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John Finkelde: *Hey guys. Welcome to this interview. I'm here today with Paul Marshall. Paul Marshall is the executive associate pastor at C3 Church Watson in Canberra, our nation's capital city. He's had a long career in education, was the founding principal of a Christian school and held that role for 18 years. In 2015, he joined the staff at C3 Church Watson which is led by his wife, Melanie. He's just published his first book, Thanks, Lappidoth: How and Why My Wife Leads Our Church. Hey Paul. Welcome to the Hub.*

Paul Marshall: Thanks very much John. Yeah, great to be here.

John Finkelde: *Cool. Well, I like to start with our guest's 60 seconds lightning round, just to kind of find a little bit about you without doing a huge bio. Here we go. What's your favourite food?*

Paul Marshall: That'd be mango.

John Finkelde: *Oh nice. What's your best book you've read in recent times?*

Paul Marshall: Okay, I like a good intriguing espionage, so that would Daniel da Silva's The Other Woman.

John Finkelde: *I've read a few of his books. Good author.*

Paul Marshall: Very good, yeah.

John Finkelde: *Your dream holiday destination?*

Paul Marshall: That would have to be an island somewhere in Fiji, John.

John Finkelde: *I've been thinking about Fiji recently. That might confirm something to me. Your favourite person in the bible beside Jesus?*

Paul Marshall: Probably Peter. I just think he's just very human forward but all heart and genuine guy, yeah.

John Finkelde: *Very appealing. What's your favourite downtime activity?*

Paul Marshall: I'd say that I'm totally committed to an exercise regime. I wouldn't say it's something I love, but, so it's not a ... It's a favourite in the sense that I do it regularly, but I don't love doing it at the time.

John Finkelde: *Always enjoy the benefits afterwards.*

Paul Marshall: Yeah, it means I can eat dessert at night.

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John Finkelde: *Yeah, so grabbing vanilla slice on the way home from the gym. No, I'm not recommending that. Coffee or tea?*

Paul Marshall: I'm an espresso and a cappuccino man.

John Finkelde: *Good man. Book or podcast?*

Paul Marshall: I'd go with book. Yeah, I love getting lost in another world and just going there.

John Finkelde: *Beach or mountains?*

Paul Marshall: Well, I like body bashing in the surf and I like having a view so, so I think it'd have to be a hill overlooking a beach somewhere.

John Finkelde: *Yeah, I do rather enjoy that.*

Paul Marshall: Can I do that?

John Finkelde: *Yeah, that's fine. Jog or bike?*

Paul Marshall: The old knees are not enjoying jogging anymore John, so I'd go with a bike.

John Finkelde: *Okay, cool. Now this book, Thanks, Lappidoth: How and Why My Wife Leads Our Church. Of course, Lappidoth is the husband of Deborah.*

Paul Marshall: That's right, yeah.

John Finkelde: *The great prophet of the Old Testament. Give us an idea. What's the main idea or thought purpose behind the book?*

Paul Marshall: Okay, well as you mentioned Lappidoth's wife, Deborah, was the leader of a huge spiritual enterprise known as the Nation of Israel, and I suspect that when he told other men in the town what his wife did and who he was, I think there'd be a few eyebrows raised.

John Finkelde: *I think so too.*

Paul Marshall: And I can relate to that. I think if he was alive today, he'd probably want to tell his story. I answer a lot of questions. People say to me, "When are you going to be in the big office? How come you're not the senior minister? How does it work?" That sort of thing.

So this is what I write in response to a lot of that.



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John Finkelde: *So your own process and your own journey became really something you wanted to put into writing to help others do the process, or was it more kind of getting out of you what was in you, or was it a bit of both?*

Paul Marshall: Yeah, I guess it's a bit of both. There have been numerous people including church supervisors in the C3 movement who've said you should write it down, tell us the story. But also, we have come across women who are gifted and yet feel somehow a bit nervous about going into ministry and men who are a bit nervous about encouraging their gifted wives.

So we thought, oh well, let's encourage them. Melanie was behind me, was supportive of me writing it all down as well. Of course, she wanted to make sure that I didn't say anything that was going to be too exposing of our marriage. So there's no sealed section John!

