

Rev. Lois Van Dyke, Interview, 2010

Are there younger women you have mentored who stand out to you?

Well, I've been one of her mentors, Tame Lambert, who is director of Women's Ministries now. And probably several of those in that age bracket because they've come up through King's Kids and such. Christie Powell, umm, I can't think right now, but there were a lot of them that came through that we worked with over about 6 and a half or seven years that I mentored, to a certain degree.

If you could say something to women just called to preach, what advice would you offer?

If they are single, I would say that you need to really seek the Lord, for one thing, and know that you are in the blessing he wants you to be, and that he's called you to do that. And then I think that you should very much prepare yourself and study and associate with people who have been there and learn from people who have already walked before you.

I've had so many women in my life, in the church, that I've looked up to. Even with the experiences I've had, with losing husbands, I've looked up to. Like Elizabeth Elliot. I read her books and so forth and she walked through so much difficulty and I think, if she can do it and be an instrument God can use, then I can do it. I think you should latch onto somebody who can be a role model for you.

And then if you are married, I think you should be submissive to your husband and work with him on doing what God called you to do. I don't think that God will call you to be something that interferes with what your husband is called to do.

Be united?

Yes, be united as a team.

Have you encountered prejudice because you are a woman in the pulpit?

Nothing except in our early pastorate, there might be someone who had a problem with it. But never anything that made me feel like I wanted to give up or do something about. Just something to overcome.

But in the general church, as a whole, no. I've always been real open in our church, in our denomination, for women ministers and for women being involved in ministry.

I was encouraged in the 2005 convention to see more women pulled into leadership. I'd like to see more women entering those roles. What do you think prevents women from doing that?

I think probably because women stand back. I don't think they get out and really let God use them. For me, it was always—I was never afraid to speak my mind—and if I didn't agree with something, I spoke my mind about it. I always had the permission of my husband to do that. He trusted me in that way. Even when I moved to Oklahoma City and was in general executive board meetings, I just always felt free to speak up. I think sometimes women don't feel free or are too timid to do that. Perhaps they are

afraid to see what someone has to say about it. But you can't please everybody. As long as you please your husband and God, it's okay.

You don't want to usurp authority over men, that is not the intent. The intent is to let our voice be heard. The intent is to be what God wants us to be. If you look, Jesus freed women to be in ministry. He freed women to do what God wants them to do. And in some churches, I hear women are not allowed to do so and so, and I think, well, that's against everything Jesus preached and talked about. So, I think that we are free because Jesus has freed us and releases us in capacities that he wants to use us in.

What do you hope to see for the future of this denomination?

Well, if I were to be in leadership today, probably I would want to see more done for the generation coming up. Especially in the area of ministry and study of the word and keeping up with everything that's going on in the world today and finding out what God says about that. And approaching those difficulties with God's word. And being able to stand firm no matter what happens. I think many times we are afraid. That it might not be politically correct to do or to say a certain thing. But what does God's word say about it? If we go out on a limb, we need to go out on a limb. We need to be taught to not compromise.

And now I have grandchildren through my second marriage and that is one thing I felt I needed to teach them, so stand for what you believe. To not back down, but to stand for it. Because you do see lots of young people today who are afraid. They know what they think, they know what they believe, but there's so much in the world that tries to put them down.

Our colleges might be bringing this about, I don't know. But that would be something I see in my grandchildren's lives.

We become tolerant. It's not that we dislike them or hate, but what does God's word say? It's not always popular to go the way that God tells us to go. I know the world has been through difficult situations, but today, with the political climate the way it is, it is difficult for young people to take a stand. Sometimes they don't see adults take a stand. They are modeling what they see.

Anything else to add?

I'm just thankful and I've never really had a problem in the church for how God has used me. I've been out of ministry since '89 since I married my second husband but none of his children or grandchildren were church-ed, they were all from broken homes, so I think that's been my ministry. I'm thankful for my heritage.