



**WOMEN, CHURCH, AND LEADERSHIP NEW PARADIGMS:  
ESSAYS IN HONOR OF JEAN MILLER SCHMIDT**

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Inspired by the writings, teachings and leadership of Jean Miller Schmidt, the nineteen contributors to this work honor their colleague with essays on women, church, and leadership. Schmidt was a pioneer and leader in theological education at the Iliff School of Theology. The authors take cues from her life and speak to women today about the steady, deep roots that are needed for bold, engaging, adventurous, and authentic leadership.

The construction of the book honors Jean Schmidt's life-long quest to take her theological musing from within the academy to the local church, to practice her theology in various ministry contexts. The chapter authors write from the context of theological education, while each respondent is a practicing minister, giving the view from the local church.

In the introduction, Eunjoo Kim and Deborah Creamer set the stage for the three-part volume by reminding us that changing gender roles, globalization, consumerism, and advances in technology and communication are causing decisive shifts in the theory and practice of leadership. The three chapters in Part One offer a socio-historical analysis of leadership in the American church, based on women's experiences and theological insights. Four chapters in Part Two focus on fundamental areas of pastoral leadership—preaching, vocation and identity, spirituality and pastoral care/counseling. Each chapter proposes a new paradigm of leadership from women's perspectives. Part Three, "Women and Scripture," is a single essay that helps us explore the feminine metaphor of Zion as refuge—a place where God is present and available to God's people.

The audiences for these essays and pastoral responses are women and men preparing for ministry, experienced ministers currently serving in diverse ministry contexts, and those looking for insights to help them refuel and find renewal. The book could be used in a variety of teaching settings, from the academic classroom to the weekly, small group conversations that happen in church communities of all denominations. It lends itself to an eight-part or eight-week study.

For this reviewer, the book was an engaging reflection on diverse issues of pastoral leadership. For years I have had the practice of skipping over a Foreword, Preface and Introduction, in favor of jumping into the meat of the volume. I did the same as I began this review, ending with a reading of the Foreword. To my surprise, I found myself wishing that the editors had used the Foreword by Mary Elizabeth Mullino Moore as the final word for the whole work. Moore does a brilliant job of pulling together the book's diverse content into a few summary pages about the images of leadership—the roots, risks, and rudders. She notes that:

- God is the taproot of leadership—the roots for one leader may seem strange to another—*Missio Dei* is shared, but the particular roots of an individual leader of community of faith differ according to the gifts and challenges that are particular to them.
- Risk is involved in following one's deepest passions—community is strongest when it is rooted in a common mission, yet people function best when they draw upon their unique gifts, passions, and experiences.
- God's Spirit is the primary rudder, and various rudders developed through years of experience and wisdom support people with extraordinary calls—leadership is deeply challenging and we need new models and courage.

The book is a refreshing read, a wonderful recognition of the work of Jean Miller Schmidt, and a much-needed addition to the conversations we have been having around the table of the Academy of Religious Leadership (ARL). It should be added to the reading list for all future church leaders and part of the renewal reading list for us all.

*Reviewed by*

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