

Breaking Through the Stained Glass: Women Faith Leaders

Just Festival 2017

For generations, men have dominated and controlled positions of authority across the major world religions. In some places, religion is used as the basis for policy and laws that oppress and denigrate women. Your gender can implicitly influence the relationship you have with your faith and your religion. Perhaps one of the most visible indicators of religion's relationship with gender is the number of female leaders across all faiths. While some religions do allow women to become leaders, others explicitly prohibit them from taking on these roles; it is clear that religious leadership as a profession is dominated by men. On the 21st August, Just Festival will dig a little deeper into what it is like to be a female faith leader, as our panel discuss the theological implications and their own experiences of being women in religious communities.

Our panel, chaired by Sally Foster-Fulton of Christian Aid will bring perspectives from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences. Joining her will be Rabbi Dr. Barbara Borts, who became the first female Reform Rabbi to have her own congregation in the UK in 1984, saying that as a woman in her profession "she has always had to prove herself". Dr Khadijah Elshayyal from The Alwaleed Centre at The University of Edinburgh has focused her research on identity politics among UK Muslims and representation within Muslim communities. Our final panellist Morag Liebert, is the UK's only Roman Catholic Women Priest, after being ordained in 2008 in a private ceremony she was immediately excommunicated by the Vatican and has spent much of her life advocating for equality within the Catholic Church.

Each of our panellists will give their own thoughts on the importance of female religious leaders and how women's position in faith and religion has changed and will continue to change.

The conversation programme has been the backbone of Just Festival for many years, offering a relaxed, safe space in which experts, practitioners, community organisations, performers and the public can gather to discuss, debate and dissect the issues that face us as local and global communities. Join us this year as we explore what it means to go Against The Current, from religious leadership to mental health we ask what it will take to challenge the status quo and make the world a fairer and more united place.

Breaking through the Stained Glass takes place on the 21st August at 19:30 at The Quaker Meeting House and is one of ten conversations at Just Festival throughout August

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