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BONNIE ERBE: This week on *To the Contrary*, first, women breaking industry barriers. Then, can feminism sell? Behind the headlines: a foul-mouthed, tattooed Lutheran pastor says she's surprisingly traditional.

(Musical break.)

MS. ERBE: Hello. I'm Bonnie Erbe. Welcome to *To the Contrary*, a discussion of news and social trends from diverse perspectives. Up first, women at the top.

Some fascinating developments this week about women occupying more C-suits at major corporations. Mary Barra is poised to become CEO of General Motors next month. She will become the first woman to head an automaker.

The oldest insurance market in the world, Lloyd's of London, joins the exclusive group with the appointment of Inga Beale as its first female chief executive.

And, at the White House, it was the women, Yahoo CEO Marissa Mayer, and Facebook COO, Sheryl Sandberg, outshining the men this week as President Obama met with tech leaders to talk about NSA privacy and the health care website.

So, Congresswoman Norton, does this mean we're finally seeing women making strides as heads of major corporations, including in non-traditional industries?

DEL. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON (D-D.C.): Bonnie, this new leadership in what is surely the epitome of a man's world virtually redefines feminist breakthrough.

FRANCESCA CHAMBERS: Oh, I absolutely think, especially younger women who are moving up into the ranks in these industries, you're going to start seeing a lot more women in charge at companies like this. And I think it's fantastic.

MEGAN BEYER: It is great, but, you know, when we're 50 percent of the population and we're only 4 to 5 percent of women CEOs in the "Fortune 500," I don't think it's quite a windfall.

RINA SHAH: I'll agree. This is a fantastic story for the purpose of women advancing, but what about diversity at the top of these corporations, I think that's something that ought to be talked about at the same time.

MS. ERBE: Well, how much farther do we have to go – and I come to you because I know you're involved in this issue – in terms of getting more women to the top, how do we do it? But don't you think – I mean, to me, it's just amazing. GM, one of the emblematic corporations of America has a female CEO and a relatively young female CEO.

MS. BEYER: And this isn't their only woman in leadership. In fact, in Europe, the CEO for two of the major brands, Chevrolet and Cadillac, was also a woman in her '40s, who is a friend of mine. And, you know, you're seeing a lot of this in the old industries, in the auto industry.

What is troubling to me is that Reuters just did a study of the top 10 venture capital startups out of Silicon Valley. And six out of 10 of them have not one woman on their board. And this is in the wake of Twitter and Facebook getting so much negative pushback when they went to their IPO without it. One of those six is Pinterest. And Pinterest has 80 percent women users.

And this goes beyond judgment. This goes to, you know, what kind of naiveté do these business people have that they're not going to have somebody that looks like the people using their product?

MS. CHAMBERS: Well, another large problem with the two is if you look at the woman who advanced this year into these positions, they didn't always have the most positive stories coming out about them. It was hurrah-hurrah, woman at the top. It's, oh, Marissa Mayer, she's about to have a baby. Should we really put someone in charge who's about to have a baby? Jill Abramson at the "New York Times," it was, you know, oh, she's a little bit pushy. Maybe, you know, she's not the right person for that job, whereas if a man were in that job, absolutely, they would be like, look at her revitalizing the "New York Times." So, you know, that's part of my big problem this year is it's not just the number. It's the way that they're being treated.

DEL. NORTON: Well, but the numbers, particularly in these areas where women have had to start just as men started, with their degrees in science, that's what fascinates me. And it may say to girls and to women, what we've been trying to say for a long time when they see these women at the heads of these companies, that STEM – of course, the shorthand for science, technology, engineering and math – is where it's at.

I was very impressed with these women because they didn't – inside, where they come in, they had to have two kinds of talents: one substantive talent in their field has to be quite extraordinary, but don't they have to have leadership talent in a man's world? This is the kind of breakthrough we haven't seen before. I mean, it redefines everything. It's very different from, you know, being the first senator from your state. Trully, anybody with appeal can do that. It has to take a whole lot more than that to head one of these global corporations.

MS. BEYER: And every time it happens, it moves the ball down the field. And it's also made it a safe thing to talk about women in diverse leadership. Look at Christine Lagarde, when she first took over at the IMF, she never said a word about gender. I saw her at the World Economic Forum, and, you know, you'd see her out and about but she was not talking about gender until this year.

