

## The Women of "Significant"

BY HEATHER SENGES

*Significant—Six Ordinary Women, One Extraordinary God*

*A Study of Women in Jesus' Genealogy by Rachel Risner*

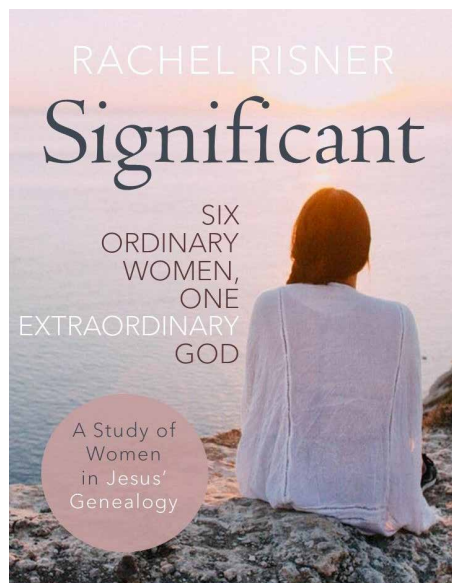
In our last TouchPoint – Spring 2022 - we looked at the first two ordinary women in Rachel Risner's book "Significant" – but how God used Sarah and Leah in the most unexpected ways. Let's look at two more of these women, and see how God used "not perfect" women to carry out His perfect plan!

### TAMAR – from Forsaken to Foremother

Genesis 38 interrupts the story of Joseph to tell the absolutely bizarre story regarding one of Joseph's brothers, Judah, and his relationship with his daughter-in-law, Tamar.

Judah, himself, had married a woman from Canaan, and then chosen another Canaanite woman, Tamar, for his oldest son. It happened that her first husband died, leaving her childless. It was the custom at the time to then marry the widow off to the next brother, which is what happened to Tamar. Again, this second husband also died, leaving her still childless.

Her father-in-law, Judah, should then have married her to his youngest son, but he was fearful he would also die, so he delayed, leaving Tamar in a state of limbo. This was an inexcusable neglect of his fatherly duties and an



injustice to Tamar.

Though a Canaanite, Tamar was intent on belonging to Judah's family and being part of God's people. So here Tamar took matters into her own hands. She tricked Judah into sleeping with her, and actually became pregnant with twin boys through that encounter. When all this came to light a few months later, Judah at first tried to paint her as a scheming prostitute.

But being a man of honour, and filled with guilt, Judah recognized his sin and acknowledged his own unrighteousness in his failure to provide for his daughter-in-law. He publicly announced Tamar's innocence, actually calling her more righteous than he was!

So we find in Tamar the story of hope and purpose. Though Tamar's life was filled with deception and seduction, she was used of God despite past mistakes. She showed traits of

assertiveness, coupled with deep family loyalty and true mercy. Her kindness brought Judah to repentance and restored his relationship with God.

Tamar did not know the full significance of her life on earth, nor do we know ours. But there is a purpose – God has a perfect plan. Tamar bore Judah two sons. The lineage of one of these sons, Perez, included Boaz, King David, and ultimately Christ Himself. We can see the transformation of Judah, as he was willing to sacrifice himself for his brother Benjamin – Judah became a man worthy of a royal line.

This is a story of God's prevailing mercy – even the most flawed of us can be used and blessed by God, not because of our merit, but because of His grace.

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# BLUE OCEAN

## 2022-2023 Cohort Gatherings



If you haven't yet taken the plunge into Blue Ocean, we want to invite you to join us for our three gatherings, once every couple of months for a few days each beginning in the fall. In case you've ever wondered, each of the gatherings has a distinct focus:

### **Vancouver, British Columbia Theology (Oct. 16–19, 2022):**

Not only does this first set of meetings help foster a sense of community, it also entails an exploration of the missio Dei and uses topics such as reading Scripture, the Gospel, and the Trinity to get at the missional nature of our God.

### **Sacramento, California Formation (Feb. 5–8, 2023):**

These few days focus being formed into the image of Christ, especially as leaders and how the dark side of leadership can impact our ministries, and even our very souls.

### **Chicago, Illinois – Ecclesiology April 24–26, 2023):**

The final gathering is a movement toward missional ecclesiology: what it looks like for us to be a people in a place, creating space and bearing witness to what God is doing there.

Over the last number of years, scores of NAB leaders have undertaken this journey together and by doing so have captured a vision for their church, ministry, and personal lives about what it means to be on mission with God in our communities.

Consider taking the plunge into this next Blue Ocean cohort, beginning October 16–19, 2022.

If you are already an alumnus of Blue Ocean (or Ethos, Light Blue Ocean, or any of the other missional programs of the NAB), don't forget Bonfire is taking place September 27–29, 2022, in Chicago, Illinois!

Sign up soon before you lose track of time and forget!