John Finkelde: *Isn't there a premium sort of copy, the extra that people could pay an extra \$100 for or something?*

Paul Marshall: Not at this stage.

John Finkelde: *I think that's interesting that you mentioned before that people would say to you, when are you going to move into the big office, when are you going to become the senior pastor, and it's probably some of the cultural thinking behind that that disturbs both and you I around this.*

I'm actually thrilled Paul you've written this book, because I think the nervousness that women have, who have a gift of leadership, I think it would really help a lot of women, and probably guys as well. I guess you've met guys who are nervous about their wives kind of rising too far in leadership during your journey.

Paul Marshall: Yes. It is a unique position because we had a guy associated with our church many years ago whose wife was a very gifted song leader for example, and he got to the point where he said, "No, you're not allowed to do that anymore because I don't want other men in the church looking at you."

He was an extreme case. Actually their marriage folded and I think that "keeping your wife in a cage" approach to life was part of that.

I've had coffee with men whose wives are being asked to do more and more and going from small group leading to ministry leading and they want to know how can they support them and is it okay for them to do this? Should I be supporting this? Particularly when it comes to when they start approaching leadership over men which is kind of the sacred thing in many people's eyes.

John Finkelde: *We were talking recently about this whole deal of why does the church have so much difficulty with accepting women leaders, and it does grieve our hearts that you see women who have an obvious gift of leadership that may be expressed in the marketplace, may be expressed in other areas of life, but the church just seems to really struggle with releasing women who have leadership*

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capacity and abilities, especially when they're way past their husband's capacity and abilities who have gifting's in other areas. Why do you think the church struggles so much with this whole area?

Paul Marshall: It's interesting. I think there's a general misunderstanding of what God's original design and intention was, which was for not just Adam to take dominion over the Earth, but for Adam and Eve to take dominion over the Earth, and so there's a sense of partnership. And then the curse that came on Adam and Eve, particularly on Eve, the curse involved them struggling for domination and it's God's desire to return us to the Eden relationship where we are working in a mutually respecting route, mutually supportive capacity, where there's no one person dominating the other.

I think historically it has been difficult for women. Contraceptive has only been around for a little while, and before then you had women having multiple child births, and not only that, but for most of human history those child births would not always result in a life and many times the women themselves would die.

If you're in a position of leadership, then you might have to do what Elizabeth I did, which is make a decision never to have children, just in order to ensure that you're not going to risk your position.

But also you have men who are jealous or who just want the power. I think there's a research that shows that women generally are more agreeable than men, as a general rule, and so they can generally find running up against men who are super disagreeable, super choleric can be a threat to someone who's not as strong as that guy.

There's a few historical reasons as well. On top of that you have some poor hermeneutics around the certain scriptures in the New Testament that seem to say women shouldn't do the very thing that Deborah was doing in the Old Testament which was speaking and leading.

John Finkelde: I have read your book and it covers a lot of historical stories around the challenge that women have faced, which I think is really helpful actually for men to read because I think men do play a significant role here in, like you said, men can be more power hungry and can be insecure about releasing their wives or women in the church. So I think the work you've done on the historical nature of these things and cultural nature of these things has been really helpful, and also that hermeneutical.

What would you say to someone who says, hey, Paul's words in 1 Timothy 2 about women are not allowed to have authority and women teaching, not allowed to be taught, to be teachers. What would you say to someone who says, "Hang on, Paul. There's 1 Timothy 2 surely forbids women having pastoral authority." What would you say to someone?

Paul Marshall: Okay, well, yeah, we can look at that. 1 Timothy 2:11 and 12 talks about women should learn in silence and full submission, and that Paul says, "I do not let women teach me. I have authority over them." It's interesting that that's been written to Timothy in Ephesus which back just in Acts 18:24 Paul's story is there about Apollos getting taught by Priscilla and Aquila in her own home. So here you

have an instant contradiction in the very same town where Paul says he doesn't allow women to teach, you've got Priscilla teaching.

John Finkelde: That's very good.

