



Q & A



Creating Cultures of Belonging *Cultivating Organizations Where Women and Men Thrive*

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While many faith-based organizations desire to have women in positions of leadership, they still fail to embody a culture that invites and celebrates gender equity. Offering practical steps for leadership teams, board members, and managers, Beth Birmingham and Eeva Sallinen Simard identify organizational changes that will create a belonging culture.

Diversity Leads to Better Organizational Outcomes

What kind of vision do you hope to cast through this book?

Beth Birmingham and Eeva Sallinen Simard: There's been so much research and support for the organizational benefits of diversity coming from the corporate sector, we thought, why wouldn't we want these better performance outcomes for the most important types of organization, those trying to end poverty in Jesus' name? Our long years of experience and more recent research about the lack of women in influential roles across the sector confirmed our desire to cast a vision for a new kind of organization and organizational culture, a belonging culture, where the talents and giftings of women and men are fully utilized, affirmed, and advanced.

How does *Creating Cultures of Belonging* help guide organizations to greater diversity?

Beth and Eeva: Organizations achieve better outcomes if there is diversity throughout the organization and specifically diversity in leadership and influential positions. The faith-based missional sector has a long history of marginalizing women and silencing their voice and underutilizing their skills and leadership talents. *Creating Cultures of Belonging* is the roadmap to change this. Too often the focus is on doing some small act, like hiring a diversity officer. In fact, cultivating a new culture requires a whole systems mentality that addresses theology, organizational culture, human resource policies and practices, leadership behaviors, and the ideologies and actions that hold organizations back from achieving their very best performance and creating the very best culture for both women and men.

What are the key takeaway points from this book?

Beth and Eeva:

- A belonging culture is a place that welcomes women *and* men.
- Women and men are created in God's image, called for his purposes, and equipped for that calling.
- Missional sector organizations are not performing at their very best if they lack women around their leadership tables and in all spheres of influence.
- Cultivating a belonging culture requires a systems approach to look across the organization and all the ways toxic and unhealthy behaviors show up.
- Cultivating a belonging culture is everyone's job—every board member, every donor, every leader, every staff member—all who contribute toward this positive change or allow bad environments to continue are responsible.



Tara Burns, print and online publicity
800.843.4587 ext. 4059 or tburns@ivpress.com

Krista Clayton, author interviews
800.843.4587 ext. 4013 or kclayton@ivpress.com



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