MS. ERBE: Yeah. In recent interviews, she's all about being the first female –

MS. BEYER: That's exactly right. And that just happened this year.

MS. ERBE: Why?

MS. BEYER: I think we're at a tipping point. I think all of these studies, Credit Suisse; we had another one out of the University of California this year, Bain Capital has done one – these are not feminist organizations – that have come to understand that diverse leadership renders more profit. And so you can come at it as a good business strategy. And you're rewarded by all kinds of stakeholders, investors, consumers, and we'll see – talk about this later with the Pantene ad. You know, people are wanting to align themselves with this more progressive approach to business that makes money for you.

MS. ERBE: How is it changing with your generation? I mean, is it just assumed that, you know, women are going to be the CEOs of one day?

MS. SHAH: It's signaling good things. And I think, yes, it's becoming more and more assumed that that is an office and that is a position I can take.

But one thing that's really troubling is that corporate boards are so stacked with people who don't look like us. And millennials (sp) are more and more given lower ranking jobs. They're not qualified enough.

MS. ERBE: What do you mean more and more given lower –

MS. SHAH: You're asking for – you're knocking on the door of the C-suite and you're told go somewhere else. And that's – take the second seat there. Don't be the head. And I think that's the problem is that these corporate boards need a change. This year, we learned that Twitter took action after being told, hey, you don't have a woman on your corporate board.

MS. ERBE: Right. How ridiculous is that?

MS. SHAH: So that's a problem for my generation is that we're still seeing stories like that emerge. So, on one hand, we're knocking on the door thinking we're allowed in, but, at the same time, we're being told to be taken out.

MS. BEYER: But this is what I love. I love the millennials because I think you are the women's movement's best friend.

MS. SHAH (?): We think everything is attainable.

MS. BEYER: You are special. Barney told you were special and you are special. I mean, you grew up thinking that you could do anything, because that's how the baby boomers raised you and I raised my girls.

And I do think that they are going to manifest what we've all been talking about for so long because they're not going to take it. And they have opportunities now that are outside the traditional corporate structure. And those corporations want these social media savvy millennials. And I think that will be a part of this environment that's creating an opening for women and diverse leadership.

MS. CHAMBERS: But it's certainly easier though when you have other people who look like you, who are out there encouraging you. You know, our company, we just got our first woman CEO, which was a big deal within our company and very exciting because she's been able to mentor a lot of the other women like myself and be able to tell us, look, this is how I got here. You can get here too. And it's been a fantastic opportunity to be able to learn from another woman.

MS. ERBE: All right. Let us know what you think. Please follow me on Twitter @BonnieErbe. From women climbing the corporate ladder to selling feminism.

A recent Pantene ad from the company's Philippines branch has sparked a great deal of controversy after unintentionally going viral via Sheryl Sandberg's own Facebook posting. The ad has generated nearly nine million views since being published on YouTube last month.

The video compares a working woman and a working man in identical settings but with opposite labels shown including "boss" versus "bossy," "persuasive" versus "pushy," "neat" versus "vain," and so on. The ad concludes with the statement, "Don't let labels hold you back. Be strong and shine."

Sandberg touts the ad as a must-see and as, quote, "one of the most powerful videos she's ever seen illustrating how when women and men do the same things, they're seen in completely different ways," end quote. Critics disagree saying the intended feminist message fails due to unrealistic representations of women and the assertion that beautiful hair helps resolve workplace inequality.

So Rina, is this ad sexist or feminist?

MS. SHAH: Feminist. Come on. Not sexist at all. I actually related to it. I found it quite appealing. Well, it's selling a product so I thought, when can I run out and grab that Pantene? No, but really, it's – it does depict something that's not false. It's true. Women are entering the workforce in professional companies. They're young professional women that exist all, everywhere around us. So it's not far off.

DEL. NORTON: It shows you that feminism has taken root in this generation. I mean, who would have thought of – I mean, these are the very same words that we used

when feminism arose in the 1960s but nobody would have put it in an ad. You put it in an ad because you know who you're appealing to and you know it appeals.

MS. ERBE: And will it sell? That's a big question.

DEL. NORTON: That I'll leave with the ad executives.

