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## FOREWORD



A. ELIZABETH WEIDMAN AND HER SISTER RUTH left their home in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1924 for missionary service in Northwest China and Tibet. The Assemblies of God was then only 10 years old, but it had commissioned these women, then 26 and 28 years of age respectively, to follow the example of the first person to tell another of the Resurrection—a woman named Mary Magdalene (John 20:18). Elizabeth and Ruth were at the vanguard of a host of women sent forth or recognized by the Assemblies of God as missionaries, pastors, leaders, and ministers of the gospel.

For 55 years Elizabeth served as an ordained minister of the Assemblies of God. I know her well, for she is my mother. Growing up in my parents' home I never knew a time when it was unnatural for a woman to serve in a preaching, teaching, or leadership role. We believed in the Assemblies of God that the Lord was an equal opportunity employer—and so was His Church!

Only as an adult did I come to realize that not every Christian felt the same way. Many of my friends, who held to a more restrictive role for women in the Church, threw biblical texts my way that appeared to suggest our stance on women in ministry was erroneous and even heretical.

Now, at last, we have a work written by Assemblies of God women ordained ministers and scholars—Barbara Cavaness and Deborah Gill—that undergirds our historic stance on women in ministry by a masterful exegetical and hermeneutical approach to the Scripture.

I think this book will do for its audience what Priscilla and her husband Aquila did for Apollos. Do you remember Apollos? He

was “a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures.” Yet there were things about Jesus he did not know. He had the grace to let a woman help teach him by explaining “to him the way of God more accurately” (Acts 18:24-26). So also today, there are many in the body of Christ who are learned, know the Scriptures thoroughly, and speak with fervor; but their knowledge of God’s design for women needs the more accurate and adequate knowledge of “the way of God” as revealed in His Word.

This book, *God’s Women—Then and Now*, will take its place as an important support for all women in ministry. And, beyond that, it will help all within the Church to better understand and value the role God intends for women in life, family, and ministry.

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Springfield, Missouri  
2004