

Media Kit:

Finding Her Voice

from Broken to Bold, Book 3

Acts of Early Female Apostles: A Novel

Elaine Ricker Kelly

Feminist Christian Historical Adventure released October 28, 2025

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Press Release

Local fiction author re-imagines Acts of the Apostles with Female Apostles

Empowering story of inclusion and love gives voice to those silenced by the church.

HAMILTON, Ontario – October 15, 2025 – *Finding Her Voice* is a novel exploring the courage it takes to stand and speak when others demand your silence. This historical fiction addresses today's issues by showing women and LGBTQ+ leaders in the early church.

"I wondered why Acts never mentions the mother of the four prophesying daughters," said Kelly, a mother of three daughters. "I imagine Susannah, a patron and disciple, as an evangelist and mother. How can she balance motherhood with her ministry? Bearing only daughters meant she was barren. Even today, there is a higher value placed on bearing sons. Would she risk her life trying for a boy? Would she have a choice?"

Kelly portrays the apostle Junia as biracial, afraid that she and her son will never belong unless she proclaims that Jesus welcomes all believers to eat at the same table. Junia becomes a threat to those who preach segregation. She faces those who, like today, oppose her message of equality and silence her from teaching because she is a woman. How did Junia overcome the patriarchal attitudes of ancient Rome? Where would she go on her first mission trip? Does she find a second-chance romance? How did Junia earn the title, "outstanding among the apostles"?

"I think my strength as a writer is the ability to ask questions, to dig deeper, to discover what historical events happened at the same time as the biblical events and pull them together into one cohesive story," said Kelly. "Like people today, my first-century characters face religious disputes and riots, are shamed into hiding who they are, struggle with doubts, learn from their mistakes, and work to bring the love of Jesus to the world.

"Kelly captures a world on the edge of change. Her vivid, lyrical prose immerses readers in the ancient Mediterranean while examining themes that still resonate—identity, faith, and the cost of being unheard... Kelly restores voice and agency to those relegated to the margins of scripture. The result is a stirring blend of theology and drama; feminist, LGBTQ+-affirming, and profoundly spiritual." – The Prairies Book Review

Elaine R. Kelly and her husband live near Hamilton, Ontario, and have three adult daughters. She and her husband worship at a mainline Protestant church and enjoy hiking, playing tennis, pickleball, and music.

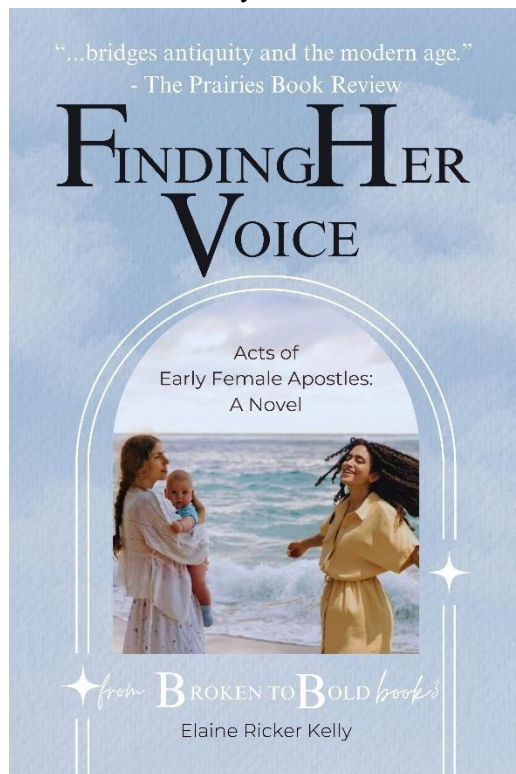
Finding Her Voice: From Broken to Bold, Book 3, Acts of Early Female Apostles: A Novel will be released on Amazon on October 28, 2025. The eBook is US\$5.99; the paperback is US\$14.99. Half price until October 28th. It can be read as a stand-alone or as the conclusion to the trilogy.

Media Kit on website: www.elainekelly.ca

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Retailer's Info One-Sheet:

Elaine Ricker Kelly



FICTION

Historical Fiction

Ancient World Romance

Gender & Religion

298 pages, B/W, 6x9 inches

Order from Amazon after October 28, 2025

<https://www.amazon.com/Finding-HerVoice-Broken-Apostlesebook/dp/B0FL9156XB/>

Paperback

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eBook

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Retail List Price US\$5.99 (approx. C\$8)

Finding Her Voice: from Broken to Bold book 3 Acts of Early Female Apostles: A Novel

Two women called to speak.