**To find out more, visit the [NAB Blue Ocean webpage](#) or contact Sara-May Cardy at [scardy@nabconf.org](mailto:scardy@nabconf.org)**

### **The Women of "Significance"** ...from cover

## **Now let's look at RAHAB – from Zero to Hero**

In the book of Joshua, we are introduced to one of the most thought-provoking and astonishing heroines of the Bible. Rahab, a prostitute in the Canaanite city of Jericho, ultimately is noteworthy for her great faith and her place in the lineage of Jesus. Looking closely at her life shows us how God deals with individual believers with grace and mercy.

We all know the story – Rahab lived in Jericho and assisted the Israelites in capturing the city by hiding the two men who had been sent to scout out the city prior to the attack. Because of her courage and assistance, Rahab and all her family were protected and were brought out of the city and included among the Israelite people. She married Salmon, an Israelite from the tribe of Judah. Her son was Boaz, the husband of Ruth, and a direct line in the lineage of Jesus.

Rahab was an unlikely candidate for a hero of faith. However, she recognized that the God of Israel was the God above all, and this faith, coupled by courageous action, saved her family. Her past was no longer viewed as an unclean prostitute, but as one worthy by grace to be part of the lineage of Jesus.

It is clear that Rahab was perceptive, intelligent and well-informed. She identified the spies, and was able to hide them successfully. She asked for her family's safety and agreed to the conditions set out by the two spies.

Rahab left a remarkable legacy of courage, faith and hope. Through her we learn of God's saving grace through faith, no matter the past. Rahab, through a grand act of courage, is truly a woman of faith.

## An Interview with Kayo Kyusai

by Shan Reed, NAB Missionary in Japan

*We have been highlighting women connected to NAB who are serving in ministry leadership within their churches and communities. Our hope is by doing so, we can encourage and support other NAB women in leadership.*

*I would like to introduce you to Kayo Kyusai (pronounced Q-sigh). Mrs. Kyusai has been a member of Komyo Christian Church in Izumi, Osaka, Japan since 2016 where she is a valuable leader. She is also active in the community, doing seasonal work at the city office, participating in a local gospel choir at the community center, and volunteering in an organization which supports people with the same illness she has.*

### How did you meet Jesus?

I met the true Jesus through Anointed Gospel Choir and our teacher, Mr. Yamamoto. He has a lovely, pure heart and truly loves Jesus. This actually turned me off because I thought that there was no way I could ever be like that. I used to give him a hard time, you might even say I persecuted him. I like to sing and wanted to do more solo work, so I left the choir for a while trying to find a place to sing, especially gospel music or jazz. However, it wasn't long until I returned to the choir. My time away taught me that this choir was singing and learning the Truth. Through Mr. Yamamoto and another gospel teacher from the US, as well as from Shan, I gradually came to understand that I am a sinner in need of a Savior. On Christmas Day 2011 I was baptized along with one of my good friends from the gospel choir.

### You were not baptized at Komyo Christian Church. What brought you to the church?

After I was baptized, I started attending a different church with my friend who played piano for me when I sang solo gospel concerts. I enjoyed attending that church, however, it was in another city over an hour away. One day the pastor encouraged me

to find a church near my home if I was truly serious in my desire for my husband to become a follower of Jesus. I was a bit hurt when the pastor told me to find a new church, but as we talked through it, I could see how God led me to Komyo Church. I had met Shan at the gospel choir, and we had started to study the Bible together even while I was attending the other church. Just as God had worked in my heart over time to help me become a believer, he also brought me to Komyo Christian Church.

### What roles do you have in leadership at Komyo Christian Church?

First of all, I have to say that these are all roles I took on because they needed to be done not because I was seeking any leadership roles! I want to serve God and give him glory, but I did not expect to have these leadership roles, especially as an elder. There are others who have been Christians much longer than I have and who have more experience. However, here I am, serving God. I believe this is part of how God is teaching me to be a disciple. I also help lead music, singing and playing the keyboard, and doing the accounting.



Kayo Kyusai

### As you volunteer and work in the community, are you able to talk about your faith?

Yes, all of my coworkers and fellow volunteers know I am a Christian. One of the first things I say when I sign up for something is that I am a Christian so I cannot help on Sundays because I need to go to church. I am always listening for the Holy Spirit's prompts to share even the smallest thing about Jesus. We must take every chance we are given to talk about Jesus! The ladies in the gospel choir all know I am a Christian, but I am learning how to talk to each one differently because of their personality or understanding or situation.