MS. BEYER: You know what? This is what I was talking about earlier, where what we see is companies have figured out that if they align themselves with the more enlightened view of how business should be done and what women's role is in business that it's actually going to help them. And I'm ready to buy some Pantene shampoo.

MS. ERBE: Show me examples. I mean, I can think of one, the Dove campaign, which is going on and on and on for four or five years, where they show real women in real – in their underwear, you know.

MS. BEYER: But remember all of the pink appliances that were sold now for the sake of cancer, yes.

MS. ERBE: But that's kind of silly, isn't it?

MS. BEYER: Well, I think it was rather trivial and superficial. This I think is pretty significant that, you know, Geena Davis has done a lot of research of gender in the media since – over the last 10, 15 years. And it's shown how the media has really undermined how women, girls, and our society in general sees women because, you know, women are sort of portrayed as eye candy, and she has all the statistics to back this up, and women are rarely showed in a working role, certainly very rarely in a powerful role and family programming.

So how great to have all these ad dollars going to bringing the message forth that, you know, we have been fed some very negative messages in the media and that we should be conscious of how we think because that's a result of this culture we're in.

MS. CHAMBERS: I certainly prefer this ad to pretty much any Victoria's Secret ad, which, by the way, never shows women the way that they look. And, also, those are very weird ads.

MS. BEYER: That's far more sexist. Yeah. Those are sexist.

MS. CHAMBERS: Most of the time – yeah. Those are a lot more what I would consider sexist ads that are supposed to be reaching out to women but yet I always look at their ads and say, is this ad for me? Well, why would I ever relate to this ad?

MS. ERBE: Well, but see, what I think about Victoria's Secret – and I don't have data – but it's clearly aimed at men. So is it – are the men going to Victoria's Secret and buying the underwear for their girlfriends and wives?

MS. CHAMBERS: But they expect women to go. They expect these women to want to go. But you know why? Because their man wants them to go and buy that, and that's what offends me about Victoria's Secret is, oh, I should want to go here because my man wants me to come here and buy this? That's offensive. I prefer to at least be – have an ad that's targeting me and the things that they at least think that I think are important.

MS. SHAH: And I submit to you that this showed equality if anything else. This showed women's equality, that she can hold her own next to this guy. Sure, it showed the terms that we're showing, one thing versus another but it shed a lot of light on that.

MS. BEYER: Yeah. It showed when the women were doing the exact same thing the men were doing, people were receiving it differently and it's no surprise Sheryl would have this on her website because this is the very reason women do not lean in.

MS. SHAH: Oh, I tweeted it right away.

MS. BEYER: So did I. And it is thought of as a negative. Women's success correlates with unlikeability; men's success correlates with likeability. It's been shown.

DEL. NORTON: I don't begrudge the hair part of it because no matter who she is, women care more about their hair than any other part of their body. And to the extent that they understand this, Pantene understands this and keeps going at it, I think they're onto something.

MS. ERBE: But do you – is the psychology here that, gosh, that's a great ad so next time I go to the drug store, food shopping, I'm going to buy Pantene? Does it translate? I don't know if it's either, wow, that's a great ad and you just keep buying the product you've always been buying.

MS. CHAMBERS: Well, full disclosure, I already use Pantene. That's how I get this lovely hair. (Laughter.) And so I was already buying it. But, yes. I think after I see ads – I mean, that's the purpose of advertising, right, is that they want you to see an ad and then want to go out and get that product, either because they – you think you're going to have better hair or because you support the ad campaign behind it. That's the purpose of advertising. So I absolutely think more women will probably think about buying Pantene now for this – for whatever reason.

MS. BEYER: I never bought Dove soap until they did that campaign.

DEL. NORTON: Well, I think Pantene is trying –

MS. ERBE: And then you did –

MS. BEYER: Yeah. I started buying. I'm going to buy their soap.

DEL. NORTON: I think Pantene is trying to reach a broader spectrum of women. I think they looked at, you know, who already buys, and they look at these women who have –

MS. ERBE: Right. New markets.

DEL. NORTON: Right, disposable income, professionals. That's who they want and that's who I think they're aiming at.

MS. SHAH: Let's not forget this was in the Philippines too. This was Pantene Philippines. And the woman in the ad is actually the picture of beauty for a Filipino woman. She's fair. She's got lovely hair. She's just really the epitome of beauty for them.

