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# Odds & Ends

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## Welcome to Owen Strachan as New Executive Director of CBMW

In January of 2013, Owen Strachan was named executive director of CBMW. Strachan is a theology professor at Boyce College of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has been deeply invested in the cause of biblical manhood and womanhood over the years and is already providing visionary leadership for the organization. After his appointment, Strachan released a statement on [cbmw.org](http://cbmw.org), and here is an excerpt of what he said:

We will undertake this work with charity, good cheer, and optimism. Even as we debate issues with fellow evangelicals, we intend to exemplify a godly and gracious spirit. We have no reason for defensiveness, after all; we believe God's Word is perspicacious, and we are grateful for that. I am personally friends with a number of believers who differ with me on the issues at hand. This is good for me, and I hope for them; I want to persist and indeed to grow in such friendship. I once heard D. A. Carson say that he was merely, in view of God's grandeur, an "unprofitable servant." That stuck with me, as with so many things Carson said and did. That's all I am: an unprofitable servant. That's all any of us are. But I am asking a great God to work through CBMW, an organization he has used to tremendous effect in the past, because if we are to know health, God is the one who must give it.

– Denny Burk

## When It Costs To Be Complementarian

*World* magazine reported last November about Daniel Harman, the leader of the University of Louisville chapter of Cru (formerly known as Campus Crusade). Cru relieved Harman of his duties because of his complementarian approach to campus ministry. He has been with Cru for 11 years,

8 of which were on the mission field in Eastern Europe. Since 2009, he's been directing the ministry on the University of Louisville's campus. His complementarian views were no problem overseas, but they became more of an issue since he returned to America. It all came to a head recently when the leadership of Cru learned that he was not allowing female leaders to teach men in Cru weekly meetings. Thomas Kidd reports for *World*:

This fall, however, one of Louisville's female Cru staff members asked Harman for clarification about whether women could teach the Bible in mixed-gender Cru meetings, and Harman said they could not. The exchange came to the attention of regional Cru officials, who met with Harman and reiterated Cru's policy of "men and women leading together." They gave Harman three weeks to reconsider his position, and said that if he remained "dogmatic" about the issue, he could no longer serve as Missional Team Leader. Harman decided that he would not change the practice, and Cru demoted him.

As campus director at Louisville, Harman has permitted female staff to speak in front of mixed-gender audiences on a number of ministry-related topics, and to assume numerous leadership roles relative to both female and male students. But Harman contends that Scripture prohibits women teaching the Bible to adult men (including those of college age), based on passages such as 1 Timothy 2:11-12, in which Paul says, "Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet." [Thomas Kidd, "Campus ministry conflict" *World* magazine online (November 30 2012): [http://www.worldmag.com/2012/11/campus\\_ministry\\_conflict](http://www.worldmag.com/2012/11/campus_ministry_conflict)]

I commend Daniel for standing upon the truth of God's Word even at great personal cost. This conflict threatens not just his ministry but his livelihood. This is not the kind of disruption that a man with a young family needs. I'm sure it would have been easier simply to let it go and revise his personal beliefs in order to protect his position. He didn't do that, and I am grateful for the stand he has taken.

A Cru spokesman told *World* that this incident amounted to a disagreement over policy not over theology. That is nonsense. Cru's policy represents an egalitarian view of ministry roles, and that stance is irreducibly theological. Daniel was demoted because of theological conviction, not because of an arcane dispute about Cru's bureaucracy. Certainly Cru has the right to set their own policies. I hope their constituency knows that it excludes consistent complementarians.

From time to time, I will hear people argue that complementarianism only applies to the church and should not be applied to parachurch groups. This has never been a compelling argument to me. It is true that parachurch groups are not the church. They cannot baptize or administer the Lord's Supper. There is a worthwhile discussion to be had about the existence and role of parachurch organizations in relation to local churches. At the very least, I think everyone should agree that parachurch organizations should never adopt ministry practices which would undermine the teaching and discipline of actual churches. For that reason, the complementarian/egalitarian issue cannot be skirted by groups like Cru.

I'm grateful for the great work that Cru has done over the decades. I have had many friends who have been deeply involved in this ministry. But this latest story is a sad one. I hope they reconsider their views on this. Daniel Harman is a good man and a faithful brother. Cru could use more like him, not less.

– Denny Burk

### **Feminism and the 40th Anniversary of *Roe v. Wade***

January 22, 2013, marked the 40th anniversary

of the infamous *Roe v. Wade* decision that legalized abortion-on-demand in the United States. Since that time, 55 million children have been killed legally in America. A milestone like this one invites us to take a long, hard look at the culture of death to see the ugliness for what it is. Much of it is driven by feminist dogma. Feminism teaches that women must not be held back from equality with men by having to care for children. Thus feminism insists that women must be set free from the consequences of their own fertility. That is why abortion rights are sacrosanct to feminists. It is much more important for women to be free than to be encumbered by a pregnancy they do not want.