### What are some challenges of being a Christian in Japan?

One big challenge for me is funerals. Almost everyone has a Buddhist funeral even though most people do not believe or even understand the tenets of the religion. It is just a ritual that everyone does and

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# Yuri Nakano and the Women of Japan



Shan Reed and Yuri Nakano  
Missionaries in Osaka, Japan

When I introduce myself I often say, “I was made in Japan but born in Canada!” I was born and raised in Alberta and came to have a relationship with Jesus through a camp ministry at the age of 10. While attending North American Baptist College in Edmonton, I received a calling to serve in full-time ministry. I have been serving in Japan close to 16 years (including my short-term years) as a missionary with NAB and have visited and worshipped in many of the churches here in the Japan Baptist Conference. I noticed right away that the churches are mostly made up of women. Some of the churches used to have a women’s ministry about 20 years ago, but has since died out along with the aging population. Currently out of 10 churches, only 2 have any particular ministry for women.

The Covid pandemic has highlighted several things to me. One is the human tendency to be drawn to ease and portraying an image on a screen and hiding behind a mask. I’ve also learned that isolation is truly not healthy. Culturally, Japanese have been raised to believe that it is acceptable to put on “a mask” of politeness and respectability and portray a different self to others for the sake of “harmony” amongst others. Even though I did not grow up in Japan, my Japanese-born

parents taught me this unconsciously through their parenting style. So, I very much lean towards this tendency. It is not easy to be vulnerable and to be honest, but I believe this kind of communication is needed within our Christian communities for greater spiritual growth. I believe we need mentors who can model this for us and encourage us. I was able to have mentors like this in my own life and have also experienced this kind of safe, trusting community with my spiritual sisters in Christ in North America. It was not until I could share my deepest struggles with another and pray together and learn from Scripture and be accountable to someone that my spiritual walk with God felt alive and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Personally, I feel this kind of relationship is most comfortable with another sister in Christ. I believe encouraging a more active women’s ministry in the Japanese churches is essential, especially after experiencing the pandemic which has encouraged even more isolation. One of our theme verses is Hebrews 10: 24-25: “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting

together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” (NIV)

Since 2021, I have introduced and explained a vision for a denomination-wide women’s ministry to the pastors of the Japan Baptist churches via one-on-one zoom meetings. The vision for a JBC women’s ministry was accepted by the leadership of the JBC. I made a video presentation and also had the pastors share their opinions and questions. It’s so important that the pastors are on-board with this and thankfully most are! A major part of our ministry to women is to facilitate Ladies seminars. Shan Reed and I have been facilitating these seminars for several years in the Osaka region with positive responses and the sense that women are hungry for this kind of training. Our goal is to reach the 4 regions (Osaka, Aichi, Nara/Kyoto, and Mie) of the Japan Baptist Conference churches with these seminars which facilitate a greater interactive style of learning and encourages deeper sharing with one another. I also have with the

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Yuri Nakano sharing at a ladies seminar

permission of the pastors to pray with and mentor at least one woman leader from their church. The time spent with these leaders continue to be mutually encouraging.

What are the goals and dreams for the future? Eventually, these are some of the goals we have:

1. We would like to have a women's committee formed at the denominational level.
2. To have the Ladies Seminars start and continue in each region. So far, we have only reached 2 regions. (Osaka and Aichi)
3. To encourage the women leaders of each church to mentor someone else in their church and to start envisioning a greater ministry there.
4. To have retreats or other leadership training.

We have been also asked to envision a partnership of some kind with our North American sister churches and their women's ministry groups. This is something that we can definitely pray about and start thinking about. I say this with the understanding that the JBC churches are still taking baby steps towards a women's ministry focus and that changes take much more time.

Since the Japanese churches are not yet equipped to organize big projects yet, I am wondering if a women's ministry in a church in North America has a project that they feel women from Japan can contribute to and work on together.

Some suggestions on my end are: It might mean at first setting up a zoom meeting and getting to know each other. Sending video prayer letters/testimonies to one another. Having a missional project where both sides can contribute either financially or in other ways.

Please feel free to contact me with any suggestions or if your women's ministry would be interested in such a partnership. E-mail: [nakanoyuri@hotmail.com](mailto:nakanoyuri@hotmail.com)

# Join Our Team

Women's Connection is in the process of expanding our team. We are looking for a woman who loves women, acknowledges their exciting role in ministry and is interested in connecting NAB women.

We are specifically looking for someone who will develop our ministry awareness by being our Social Media Strategist. In addition you will be a part of a team seeking to connect NAB women with God and each other.



If this description interests you please contact: Jean Ewing [jhewing@roadrunner.com](mailto:jhewing@roadrunner.com) for details.

## Kayo Kyusai

...from page 3

there is a lot of pressure to participate in the rituals. As I have come to understand Jesus more, it makes me sad to see everyone participating without understanding.

I am grateful to have faith in Jesus. I know I can bring my problems to him and trust him even when I do not see or understand the outcome. Japanese people think they can do everything themselves. That is a heavy burden to bear.