The world told them to stay silent.

After being forced to move to Syria, hide her Hebrew heritage, and live under her Latin name, Junia must convince the church to end segregation, or her son will never belong. While focused on her calling, will she find a second-chance romance?

Susannah has been evangelizing with her husband, Philip, but as unrest shakes the streets and new life grows within her, she wonders if it is possible to raise a family and still raise her voice. Is giving birth to a son more important than birthing a daughter? Should she risk her life trying for a boy? Framed by the biblical narrative and historical events, this empowering and inspiring novel explores the courage it takes to stand and speak when others demand your silence. Can the women proclaim Jesus's message of equality before church leaders silence them forever?

Read it as a stand-alone or the conclusion to the Trilogy.

"An immersive and deeply affecting novel that bridges antiquity and the modern age.... Kelly restores voice and agency to those relegated to the margins of scripture. The result is a stirring blend of theology and drama; feminist, LGBTQ+-affirming, and profoundly spiritual." -The Prairies Book Review

Elaine Ricker Kelly is amplifying biblical scholarship to empower women and endorse equality for all. After a career as a financial advisor, Kelly turned to writing stories based on women in the Bible and early church designed to inspire those who are deconstructing and reconstructing their faith after being sidelined or silenced by the church.

Elaine Kelly and her husband live in Grimsby, Ontario, and worship in the mainline Protestant Christian tradition. They have three adult daughters and enjoy hiking, tennis, pickleball, music, and travel.

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Editorial Review: The Prairies Book Review

An immersive and deeply affecting novel that bridges antiquity and the modern age.

Set between AD 39 and 48, this final volume in Kelly's From Broken to Bold trilogy continues her exploration of faith, gender, and power within the early Christian church. Antioch, AD 39. Junia hides her heritage, her name, and her fear. But as she gathers believers under one roof—Jews and Greeks eating as one—she becomes a threat to those who preach division. On the other hand, Susannah, Philip's wife, must balance calling and motherhood as Rome's shadow darkens Judea.

Moving between the charged streets of Antioch and the unrest of Jerusalem, Kelly captures a world on the edge of change. Her vivid, lyrical prose immerses readers in the ancient Mediterranean while examining themes that still resonate—identity, faith, and the cost of being unheard. Junia and Susannah's intertwined journeys reveal both the hope and heartbreak at the roots of inclusion. As in her earlier novels of the From Broken to Bold trilogy, Kelly restores voice and agency to those relegated to the margins of scripture. The result is a stirring blend of theology and drama; feminist, LGBTQ+-affirming, and profoundly spiritual.

<https://theprairiesbookreview.com/?p=42042>

Excerpts from Finding Her Voice

300-word Excerpt: Susannah

"I hope our next one will be a boy," said Philip.

Susannah placed her hand on her belly. *What if I have another girl? What if Philip does not have a legal male heir to carry on his name?*

"Are you expecting another one now?" Desdemona asked. "I hope it works out perfectly, in good hour."

Susannah blushed and nodded. *Will they taunt me if I have another girl? Will I disappoint Philip?*

"Boy or girl, we are all legal heirs in God's family," said Maria. Jesus's mother was like a mother hen to the whole congregation. She often led in worship, prayer, and officiating the Communion ritual.

"We are still bound by God's laws." James, Jesus's brother, was the chief administrator of the congregation in Jerusalem. "The law shows that we are obeying God."

"Yes, Son, but the Scripture says that daughters can be legal heirs," said Maria. "The five daughters of Zelophehad asked Moses for their father's inheritance, and Moses agreed since they had no brothers. It set a precedent for us."

"That was a different time—when Israel was a tribal society. In Roman society, only a male is a legal heir," James explained.

A frown crossed Susannah's face as she massaged her lower back. Her dizziness returned. *Will Philip be upset if I have another girl? Will he accuse me of being a bad wife?*

150-word Excerpt: Junia

“I hope that I may be able to share my testimony with many in Antioch, teaching them all that I learned from Jesus,” said Junia.

“We may have a place for you to teach women in our congregation,” said Nicolas.

Will Nicolas make it difficult for me to speak and teach men and women? “I want to convince everyone that Romans, Jews, and Greeks who believe in Jesus can worship and share Communion together.”

