

inclusive language is a welcome update, though otherwise the translation keeps close to Ellul's text, as reflected in the way the prose tends to follow French language structure, punctuation, and phraseology. This particular volume also includes explanatory footnotes. Some of these, prepared by David W. Gill, provide helpful context and commentary to Ellul's thought, whilst others, supplied by the translator, comment on linguistic issues or offer explanations of various movements or personalities referred to by Ellul, such as Marx, Weber, or Lenin. The latter type of footnote seems to be largely superfluous, given Ellul's dense prose and the target readership of 'Christian intellectuals'.

Those already familiar with Ellul's thought and *The Presence of the Kingdom* may enjoy a fresh rendering of this classic piece. New readers may need patience as they get used to Ellul's language and dialectical argument, but they will be rewarded with a stimulating invitation to 'read' the modern world in a way that searches for an authentic Christian presence and witness to the gospel.

**Kate Bowler, *The Preacher's Wife: The Precarious Power of Evangelical Women Celebrities* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2019), 338 pages. ISBN: 9780691179612.**

*Reviewed by Laura Dijkhuizen*

Laura Dijkhuizen is research community co-ordinator at IBTS Centre Amsterdam.  
 dijkhuizen@ibts.eu | <https://research.vu.nl/en/persons/laura-dijkhuizen>  
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'In almost every spiritual empire, there was a she' (pp. 1 and 238).

Historian Kate Bowler describes in this book the public lives of America's Christian female celebrities. She interviewed over one hundred women in order to paint a picture of the search for their role within ministry and the marketplace in the context of a complementarian view on gender relationships.

Bowler wrote the book while fighting severe cancer and discovered that her interviewees were very open to show their vulnerability because she was vulnerable. I cannot imagine a bigger contrast between a deathly ill woman having chemotherapy and a perfectly dressed and styled celebrity who arrived in her private

aeroplane to grant an interview. I have great admiration for the perseverance of this researcher.

Her style of writing is refreshing and humorous. The choice to thematise the content into five major subjects: The Preacher; The Homemaker; The Talent; The Counsellor; and The Beauty demonstrates the impact of the development of female influence and leadership on different areas in life and ministry.

Bowler looks behind the scenes of internationally famous Christian women like Beth Moore, Victoria Osteen, Beverly LaHaye, and Joyce Meyer and describes their challenges, worries, and successes. The ‘dance’ between submitting to husbands and having their own successful ministries is both cringing and fascinating. Although, in recent decades, the dance has changed, when it started around the 1980s the subject of submission did these women no harm. They flourished from under the umbrella of their husbands and often their popularity, including their bank accounts, rose higher than that of their spouses.

Personally, I found it very interesting to read about the shift from the admiration of female missionaries — seen as heroines in long, old-fashioned skirts, wearing no makeup, and doing ‘man’s stuff’ — to CEOs from mega ministries in designer clothes, having their own makeup or clothing brands and an apparently non-ageing skin. These new female heroines within the evangelical, Charismatic, and, yes, also Baptist denominations in the United States, lived the dream of every Christian housewife, mother, and employee. And, no small detail, where the missionaries looked old in their forties, these faces of mega ministries still look young at eighty!

This book is a product of the context of the United States, which is far from the European context. But considering that theologically (and not only theologically) we do lean on the developments of denominations like the Southern Baptist, there is a lot to profit from this work, especially in the difficult area of gender dynamics within church leadership. Besides the theological and historical value, the book is very accessible and opens a world we might not be familiar with but through which we are influenced, willingly or not.