MS. BEYER: By the way, we are below the Philippines in the gender ranking of nations at the World Economic Forum. We're 23. They're beating us.

MS. ERBE: And by the way – so does this signal an end to the ads or has it already come where, you know, the car ads, for example, guy with a beautiful woman, it's almost like, buy the car and the woman comes with it, are we seeing an end to that?

MS. CHAMBERS: Unfortunately, I don't think so. It was just last week that the Victoria's Secret fashion show was on TV and that's all everyone could talk about even in the news cycle that day, which is really sad on a whole other level. But I don't think that it's going to be the end of that, but I certainly hope that we're at least moving in a better direction.

DEL. NORTON: Yeah, that the ads tend to be more sexist than feminist, but I think that ad executives will be looking at whether this takes and they'll be measuring the numbers. That's how we'll know.

MS. ERBE: Let's hope it takes. And I can't wait to see the U.S. version. Behind the headlines: a different kind of Lutheran pastor. A former standup comic, Nadia Bolz-Weber sports multiple tattoos and swears when she preaches. But she says her message comes straight from the Bible.

(Begin video segment.)

NADIA BOLZ-WEBER [Lutheran Pastor]: I swear like a truck driver. I have a different kind of history.

MS. ERBE: Nadia Bolz-Weber doesn't talk or look like a typical Lutheran pastor.

MS. BOLZ-WEBER: I have a tattoo of Mary Magdalena, the apostle to the apostles she is called. She was the first witness to the resurrection and she was the one who Jesus said to go and tell the others. This is Lazarus, raised from the dead being unbound from his grave clothes. And then I have the whole church here on this arm. I have sort of a creation motive here, Gabriel and Elizabeth and Zacharias. That's advent. There's the nativity for Christmas. That's the angel and the women at the empty tomb for Easter and Mary and the apostles with flames on their heads for Pentecost.

MS. ERBE: Bolz-Weber has always had a knack for captivating an audience. But the setting wasn't always a church. Before becoming a preacher, Bolz-Weber was a comedian.

MS. BOLZ-WEBER: I mean, I actually got paid, you know, to be cynical and caustic on stage and to sort of just blurt out my observations about myself and the world. And I still do that in preaching, you know, in a sense. Preaching and comedy have certain things in common.

They're having a heart attack back there going, please help her not swear.

I actually have no idea how people manage to become preachers without being standup comics first.

MS. ERBE: She made people laugh but she was not happy.

MS. BOLZ-WEBER: I had a drug and alcohol problem, and I was a very angry person, and I have an enormous capacity for destruction of myself and other people.

MS. ERBE: Bolz-Weber's life was changed, she says, by divine intervention.

MS. BOLZ-WEBER: I ended up getting sober and it didn't feel like I pulled myself up by my spiritual bootstraps. It was as though God reached down and picked me up, and I'm like kicking and screaming going, no, no. And God's like, that's adorable. And then he like puts me around this other path toward being of all things a Lutheran pastor. I mean, I just never would have chosen it, right? It was sort of thrust upon me.

MS. ERBE: Bolz-Weber left home and the church in her teens. She was brought up in what she calls a very sectarian fundamentalist Christian tradition where empowering women was not part of the program.

MS. BOLZ-WEBER: A lot of Christianity has been based in rule following in a sense. It's a behavior program almost, like if you can just follow these really particular rules, whether it's having a political belief or expressing your sexuality in a certain way or your gender in a certain way, holding certain social conventions, that's what Christianity has been boiled down to.

MS. ERBE: Bolz-Weber says the Lutheran Church trusts and understands her. And she says her message stays true to the core of Christianity.

MS. BOLZ-WEBER: There are ways in which our church and myself are just really traditional that I think people – are counterintuitive to some people. I think people are desperate for a place where the truth is just spoken out loud, the truth about ourselves and the world and God. We don't really sugarcoat things. There's this culture of truth telling.

This Lutheran liturgy and this Lutheran theology, the whole tradition, it is a feast. And it is a feast to be shared. And I'm here to tell you people are hungry.

(End video segment.)

MS. ERBE: So are people hungry for, you know, this different kind of religion, something new, change, or are they hungry for entertainment in church, which is really kind of what she's doing?

MS. CHAMBERS: Well, I think young people in general are more likely to listen to something if it's entertaining. But you don't have to necessarily go as far as she's going or you don't have to be the pope. I think that there's a happy medium, which is what you'll find in most youth groups in America these days.