“If they convert and are circumcised, of course,” said Nicolas. “The Jewish laws have not been abolished, and the pillars of the Way in Jerusalem continue to uphold the law and ensure that worship is segregated.”

Jesus knew I was biracial when he invited me to be one of his people. I want to proclaim publicly that Jesus delivers both Jews and non-Jews. But I cannot demonstrate it by going public about my mixed heritage.

250-word Excerpt: Jamie

“Jamie is home from Alexandria!” Mara hugged her son as he walked into the room. “We’re so happy to have him home. He has been gone so long! And he brought a friend with him.” An olive-skinned man walked in behind Jamie.

“Leon is more than a friend, *Eema*.” Jamie had a twinkle in his eye as he called her by the familiar Hebrew term for *mama*.

“Do you work together?” Jesse asked Leon. Jesse had partners in the Galilean fishing business he had taken over from his father.

“Yes, I was one of the first to believe in Jesus when Jamie started preaching in Alexandria,” said Leon. “My family thought I was crazy, listening to a man preaching alone on the public squares. But what he said made sense, and now we stand together to preach the word.”

“Folks, Leon is more than my ministry partner. He is my dear companion. We work together, live together, and travel all around the Lower Nile Delta.”

“Pleased to meet you,” they all murmured.

“It has taken some time to see Leon as Jamie’s dear partner,” said Mara. “But many years ago, Jesus said that God creates some men not to marry a woman or have children, and that is normal. Jesus knew Jamie from the beginning and still chose Jamie as a disciple.”

“It took me some time, too!” said Jamie. “Time to figure out who I was and accept myself as God made me.”

100-word Excerpt: Mariamne

Mariamne blushed as she looked down at her male attire. “You knew me before I cut my hair and started to wear pants. It was over ten years ago that the Jerusalem elders told me I could not travel as an apostle because I was a woman. Then I had a vision where I was stripped naked, and I became a man. The elders saw that I had the soul of a man and was gifted for this work, so they agreed I could go if I removed my feminine clothing and character. It’s been a long time now.”

Author Photo and Bio:

50-word Bio:

Elaine Ricker Kelly is an award-winning author bringing healing and hope by writing about women in the Bible and early church. She has a research-based approach and empathetic tone from her thirty years as a financial advisor. She and her husband have three grown daughters and live near Hamilton, Ontario. www.elainekelly.ca



165-word Bio:

Elaine Ricker Kelly HBA MBA writes to bring healing and hope to those sidelined or silenced by the church. She uses her experiences as a financial advisor, business owner, mother, daughter, and wife to empower women at home, church, and society. As a financial advisor, Elaine knew that Jesus engaged women as financial advisors. As a mother of three daughters, Elaine knew the harm of being considered secondary. She thought fiction would help others see how Jesus equipped women as disciples and empowered women to speak and lead. As a Christian, when Kelly saw the church was speaking against equality, Elaine felt it was important to show how the Bible empowers women and endorses equality for all. Elaine R Kelly Author also writes blogs on biblical equality, church history, and women leaders. She and her husband live near Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, and worship in the mainline Protestant Christian tradition. They have three adult daughters and enjoy hiking, nature, tennis, pickleball, music, history, and travel.

Published Works:

- *Forgotten Followers from Broken to Bold* is the Silver EVVY award-winning spiritual fiction showing women healing from trauma as they become disciples of Jesus (set in the Gospels).
- *Because She Was Called: A Novel of the Early Church*, shows one woman healing through grief and another pulled between romance and following God's call (set in Acts 2-11).
- *Finding Her Voice, Acts of Early Female Apostles: A Novel*, explores early female apostles and prophets (set in Acts 11-15).
- *The Sword: a Fun Way to Engage in Healthy Debate on What the Bible Says About a Woman's Role* is a nonfiction with 104 flashcards showing the rationale for diverse views on gender roles.
- *Walk with Mara on Her Healing Journey: 21 Steps to Emotional Resilience* is part self-help, part devotional, part psychology, part theology, and part memoir.

