesus. She holds degrees from Trinity International University and Wheaton College in Organizational Leadership and Missional Church Movements.



***4word** is a global community of Christian women in the workplace. Our mission is to help women in the workplace reach their God-given potential with confidence.*

Why 4word?

At 4word, we know you want to reach your God-given potential so you can have a Kingdom impact on your workplace and the world. To do that, you need resources for professional and spiritual growth - and a community of like-minded women to cheer you on!

The problem is your time is limited and meaningful connections are hard to find. This can leave you feeling overwhelmed, frustrated, and isolated on your life's journey.

We believe you shouldn't have to navigate work, life and faith on your own because God designed you for community. You are worthy to be surrounded by loving and supportive women who "get you."

We understand you face unique challenges as a Christian woman in the workplace, which is why we create easy-access opportunities for leadership development, spiritual growth, and connections to influential women around the globe.

Our Simple Empowerment Plan:

- Connect to a community – We offer virtual and in-person Community Groups specifically designed for working women – and we also have special groups for executive women.
- Access relevant content – 4word's podcast, blog, and our Community Group Discussion Guides are specifically geared to women in the workplace to help thrive on your journey.
- Get matched with a mentor – From our pool of over 220 amazing mentors we connect you with the right fit for a transformational mentoring experience through 4word's Mentor Program.



Join the Journey to empower 10 million Christian women in the workplace to change the world by 2030. Click the picture below to learn more.



Upcoming

HundredX Campaign April 3- May 2

April Discussion Guide Unstoppable Women- How to thrive in your relationship with God.

Mentoring Program Summer Session Sign-up Deadline May 12