Paul Marshall: So you've got to get the context and weigh up scripture with scripture to get the answers. But also, first of all, it says women should learn quietly and submissively, and I think that's a general rule for any learner. He's not talking to women teachers here. He's talking to women learners. And learners should learn quietly.

The fact that Ephesus was a town with the statue of Diana in the middle and it's this big female cult city, it's possible I think Paul in establishing the boundaries of behaviour in a new church to say, "Look, this may be the way women have behaved up until now, but you're not going to do that in here. You're not going to come round and just start speaking up." We see that also in Corinthians.

But I think the word silence also is better translated as in a quiet way. In fact, the same word, the same concept of not being a meddling sort of person is directly addressed by Paul later in 1st Timothy chapter 5:18. He says, "Stop being gossips and meddlers," and I've got a feeling that some of the women who are getting saved in Ephesus were gossips and meddlers and Paul saying, "Okay, well, you've got to come in here, you're going to listen quietly, and you're not going to be meddling."

But also, it's interesting that the words that are translated do not let women teach men are the very same words used in 1 Peter 3:16 to talk about wives submit to your husbands. I think that that scripture could just as well be interpreted or translated as, women, I don't want you to be teaching your husbands or having authority over them. In fact, that word authority has a real sense of domination about it.

I just think the whole section there is about in the context of that chapter is all about the way that wives and husbands are relating to each other, and I think Paul's saying, "Look, I don't want you to be speaking, I don't want you to be teaching your husbands in a domineering, usurping style."

There's other parts in my book where I talk about historically how the church really grew on the shoulders of women who got saved and then brought their husbands along to church. They've got a lot of evidence that there were many more women in the early church than there were men. Who's this poor guy being dragged off to church and his wife is bossing him around?

I think Paul's saying, "Hang on a second. That's not the way we do things here. Let's do this in order and in a good spirit. Just because I let women speak like Priscilla, doesn't mean that you're going to do it in a domineering way."

So that would be my response to that scripture.

John Finkelde: I love your thinking because it really is encouraging people to think broader than the words that are in black and white in a couple of verses. Let's think of the entire context of Timothy

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being in Ephesus, not enough people if you think about Ephesus. And I have to say, I don't think I've ever connected Priscilla teaching Apollos in Ephesus with 1 Timothy 2. That has never struck me. That's a great thought. I'm going to use that. That'll travel Paul - thank you for that one!

I love that thought that here's Paul contradicting what the practice was, so what on earth is going on? Something else is going on there I think.

Paul Marshall: Yeah, that's right.

John Finkelde: When pastors roll out 1 Timothy 2, I point them to 1 Timothy 5 and say, "Do you know, Paul instructs you to have a widow's roll. Could I have a look at your widow's roll please?" And of course no one keeps a widow's roll in their church. They pretend they have one, but they don't have one. And I say, "Why are you ignoring 1 Timothy 5 and paying so much attention to 1 Timothy 2? What about obeying the whole bible?" So it gets contingent about what's context, what's the background behind the passage. I love that in your book that you've gone into the 1 Timothy 2.

You've also jumped into 1 Corinthians about women being silent. Can you give us a bit of a short thought about what do you do with that 1 Corinthians 14 passage about women being silent? Where do you land on that one because I know there's a few different interpretations on that?

Paul Marshall: Yeah, well again, you look to 1 Corinthians 11:5 just a few chapter earlier and Paul is saying that, "This is how I want women to pray and prophesy in public with their head covered." On the one hand he's saying, I expect women to be praying and prophesying in public, and prophesying includes that concept of teaching and preaching. And yet here we have a few chapters later, he's saying that he wants them to be silent, not to speak and be submissive.

Again, the context there is that Paul is wanting orderly services. The word speak there is probably better translated as interrupting or chattering. It's a beautiful thing to imagine a brand new church with all these people getting saved and they don't know anything about how you run a church.

One of these issues that Paul had to deal with in the Corinthian church are bizarre with the sexual issues and so on. In here he's saying, "I don't want you to be interrupting and chattering during the service. If you have any questions, you've got to go and ask your husband at home." The context clearly suggests that they're probably calling out questions and interrupting the preacher. And Paul's saying, "That is not how we're going to do it ladies. Let's have some order here."

