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The Importance of Preaching the Negative as Well as the Positive

BY PHILLIP JENSEN

I had just met one of the wiser older saints of North American Christianity. We were walking together to an evening dinner party. Apropos of nothing he said to me, “Phillip, when men grow old, some of them go soft-headed and sentimental while others become cantankerous and irascible.”

It was a strange lesson to be given, but I understood what he meant about an hour later, when he seated me between two elderly preachers. In these two men I discovered a classic illustration of each type. I had been warned!

Over the next few days I listened to both these men preach, and sure enough, one was negative and the other positive. I saw in those few days a very common pattern of two different styles of preaching: an affirmative style that looks in the text for positive things to say about people and a negative style that always finds in the text things to criticize about others or the congregation.

Some people preach with great fervour sermons that are little more than reflections of their personality—emphasizing the positive or the negative in the text and in the congregation. These sermons have less to do with “speaking the words of God” than reflecting the personality of the preacher. Either he will place his personality upon the text or he will select only those texts that reflect his personality. However, faithful explication of the text in an ordered fashion will sometimes be negative and sometimes be positive, for both are to be found in the Bible irrespective of the preacher’s personality.



Phillip Jensen

Reasons for Affirmative Preaching

Leaving personality aside, the current choice for most preachers today is the affirmative over the negative. There are several reasons for this choice. First, society at large pushes the preacher in this direction. Educational models promote the effectiveness of the affirmative style

see Jensen on p. 10

Gay Spin City

HOMOSEXUAL PUBLIC RELATIONS MACHINES CREATING AN ILLUSION OF REALITY

BY TONY PAYNE

From Condemnation to Acceptance

By any standard, it has been an extraordinary transformation. Thirty years ago, homosexuality was the practice of a small and virtually unseen minority, a marginalized sub-culture viewed with suspicion and distaste by society at large. How quickly things have changed. Within the span of a generation, our society seems to have moved from suspicion and condemnation, through grudging tolerance, to open acceptance and promotion, and now it seems to have gone all the way to suspicion and condemnation of those who might speak ill of homosexuality.

Perhaps the most potent symbol of this transformation in Australia has been the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras. From its beginnings as a small, counter-cultural protest march in 1978, the event has become a juggernaut no longer even requiring its sexual adjectives. It is now known simply as ‘Mardi Gras’ and is touted as the largest and most important festival on Sydney’s calendar. It is broadcast at prime time on network television, with breathless commentary from popular personalities, and live crosses to cross-dressed roving

see Payne on p. 18

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From the Editors

MANY OF US WERE THRILLED this past September with the exploits of Marion Jones, Cathy Freeman and Michael Johnson on the track during the Olympics. With the eyes of the world turned toward Sydney, we decided to do a special Australian issue of *JBMW*.

In the last several years, we have established strong ties with many in that country who are standing for the truths of biblical manhood and womanhood. We offer in this issue a potpourri of Australian conviction on the topics of homosexuality, the men's movement, singleness, liberation and the importance of preaching the negative.

This is the last issue of *JBMW* that will be published by the editorial staff of the past few years. With the change of executive directors will come a change in the direction of the journal, but we will let

Randy Stinson and Bruce Ware explain that in the next issue.

The current staff is going in a number of new directions. Tim Bayly continues to serve as the full-time senior pastor of Church of the Good Shepherd in Bloomington, Indiana. Phil Henry has just begun a Presbyterian pastorate in Hanna City, Illinois, just outside Peoria. Andrew Dionne is completing requirements for his D.M. in music composition, ably helped by his omniscient wife, Sarah, who has also done a lot of behind-the-scenes work on the journal. David Wegener is raising support to join an international team of lecturers at the Theological College of Central Africa in Ndola, Zambia. It has been a privilege to serve you and we hope that it has helped the cause of God and truth in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

Newsbriefs

❑ "WHAT NEXT for our equal opportunities armed forces — obligatory wheelchair access in tanks and submarines?" So writes Mick Hume in the September 27th, 1999 edition of the *London Times*, reacting to the European Court of Human Rights' opinion that Great Britain's ban on homosexuals in the military is wrong. "I am against all discrimination by the State. But there is something perverse about the sentiment which has turned the ban on gays in the military into a major national issue. It seems to have less to do with fighting 'institutionalized homophobia' than with neutering masculinity." Hume continues, "While gay men walking through Manchester in their underwear during Mardi Gras are hailed as symbols of healthy cultural diversity, a charity pin-up calendar posed by Salford firemen is banned as 'too laddish'." In his final analysis, Hume makes this poignant observation of our day: "heterosexual men are toxic." The homosexual rights movement is not an honest quest for the fair treatment of a people group that is being persecuted for unavoidable personal attributes — this in itself a lie — but it is a battle against biblical masculinity, aiming to destroy that which God says is "very good" (Gen. 1:31).