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- *Forgotten Followers from Broken to Bold* retells the Gospels from the view of women overcoming trauma.
- *Because She Was Called: A Novel of the Early Church*, set in Acts 2-11 with women testifying about Jesus.
- *Finding Her Voice, Acts of Early Female Apostles: A Novel*, about female apostles and prophets in Acts 11-15.
- *The Sword: A Fun Way to Engage in Healthy Debate on What the Bible says About a Woman's Role*. A set of 104 flashcards introducing the rationale for Complementarian/Egalitarian biblical views.
- *Walk with Mara on Her Healing Journey: 21 Steps to Emotional Resilience*, "a fusion of self-help and devotional"

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Categories:

- Biblical equality
- Gender equality
- Women in the first century
- Christian theology on gender roles today

Topics I can discuss:

- Women of the Bible
- Jesus educating, equipping, empowering women
- Biblical inclusion of LGBTQ+ in God's family
- First-century culture and religion
- Genesis creation story and its impact on women
- Complementarian and Egalitarian perspectives
- Anxiety, worry, self-confidence, trauma-healing
- Research and writing craft
- Art and theology, fiction and the power of story

Benefits to your Podcast/YouTube Channel

- An informal, conversational tone, with complex concepts in everyday language.
- Content pertinent to those interested in Christianity or deconstructing their faith
- Promoting your finished interview with my website, email list, Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook.

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Find out more on YouTube:

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The Local Churchology Podcast:

<https://youtu.be/GbqN9BDx6Nw>

Regency History: Author Interview

<https://youtu.be/8YuF2Ehq7cc>

Reluctant Christian Feminist: Jesus and Women Disciples

<https://youtu.be/Wzz6aSk6T44> Behind

The Story with Elaine Kelly

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qS>

[I9QuzEO_Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qS)

Tru316 with Elaine Kelly

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kKDMCocGoU>

Feminists of Faith book chat:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aq-slShfYFE>

Beacon of Light Podcast:

<https://www.youtube.com/live/wVDDZ6c8bko>

Media Coverage

The Hamilton Spectator November 26, 2022: [A Christian-based novel addresses inequality and gender roles](#)

News Now January 5, 2023: Author launches [historical fiction empowering women](#)

Author Q & A

1. What is your favourite kind of books to read?

I enjoy historical fiction with female main character, suspense, and adventures. I aspire to write novels enjoyed by fans of *The Red Tent* and *The Book of Longings*.

2. Where did you get the idea to write historical fiction about women in the first century?

I have always been interested in exploring the women in the Bible and as I approached retirement from my financial career, I read, studied, and listened to research on them. I found models of strong women of faith, but many of them had either been forgotten or intentionally hidden or slandered. As a woman in business and a mother of daughters, I have seen how our society and religion can devalue girls and women. I thought it would be inspiring and empowering for readers to see these bold women of faith. It is important to see yourself in biblical stories, so my first novel explores women who were disciples and patrons of Jesus, and my trilogy shows the women as they become evangelists, prophets, and apostles.

3. What themes are the focus of *Finding Her Voice*?

The theme verses for *Finding Her Voice* say that because we have hope in God, we act with great boldness, not like Moses, who covered his face with a veil. When we turn to Jesus, the veil is removed, for where the Spirit is, there is freedom (2 Corinthians 3:12-17). Mary's song of praise prophesies that Jesus will lift up the lowly and pull down the powerful. The church today has done just the reverse, revering the powerful and silencing the lowly. The church has historically punished people who express their questions, doubts, or alternate beliefs. It has often silenced women or sidelined them from fulfilling their call to speak or lead. In order to belong in community, people hide who they really are, their ethnic background, alliances, orientation, or gender identity. This passage tells all people, including women, to be bold, uncover their faces, stop hiding, and act with the freedom God provides. For example, Junia's grandfather forces her to hide her Jewish heritage, and the church forces Mariamne to hide her feminine characteristics in order to be an apostle. I explore how the Bible empowers all people to follow their call and use their gifts, regardless of gender.

4. Why put these ideas in historical fiction?

I hope that seeing the early church in action may help Christians today to cooperate with those who hold various beliefs or backgrounds. The early church negotiated compromises to respect both Gentiles and Jews. Evidence shows the early Christian movement involved women as speakers, prophets, and evangelists. I hope that reading the story will allow Christians to experience Jesus and his message through a woman's eyes. For example, a reader will see the harm done by telling Susannah that her main purpose is bearing children or being the mother of sons, or that her life is less important than the life of a potential new baby.