### How can people in North America be praying for Komyo Christian Church?

First, I want to say thank you! Thank you for your prayers for us for many years. When I became a leader at the church, I came to understand how much you all support us not only through prayer but also through sending missionaries like Shan and the Ewings and Yuri. If we had not had them at the beginning, we could not have survived financially.

Thank you for your support!

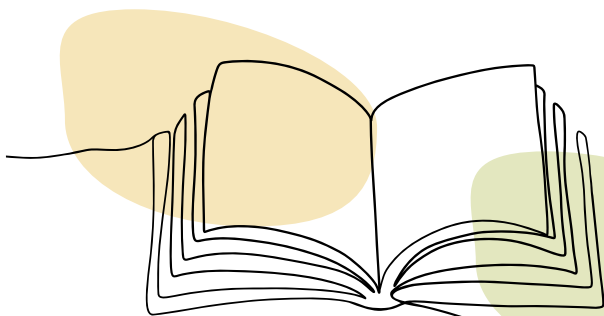
Also, please pray for our new Japanese pastor, Pastor Saijo. He started in 2020 just as the world was closing down because of the pandemic. We have had many struggles over the past few years. Please pray that those who have stopped coming for whatever reason will be able to return as well as for new people to come. Pray that we will be united in prayer.

We see God at work and anticipate he is going to continue leading us in the future.

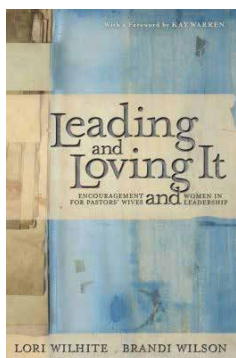
### How can we pray for you personally?

Please pray for my spiritual growth, that I will learn how to surrender to Christ daily. Pray for me to be a witness to my family and friends, that I can be myself and let Jesus' light shine. Finally, the burden of living in the formalities of Japanese culture has been very heavy for me in the past. Please pray for me to be my true self before Jesus and others without feeling the pressure to perform or wear a mask.





# BOOK STUDIES FOR WOMEN



## Leading and Loving It

by Lori Wilhite and Brandi Wilson

Being a woman in ministry, whether you are partnering with your husband in his calling or serving in your own leadership role, is challenging. While serving as mentors, counselors,

advisors, and even cheerleaders, women carry numerous responsibilities. Lori Wilhite and Brandi Wilson know about this first-hand as the wives of two well-known pastors in America.

Everyone has an image in their mind of what they think a pastor's wife should be. The trouble with this picture is that it has never been and never will be accurate. Ministry wives and female ministry leaders face the same real-life struggles as their church members, but have the added stress of sharing in everyone's burdens as well. They are held to impossible standards by those they serve, and the more this ideal of women in leadership is expected, the more we turn up the intensity in the pressure cooker that is life in ministry.

In *Leading and Loving It* Lori Wilhite and Brandi Wilson offer a support system to help women make connections to get the encouragement that sustains them and become equipped for the ministry God has called them to pursue. They give readers tools for understanding that external pressures and expectations are only important if they fall in line with what God intends for your life and ministry and they give answers for how to deal with criticism, isolation, finding your personal calling, and what happens when you reach a place of burn-out, and more.

The first woman to email [jhewing@roadrunner.com](mailto:jhewing@roadrunner.com) will receive a free copy of the book.

## Online Bible Studies in August Better – A Study of Hebrews



by Jen Wilkin

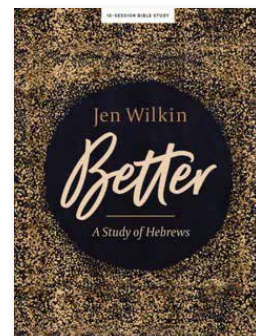
This fall we're starting a 10-week study by Jen Wilkin *Better—A Study of Hebrews*.

Starting on Thurs.

Aug 4, you'll be able to watch the weekly teaching videos for free!\*

All you'll need is a copy of the Bible study book to follow along with the discussion. So join us! [REGISTER HERE](#)

\*Videos will remain up for free until October 20, 2022 (11:59 PM CT).



## Find Your People



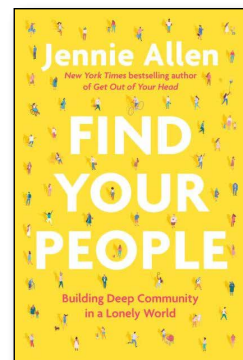
by Jennie Allen

Register now at [faithgateway.com/obs](https://faithgateway.com/obs) to be a part of the study with Jennie Allen. You will receive access to the 7 session

weekly study videos with Jennie beginning August 1.

Free downloads of a *Friend Guide*, *Prayer for True Community*, *The Schedule*, and the study guide for sessions 1-2 are available as you register.

You can join the conversation with participants from around the world in a private Facebook Group.



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