



# Half the Church: Recapturing God's Global Vision for Women

By Carolyn Custis James

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Women comprise at least half the world, and usually more than half the church, but so often Christian teaching to women either fails to move beyond a discussion of roles or assumes a particular economic situation or stage of life. This all but shuts women out from contributing to God's kingdom as they were designed to do. Furthermore, the plight of women in the Majority World demands a Christian response, a holistic embrace of all that God calls women and men to be in his world.

The loudest voices speaking into women's lives in the twenty-first century thus far come from either fundamentalist Islam or radical feminism. And neither can be allowed to carry the day.

The Bible contains the highest possible view of women and invests women's lives with cosmic significance regardless of their age, stage of life, social status, or culture. Carolyn Custis James unpacks three transformative themes the Bible presents to women that raise the bar for women and calls them to join their brothers in advancing God's gracious kingdom on earth. These new images of what can be in Christ free women to embrace the life God gives them, no matter what happens. Carolyn encourages readers with a positive, kingdom approach to the changes, challenges, and opportunities facing women throughout the world today.

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## Half the Church: Recapturing God's Global Vision for Women By Carolyn Custis James Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #60310 in Books
- Brand: HarperCollins Christian Pub.
- Published on: 2015-06-02
- Released on: 2015-06-02
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.39" h x .59" w x 5.47" l, .45 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 208 pages



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### **Editorial Review**

#### **From the Back Cover**

"Carolyn Custis James has written an unusual and compelling book, mixing her personal story with the dramatic changes in today's world and her thoughtful interpretations of the Scriptures and how women can respond with greater fervor to the Bible's call for change and betterment of the world."

**--Sheryl WuDunn, co-author of *Half the Sky***

"Half the Church is a significant contribution to the current public discourse of the role and responsibility of the church in responding to the suffering of millions of women and girls due to oppressive cultural and traditional norms. In her excellent book, Carolyn James reminds us of the urgent need for action in order to protect girls and women from gender-based violence and cultural practices such as trafficking, forced child-marriage, gang rapes, abduction, infanticide, and female genital mutilation."

**--Fatuma Hashi, Director, Gender and Development**

**World Vision International**

"Carolyn Custis James combines passion for the suffering women of our world with rigorous biblical observation and exegesis. The result is a prophetic word that challenges both our apathy and ignorance in the face of terrifying facts, and our theological shallowness in the face of abundant biblical teaching. The title and subtitle only tell half the story. For this is a book for the whole church and urges us to see God's global vision for men and women. Half the church badly needs to think again about the message of this book. So does the other half. Otherwise both halves are the tragic losers."

**--Christopher J. H. Wright, International Director**

**The Langham Partnership International**

"With the care of an experienced scout, Carolyn James has lined the fire pit with stones, then assembled the kindling and logs, and in the final chapters of this remarkable book has struck the match to ignite a blaze for God and his kingdom. No thoughtful Christian woman can walk away from this book unchallenged or unmoved, as she senses the glory of her *ezer*-warrior calling. Nor can any thoughtful Christian man remain unmoved by the vision of the Blessed Alliance so skillfully sketched in these pages. The challenge of *Half the Church* is to the whole church to fulfill God's purpose in creating all of us as iconoclastic bearers of the divine image in a broken world."

**--Alice Mathews, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary**

"Carolyn Custis James expertly weaves contemporary reality with biblical story. Reaching into the Old Testament as well as the New, Carolyn shows that God has always been and continues to be at work through women and girls. They are, like men and boys, His image bearers. This book should open the eyes of everyone who takes Jesus seriously to the horrendous injustices against women around the world and provoke within us a serious drive to do something about it. The day is near (and I believe this book will help usher it in) when the church will be a significant cultural catalyst for bringing equality and dignity to women and girls around the world by providing education, empowering women with microloans, and liberating them from oppressive regimes, sex trafficking circles, and secular philosophies that are ultimately degrading to them. It is time for the other half of the church, men, to be strong and courageous and do all we can with all we have to bring divine freedom to women and girls so they can be all that God created them to be."

**--Mark L. Russell, coauthor, *Routes and Radishes***

"Once again Carolyn Custis James calls us to radical thinking and living. Half the Church opens our eyes to the global problems facing women, drives us to God as the only solution, and refreshes our passion that we can 'do something.' And the writer in me loves Carolyn's exquisite phrases and vibrant images. This book is a must-read and I will be giving it to many people."

**--Judy Douglass, Director of Women's Resources**

**Campus Crusade**

"With hope, beauty, and clarity of vision, Carolyn Custis James takes a megaphone to the biblical call to mobilize justice on behalf of those who suffer violent injustice in our world today. She argues that all in the Body of Christ are God's image bearers, called to be used by God in restoring His image in those who have been most deeply stripped of the freedom and dignity intended for them. We are more aware of the scope of violent injustice in our world today than in any other time of human history; brutal abuse is committed against our neighbors-- neighbors next door and neighbors across the globe. Carolyn calls the whole Church to see the opportunity at hand--to rise up, together, and make God's justice and restoration known."

**--Bethany H. Hoang, Director of the IJM Institute**

**INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE MISSION**

"In Half the Church, Carolyn Custis James offers a striking theology as to why men and women are called to live and lead together. Her insightful, integrated and unapologetic plea leaves us with no option but to get on with it ... all of us ... men and women together urgently working for God's best in this world."

**--Elisa Morgan, author, speaker, and publisher of FullFill**

#### About the Author

Carolyn Custis James (MA, Biblical Studies) travels extensively as a popular speaker for women's conferences, churches, colleges, seminaries, and other Christian organizations. Her ministry organization, WhitbyForum, promotes thoughtful biblical discussion to help men and women serve God together. Carolyn founded and is president of the Synergy Women's Network. She is a consulting editor for Zondervan's Exegetical Commentary Series on the New Testament and author of *When Life and Beliefs Collide* and *Lost Women of the Bible*. Carolyn and her husband live in Sellersville, Pennsylvania. They have one grown daughter.

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**Thomas Fleischmann:**

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