I've talked a lot on this show about how I moved from the Catholic Church to a non-denominational Christian because their youth group was more fun. It works. It certainly works to a certain extent to get more young people interested if there's nachos and games and fun music, you know. And if that's what you've got to do to get young people listening to the word of God, then, you know, Hallelujah.

DEL. NORTON: Well, apparently, she's got (stray ?) Presbyterians and Lutherans and middle-class people who you would find, if at church at all, not at that kind of church. And that's what's really intriguing about her. I mean, she's made religion hip on these Protestants.

MS. ERBE: And what is it about Lutheranism that appeals to – that selected her?

DEL. NORTON: No, no. She was raised as a Lutheran. And so, you know, when she decided to embrace Christianity as a profession, she went to her own church. And Lutheran – Lutheranism, like much of Protestantism, is a liberal church, but it's not hip. And she is saying to all these Lutherans and Episcopalians and Presbyterians, we can be hip too. And so she's joining across the age lines. People want to hear her. It's as if for religion to regain itself – and remember, people continue to be spiritual. They continue to say they believe in God, but church attendance continues to go down.

MS. BEYER: And she came out of a church environment where after the age of 12, at her church, you became baptized at the age of 12 and you could no longer have a

woman teaching Bible class. And so it was very much a patriarchal, hyper-conservative church. And she very much rebelled and became – you know, got involved in drugs and alcohol. And her flock, at first, were broken people. I mean, that was the way she looked at – I was reading her book and she saw –

MS. ERBE: Which, by the way, to almost near the top of the “New York Times” bestseller list. So that says a lot.

MS. BEYER: Yeah. And the way – and to me, it almost looked like she was catering to people who sort of fell out of society. And, right now, you know, we’re going through this huge –

MS. ERBE: That’s just like the pope.

MS. BEYER: Yeah. And the pope too. I think with globalization, you’ve seen a lot of – the social contract has not been able to hold. The center has not held. And, in America, you see this widening gap between the rich and poor, but you also see it all over the world in developed societies. Now, globalization has been great for emerging economies. A lot of people have been brought out of poverty, but in places like America, where you have a lot of people who have – feel really kind of lost, and I think her message was aimed at them, as is the pope’s. And it’s not very different from what the nuns taught me in the ’60s, and it was all about forgiveness, and love, and compassion and not the rigid fundamentalism that I think we saw later.

MS. ERBE: But do you think – you say, Eleanor, fewer people are going to church. I certainly know more people – I’ve seen data by a particular group that specializes in polling religious – or Americans about their religious beliefs, that says that, you know, fewer people identify as a particular – some sect of Christianity or any other religion than in recent years. But is this kind of thing going to turn it around?

DEL. NORTON: No. I think this is – she can call herself a Lutheran all she wants to, but, in fact, she’s just like those non-denominational churches. And I think she’s joined Protestants and perhaps even Catholics from across the board.

But I must say, I think that while she may be starting something with how hip she is, I don’t think she’s the wave of the future with her tattoos and the rest.

MS. ERBE: Why not?

DEL. NORTON: Because I think she is really far out. And if you notice her congregation – I mean, what’s gotten her is her book. Her book is an almost bestseller. It’s not that she has a congregation of 1,000 or 2,000 the way you see on television.

MS. ERBE: Well, she had – when I interviewed her, she had 600 I think she mentioned.

DEL. NORTON: Oh, she says she's growing, and I find it really interesting how she's growing. She's not just growing with who you might expect to come to church. And that's what's interesting to me. So I think there's a kind of hip phenomenon here that, you know, you're not – you know, this is not your grandfather's church.

MS. SHAH: Congresswoman, I'd have to politely disagree. I think that is the future. I think that this is going to attract people who have questioned their religion and how rigid religion has been no matter what you are, Christian or otherwise. I think she is compelling. Her story, her testament of her faith is also compelling. So she's unconventional. It sells.

MS. ERBE: All right. That's it for this edition of *To the Contrary*. Please follow me on Twitter @BonnieErbe and #tothecontrary. And visit our website, [pbs.org/tothecontrary](http://pbs.org/tothecontrary), where the discussion continues. And whether you agree or think to the contrary, please join us next time.

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