

Created in God's Image

A GENDER TRANSFORMATION TOOLKIT
FOR WOMEN AND MEN IN CHURCHES

REVISED EDITION



NORWEGIAN CHURCH AID
actalliance

This is a revised edition of the booklet *“Created in God’s Image: A tool for women and men in churches”* produced in 2008. The structure of the tool has been changed to take the form of a toolkit.

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"In truth, the dominated are human beings that have been forbidden to be who they are.... Whether they [are] a social group (like homosexuals), a social class [like the poor] or a particular gender (like women)."

Paulo Freire¹

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The toolkit directly builds on learnings gleaned from several gender audit and related studies and publications that broke new ground from 2006:

¹ *The Politics of Education: Culture, Power and Liberation*. 1985. London: Macmillan Publishers.

- Churches' Gender Audit research studies were undertaken in South Africa, Zambia and Malawi, by PACSA, The Council of Churches in Zambia and the Malawi Council of Churches between 2006 and 2008. We are deeply indebted to the various specialists who were commissioned to undertake the work, as well as all those who contributed to the combined report published by PACSA in 2009 for NCA and its partners.
- Together, two consultants Mary Ryan and Bridget Krone, and Daniela Gennrich from PACSA, developed a small booklet which reported in simple terms on the findings of the country studies mentioned above, and included some thought-provoking sections on gender from theological, cultural and social perspectives. This booklet, *Created in God's Image: A Tool for Women and Men in Churches*, was the precursor to the current toolkit.
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Foreword

This toolkit enables us to take another step towards making churches “gender competent”. Actually, it is a powerful toolkit for gender competency, and fills a gap that has existed for a long time.

Through exciting Bible studies and in-depth human rights analyses, the book empowers women to say...

... I am. I am a human being worthy in God's eyes. I am the person I have chosen to be. I am free. I am a thinking, playing agent in God's Kingdom. I am a caretaker in, and for, God's world.

... I can. I can enjoy being a woman and a body. I can love and reach out to another human being of my choice. I can demand to be treated with respect. I can celebrate being a human being with others. I can be serious, and I can be playful. I can do hope.

... I have. I have role models, empowering role models such as Eve, and the five wise virgins, and Mary. I have dignity. I have choices. I have access to opportunities.

This is of course also a book for men. Actually, it should be compulsory reading for all men in the faith community. Human dignity is for both men and women. Together they will affirm one another as worthy human beings in God's eyes. Together they will experience the joys of being equal bodies.

Use this toolkit. Pass it on to other women in your congregation. Form focus groups with men in your church and discuss the issues that are placed here on the table and in the public arena.

Embark on the exciting journey of travelling with other people of faith towards equity, and dignity. Leave no stone untouched to build a church that understands gender, its challenges and its pain.

This book is a worthy companion on that journey. They say that if you do not know where you are going, you can take any road to try to get there. This book sets the goals for our journey. It is the road to freedom, equity, dignity, and living life to the fullest.

Professor Christina Landman
University of South Africa (UNISA)
5 June 2014
Centurion