John Finkelde: Yeah, I think the thing I love about 1 Corinthians 14 when you study it, and people just skip across the surface way too much on scripture. When you study 1 Corinthians 14 and read really good scholars, there's at least four different interpretations about that, what was Paul's meaning. Was it the one you've mentioned, which I think is really viable and genuine way of looking at it?

Gordon Fee probably one of the greatest Pentecostal scholars on the planet believes that those two verses there were actually inserted by an editor. He doesn't believe Paul wrote them.

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So when you've got a guy like Gordon Fee saying that, and whenever I've got a group of people I've been teaching 1 Corinthians 14, I get them to read the scripture out loud. Invariably I have a fascinating experience. Whenever they hit those two verses about women being silent, invariably people laugh in the group, invariably. It is like its people hitting a road bump and going, "What's that there for? That doesn't make sense." So I kind of sit with Gordon Fee. I wonder if they're actually inserted verses there.

Now that's a bit controversial, but the point I've been making and doing as what you're doing Paul, is look, there's more than one angle on this on 1 Timothy 2, 1 Corinthians 14, and like you say, you go back a few chapters and Paul's saying prophesy, pray out loud women. So what else is going on here rather than just I think very naïve simplistic shoddy way of handling the scriptures of just kind of cherry picking these ones out and keeping women silent? But I love the way you've delved into this in your book. It's really healthy, really good.

Paul Marshall: And thank you for that about Gordon Fee. I might have to look at doing that in my second edition.

John Finkelde: Well, it's an interesting that a man like Gordon Fee would say that. That made me sit up and take notice with his scholarly expertise, but anyway.

On the practical side, what's the most challenging aspect of working for your wife because you've been on staff there since 2015 working with Mel as the Associate Executive Pastor. She's been the Lead Senior Pastor. What's been challenging or the most challenging aspect of working for your wife?

Paul Marshall: Well, Melanie is a great leader by the way, and she's very consulted. She wants my input on just about every significant decision, certainly really major vision. We work together on selecting the preaching series for the year and that sort of thing. I don't have any problem with her making a final choice if it comes down to that, but generally we're both in agreement.

I mean, I think one of the best things about our working situation is that it's built on a great marriage, that we don't operate at home as if I make all the decisions and Melanie just complies and-

John Finkelde: What? Oh, you're shocking me now. Seriously. I thought you'd be the guy going, "This is the way it is. Don't even talk." I'm kidding folks. I'm kidding. I must say I've been in Paul and Mel's house so I kind of know a little bit about how they work as a couple as well.

Paul Marshall: Yeah. I guess neither of us are threatened by the other person having an opinion and neither of us particularly worry about giving up a position if it's obviously a better one, a better option comes up.

All those challenging tensions come around the whole idea of bringing work home and bringing the office relationship in our marriage. So if we've had a disagreement about some issue at work, there might be emotional baggage that we bring home. And we have to talk about that sometimes or we have



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to forbid work conversations sometimes, and both of us have the right to veto any conversation like that.

I think that's where the only points of tension is about bringing baggage home John.

John Finkelde: *I imagine before you went on staff, I mean you were a principal in a Christian school, a position of a great responsibility and variety and challenge and rewarding. Before you went on staff, I imagine you sat down with Mel and had a bundle of conversations about how this is going to work or not work, and then hit the reality of, here we are. Let's work this out.*

Paul Marshall: Yeah. There are always going to be times where we disagree, but it's not anything else a crisis. It's worked well John. Your input back in the day as our consultant, I'd really recommend Grow a Healthy Church to anybody who's listening because you actually have directed us into having some conversations. There's some specific targeted deliberate strategic conversations that helped us to sort some things out that you just can go in, having some unspoken expectations, that it's best to speak about.

John Finkelde: *That's true Paul. If you were talking to a guy who's married to a woman with a pastoral call or a leadership gift, what three tips would you give them?*

Paul Marshall: Yeah, okay. Well, apart from buying my book, John.