In my financial career, we learned that facts tell, and stories sell. Theologians, scholars, and academics have already written how Jesus lifted up women and explained how the Bible can be interpreted to promote equality. While this scholarship engages the intellect, fiction can make it accessible and relatable. A story that engages the emotions can change not only our thinking but our behaviours. We saw this with *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, a fiction that dramatically showed the problems of slavery and moved the public towards abolition. I wanted to amplify egalitarian and affirming scholarship, putting complex ideas into plain language, and writing stories to engage the emotions and change people's minds about gender equality.

5. What excited you as you wrote this book?

I was excited by learning the local customs, myths, and religions of the six cities on Junia's fictional first mission journey. The story shows the difficulty and tact needed for missionaries to make disciples while respecting local cultures. Junia's advocacy to be able to speak is similar to current arguments for women in ministry. I chose Junia's fictional route to match early Roman trading routes and was amazed to find historical evidence of Christian women leaders in four of these six cities!

6. What plot lines were most emotional or personal for you?

As a mother of three daughters, including twins, after having struggled with fertility for several years, Susannah's story of bearing daughters resonated with me. The ancient practice of abandonment allowed men to reject a baby who was deformed or female. The custom was for the first-born son to carry his father's legacy and receive a double inheritance. Her friends are like Job's friends, insulting her for not being able to bear a son; she feels barren and worthless. She mourns loss in a miscarriage and in the next pregnancy, she is confined to bed rest. She is told another pregnancy will risk her life. Will using birth control go against her faith, or against her husband? Does she have a choice?

7. How have you seen our culture today placing a higher value on a boy?

When I had two girls and was pregnant again, some people assumed I wanted a boy. It was seen as more valuable, a way to make my family complete, because a family without boys is incomplete. This is not a first-century problem. Even today, many people prefer to have a boy to carry on their name, their legacy, or their business. Boys may still be given a preferential share or "first dibs" on inheritance. Girl fetuses are aborted more often than boy fetuses. Women athletes are paid less than men athletes. Some churches assign women the same responsibilities as men, but with a different title and lower pay. Our language, customs, and even the size of our clothes and equipment often suggest a male is the standard or regular size, and a woman is secondary.

8. How did the early church manage with only the Old Testament and oral records of Jesus?

Junia's grandfather, Theophilus the high priest, honours the written Scriptures, so I show her commissioning Luke to write an orderly account for him. However, an early Christian named Papias believed that the spoken word of a living witness was more beneficial. The letter from the Jerusalem Council writes a letter and explains that since the written word can be counterfeited, the letter is delivered with trustworthy people. The novel shows that there is a purpose for both written and spoken testimonies.

9. Why did you write poems, songs, and prayers in your novel?

I wanted to imagine Christian ideas that were predominant at the formation of the new movement, while the New Testament was not yet written. Since many early Christians were not literate, I can see early leaders teaching songs to new believers to help them remember their message. For example, Jesus's mother, Maria, sings her own song in Luke 1:46-56, prophesying how Jesus will bring down the powerful and uplift the lowly, abolishing hierarchies and bringing equality. The themes mirror Isaiah 40:4-5, which would have been a familiar passage to the Christian Jews. These themes are central in the novel. I also wrote songs based on Philippians 2:6-11, which is thought to be a Christian hymn that pre-dated Paul, and 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, which is an ancient creed that pre-dated Paul. I also wrote lyrics teaching believers how to follow the royal command to love one another (1 Corinthians 13, James 2:8).

10. What is the most challenging part of the writing process?

This novel has many moving parts: the biblical narrative, riots in Rome, Alexandria, and Judea, and changes in Roman governors and emperors. It was challenging to keep my fictional story moving among these elements. I find the initial plotting before the writing, and the many rounds of editing after the writing, both take longer than the writing.

I carefully plot the story, keeping the characters' end goal, obstacles, and stakes in mind. I saw a video where Margaret Atwood described a chart she uses for reference when writing a fiction; beside each year, it shows the age of each character. My editor also uses a Style Sheet to keep track of the physical characteristics I have assigned to each character, so that their hair or eyes are the same colour in every scene. Because I'm writing historical fiction set in biblical times, I began with a column for the estimated calendar year, the references to biblical events that may have happened in that year, the age, and activities of the various characters in that year. Then, I write a scene-by-scene outline for my fictional plot, ensuring tension and obstacles in each chapter. I am in control of my story, and I write building to a satisfying conclusion. There is room for creative freedom as I delve deeper into research for each chapter. For example, I knew I wanted Junia to visit Philadelphia but didn't know who or what she would do there. Then I found out about Ammia of Philadelphia, a prophet renown for teaching the apostolic tradition, and I imagined that she learned the apostolic tradition from the Apostle Junia. In another example, I had already portrayed Joanna, the patron and disciple, as the same person as Junia the Apostle, and given her a backstory as part Greek and part Jew. In *Finding Her Voice*, I wanted Junia to visit Colossae, then discovered that Colossae had biracial people and they worshipped the Colossian heresy, blending beliefs of Greek gods, spiritualism, and the God of Abraham. It was exciting for Junia to discover that Colossae Apphia (Philemon 1:2), a woman who was like Junia, having a Greek name and worshipping the God of Israel.