In a 2010 article for *The Times* of London, Antonia Senior argued this case in spades (Antonia Senior, "Yes, Abortion is Killing. But It's the Lesser Evil," *The Times* [June 30, 2010]: accessed online, <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/opinion/columnists/antoniasenior/article2579786.ece>). She contended for a woman's fundamental right to kill her unborn child in order to further the feminist cause. You almost have to read it to believe it, but it is what she wrote. You might think it a joke or a hoax, but it's not.

Here's her argument in a nutshell. As a pro-choice feminist, Senior says she had always believed that an unborn child was not a life but a *potential* life. That was her belief until she finally had her own child. After giving birth to her own little girl, her view of the personhood of the unborn changed. In her own words:

What seems increasingly clear to me is that, in the absence of an objective definition, a fetus is a life by any subjective measure. My daughter was formed at conception, and all the barely understood alchemy that turned the happy accident of that particular sperm meeting that particular egg into my darling, personality-packed toddler took place at that moment. She is so unmistakably herself, her own person—forged in my womb, not by my mothering.

Any other conclusion is a convenient lie that we on the pro-choice side of the debate tell ourselves to make us

feel better about the action of taking a life. That little seahorse shape floating in a willing womb is a growing miracle of life. In a resentful womb it is not a life, but a fetus—and thus killable.

Astonishingly, even though she concedes that an unborn baby is a human life, she says that killing a baby is sometimes the lesser of two evils. Feminism's commitment to reproductive freedom and "fertility control" is more important than an unborn baby's life. It would be more evil to surrender feminism than to kill a human life. In her own words: "The answer lies in choosing the lesser evil. The nearly 200,000 aborted babies in the UK each year are the lesser evil, no matter how you define life, or death, for that matter. If you are willing to die for a cause, you must be prepared to kill for it, too."

If you don't think that this is the logical consequence of third wave feminist ideology, then you don't understand feminism. Such feminists on both sides of the pond believe that a woman's "right to choose" is more important than another person's right to life. This is the logic of death, and it is in part what has led to the killing of 55 million unborn babies since 1973. "Consider it, take counsel and speak up!" (Judges 19:30)

— Denny Burk

### Tom Wright and Ordination in the Church of England

Late last year, Tom Wright wrote an op-ed for *The Times* of London commenting on the Anglican decision not to ordain women as bishops ("It's about the Bible, not fake ideas of progress," *The Times* [November 23, 2012]: accessed online at <http://www.thetimes.co.uk>). Wright's article is a response in large part to Prime Minister David Cameron's admonition to the church to "get with the program." Wright thinks Cameron oversteps his bounds in telling the church what it ought to do. Perhaps I'm not the only one who would note the irony of an Anglican church leader complaining about the state chiming-in on church matters. But that is not what I am mainly concerned about here.

At the end of the article, Wright tries to make a biblical case for egalitarianism in the appoint-

ment of bishops. There's nothing new here, and I'm not going to rehearse all the arguments for and against the issue. But one paragraph in particular is telling and really does serve to highlight the difference between egalitarians and complementarians in our approach to Scripture. Wright writes,

The other lie to nail is that people who "believe in the Bible" or who "take it literally" will oppose women's ordination. Rubbish. Yes, I Timothy ii is usually taken as refusing to allow women to teach men. But serious scholars disagree on the actual meaning, as the key Greek words occur nowhere else. That, in any case, is not where to start.

The verse that Wright alludes to is 1 Tim 2:12, "I do not allow a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet." This is the verse in which the issue of women serving as pastors is discussed more directly and explicitly than any other text in Scripture. And yet somehow Wright believes that this text is "not where to start" in trying to understand what the Bible says about these things. This is an incredible claim. It would be like saying that the Bill of Rights is *not where to start* in understanding human rights in American culture.

The triumph of egalitarianism in many sectors of the church and of biblical scholarship lies in this: It is now possible to declare the most relevant biblical texts to be the most irrelevant in settling the issue. Through a variety of subversive hermeneutical sleights of hand, egalitarians deftly set aside texts like 1 Tim 2:12 and 1 Cor 11:3. In effect, they have told us, "Nothing to see here, move along."

Well, in spite of Wright's protestations otherwise, there is something for Christians to see in 1 Tim 2:12. It really does teach that Paul only intends qualified males to be pastors. It bears directly on the question of ordination in the Church of England and every other church making a claim to be Christian, but I doubt that many readers of *The Times* of London know that. Unfortunately, Wright doesn't clarify the point but only obscures it.

— Denny Burk