John Finkelde: *Of course. Four tips. Number one, buy Thanks, Lappidoth by Paul Marshall. Get it on Amazon.*

Paul Marshall: That's right. I think you have to be convinced that this whole thing is of God, that starting with Deborah and Lappidoth and moving through to people like Priscilla and Aquila, that God was very happy to have people, have women in positions of authority because he gave the same Holy Spirit to sons and daughters. The list of gifts includes leadership and prophesying and teaching, and there was no male only sticker on some of those gifts. So number one, get convinced.

Number two, become your wife's greatest fan. As a husband, we should be doing that automatically, automatically feeding, encouraging, preserving, which is what the word husband actually means. There are times I've had to say to Melanie when she's been down, I've said, "No, you can do this. You're built for this. God's with you." You need to be able to really encourage.

Number three, you've got to find your own line.

John Finkelde: *Awesome.*

Paul Marshall: Find out what it is that God wants you to do and not be looking into her line and telling her how to do her job. It's between her and God to figure a lot of that out and trust that God's going to



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do that. But focus on God's given you to do which is just as important. Really every person's got a very important calling and we've got to make sure we're doing it.

John Finkelde: *Paul. That's great. Four tips. Here we go folks. If you're out there, you're a guy, you're married to a woman with a pastoral call, leadership, number one, buy Thanks, Lappidoth on Amazon by Paul Marshall. Grab that. That's number one. Number two, get convinced that this is right, that women in leadership like Deborah, Priscilla, and so on, and many others are part of it. Number three, really being encouraged to take the role of being a refreshing encourager to your wife in that. And number four has escaped my brain. What was number four?*

Paul Marshall: Find your own line.

John Finkelde: *That's it. Love it. Find your own place, your own line. I love that.*

Paul *this has been fantastic. I mean this is so helpful. I think it also helps pastors who have a heart to encourage women to leadership but sometimes struggle with some of the cultural, historical, and biblical aspects of it. I think this is really going to help many pastors and leaders get their heads together.*

I think what I want to finish with is what I finish every interview with in the Hub, is if you could invite four guests from any time in history, except Jesus, I always leave Jesus out of this because I don't want people to feel pressure, I have the pick the Lord, don't I? If you can invite any four guests from any time in history at a dinner party, who would they be?

Paul Marshall: Okay. Well, I think I'm most curious about the unusual people who were able to bring incredible healing into the world through the healing evangelists like Wigglesworth, like Kathryn Kuhlman, even John Alexander Dowie. Some of them like Dowie were dancing around the edge of being completely weird. But I'd be fascinated just to sit with them at the meal and just see what they're like. I mean are they fun? Are they friendly? I've got a feeling that they'd be quite severe compared to that. I'd still be curious to see what they are like. I'm sure that the conversation would just challenge me to transform my mind as part of listening to them. So that'd be my top three there.

John Finkelde: *Well, that's fascinating. Your healing revivalists type sort of guys with Wigglesworth. John Alexander Dowie, that would be very left field, but make the dinner time incredibly interesting. William Brandon would be an interesting guy to add into the mix, just to make it seriously a party you'd never forget. That's awesome. That's very left field Paul. Well done.*

I've had various responses to that. I think someone who mentioned out of Hitler has probably still got the prize of the most left field unusual person they would invite to the dinner party.

Paul Marshall: Wow.

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John Finkelde: Yeah, that was the feel when they came up with that one. But I think yours is again very intriguing of how it would stretch you and develop you. Well done too. Brilliant.

Paul Marshall: Yeah, thank you. Thank you John. Thank you very much.

John Finkelde: If I made it at the dinner party as well, I'd like to sit around that table to be honest. We can throw Adolf into the middle just for the occasional chat as well. That would make it interesting.

Hey Paul, been great to have you in the Hub. Folks, grab a hold of Thanks, Lappidoth. You'll find it on Amazon. Just search Paul Marshall on Amazon or search Thanks, Lappidoth. Paul Marshall might be a bit easier to search. But I'll put a link actually in this presentation, I'll put the link in the Hub directly to the book so you can grab it and encourage you to share that around.

Thanks Paul for joining us today.

Paul Marshall: Thanks so much John. Glad to speak to you as always.