11. What plot points add tension to the novel?

It is set in the AD 40s, where there is pressure to worship the Imperial Cult, where the emperor puts idols of himself in holy places, where Greeks persecute Jews, and where Christian Jews challenge traditional Jews. There are records of street riots in Rome and Alexandria, and an extremely violent stampede in the Temple of Jerusalem. As Junia travels to new places, she is persecuted, harassed, and imprisoned. In Hierapolis, the Acts of Philip describes a woman being abused by a tyrant of a husband. In addition, the church is internally divided over direction, requirements for new believers, and who has authority to speak or lead. There are also interpersonal frictions in the romantic liaisons.

12. What motivates you to write?

I have always been a feminist, in that I have always believed in equal rights and freedoms, regardless of gender. I have the same education as men (an MBA in business), and I worked in a male-dominated career (investments and life insurance). When I began my career, there was a societal movement towards equal rights for women in religious, political, and business leadership. As I prepared to retire, I discovered that women's rights had actually moved backwards. As a Christian, I felt betrayed to find that many of the new restrictions on women originated in the Christian church. I felt an urgent call to write about how Jesus equipped women as disciples, engaged them as his financial advisors and empowered women to go out and speak. I want to encourage the Christian church see the benefits of including all God's people and all of their gifts. I stand with those who are excluded and sidelined by the church and speak for those who are silenced. I want to show them God still loves them and seeks them.

13. Why do you have LGBTQ+ characters in your fiction?

I show LGBTQ+ characters in fiction because LGBTQ+ people exist today and also lived in the first century. As I researched equality for women, I soon realized equality for some is not equality at all. My LGBTQ+ characters come from my historical and biblical research. *Forgotten Followers*, shows a mother learning to accept her son, Jamie, as he is, based on Jesus teaching that some men are not designed to marry a woman (Matthew 19). *Because She Was Called*, is set in Acts 2-11 where the central theme is that Christ breaks the barriers between people. In Acts 8, the Holy Spirit directed Philip to baptize a eunuch to be adopted into the family of faith, even though a eunuch was considered neither male nor female. In Acts 10, the Spirit gives a vision to Peter to enter the unclean home of a Roman centurion, and when the Spirit baptizes all who heard Peter's message, no one can object to baptizing them in Christ's name. Among the crowd at Cornelius's home, I portray Longinus and his male partner being baptized, basing Longinus on the centurion who asks Jesus to say the word to heal his dear companion (Luke 7:10). In *Finding Her Voice*, Jamie returns from his mission journey with a dear male companion. In addition, I portray Mariamne, who is described in the Acts of Philip as wearing pants, cutting her hair, and shedding her femininity in order to become an apostle. These characters represent the full diversity of society in the first century and today. Showing LGBTQ+ characters in fiction honours God and the diversity God creates and the way God seeks every lost sheep, and we all belong as equal heirs in God's family.

14. Who would enjoy reading your novels?

My fiction is reassuring for readers who believe in equality but want to see how the Bible and early church endorsed it. The novels bring healing and hope to those whom the church has sidelined or silenced. It is great for readers deconstructing their faith or leaving evangelical or fundamentalist Christian circles who may not have been exposed to biblical interpretations showing how God values all people. In contrast to many churches, these novels encourage readers to express questions or doubts about God, Christianity, or the church. The novels would also be enjoyed by non-fiction readers of books on religion and gender, women's issues, egalitarianism, and feminist theology.

15. What other writing are you doing?

I am in the process of writing a 40-session devotional based on the harmony of the Gospels called What to Do When You Feel Forgotten. In non-fiction, I published a book of 104 flashcards with various understandings of biblical passages discussing what the Bible says about a woman's role. I have also written a self-help book for people recovering from spiritual trauma and looking to reconstruct their faith in an inclusive and empowering way.

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