❑ FROM *AFA NEWS* (10/18/99): "In Canada, political correctness is taking over the barnyard. Press reports say cows at a federal government research center in Ottawa can no longer be given names of women. Names like Bessie, Mabel and Elsie are out, but Bossy and Daisy are still okay. Apparently the "no female" name order was given after a woman visited the research center and was insulted to discover she shared her name with a cow."

❑ THE *LONDON SUNDAY TELEGRAPH* (May 15, 2000) reports that "more and more women in Britain are

becoming divorced from their husbands after embarking on lesbian affairs." Stated reasons for these lesbian relationships range from the idea that women understand women's needs better, to the fact that women tend to give up their men before their work. Greater societal acceptance of homosexuality is, no doubt, another factor. This is not a new phenomenon — Paul decries this abominable behavior in the first century: "their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural" (Rom. 1:26). Apparently, people have not changed. The natural man — 2,000 years later — still rejects God's perfect design for men and women that he might indulge in the "passing pleasures of sin" (Heb. 11:25).

❑ THE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH (A.M.E.) elected a female bishop on July 10, 2000, its first in the A.M.E.'s 213-year existence. As written in the *New York Times* (July 12, 2000), Ms. McKenzie, pastor of Payne Memorial A.M.E. Church in Baltimore, following her victory said, "I stand here tonight on the shoulders of the unordained women who serve without affirmation or appointment." Ms. McKenzie further proclaimed, "Finally, the stained-glass ceiling has been broken." Along with the position, Ms. McKenzie will benefit from a salary of more than \$100,000, paid housing and travel costs, and a car and driver. Laurie Goodstein, in the *New York Times*, notes that "candidates began campaigning as many as four years earlier, at the last general conference, and some spent the intervening years traveling around the country and preaching from different pulpits to make their faces familiar to the voting delegates. Some candidates were said to spend as much as \$40,000 a year in the quest for a bishop's seat."

New Research on the Family

FROM THE HOWARD CENTER FOR FAMILY, RELIGION, & SOCIETY

Tiger's Tale

The unexpected and often pernicious consequences of widespread contraception, welfare, and feminism are surveyed in the pages of *Society* in an interview with the noted anthropologist Lionel Tiger, author of such works as *The Decline of Males* and *The Pursuit of Pleasure*.

A principal consequence of contraception, Tiger suggests, is that men "have become less committed to the reproductive process, though not to sexual activity." He notes that upwards of one-third of marriages used to occur during a pregnancy, "because men clearly understood their responsibility." The pill, by largely removing men from the reproductive choice, made them "increasingly reluctant to 'do the right thing.'"

According to Tiger, the feckless fathers that are one consequence of contraception have sired a "new kinship system" that Tiger labels "bureaugamy": the union between woman, child, and their bureaucrat. Fathers are not seen as critical elements of the welfare family; their diminished importance contributes to the much-lamented "deadbeat dad" who enlivens the dreams of headline-hunting members of congress.

Tiger explains deadbeat dads by observing that "many men may resent the fact that even though they are publicly labeled as 'patriarchs', they are...expected to support families without the public approval [such a] 'family man' used to receive."

Tiger suggests that we abandon the folly that the sexes are identical or interchangeable: "The notion is silly that all differences between men and women are the result of television, magazines, Barbie dolls, GI Joe and stereotypes. Sex differences are seen in other primates, too, and they can't read and don't own remote controls."

Source: Lionel Tiger (an interview), "The Decline of Males," *Society*, 3 Volume 37, No. 2 [January/February 2000]: 6-9.

The Best Preparation for Divorce

Some progressive theorists have endorsed premarital cohabitation as a sensible way to prepare for marriage by testing for compatibility. But in a study recently published in the *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, sociologists at the University of California, Irvine, report that what cohabitation best prepares couples to do is not to make wedding vows but rather to break them.

Using data from national surveys, the researchers establish that "although cohabitators held less conventional gender and family values, cohabiting heterosexuals were only slightly less likely (94% versus 99%) to expect sexual exclusivity than married persons who had never lived together [outside of wedlock]. Once married, those who had lived together [before marriage] held expectations [of fidelity] that were not significantly different [98% versus 99%] from the expectations of other married people."

But while couples experimenting with cohabitation may resemble traditional couples in their desire for fidelity, they are far more likely to tumble short of this standard. "The odds of a recent infidelity," the researchers calculate, "were more than twice as high for cohabitators than for married persons ($p < 0.01$)." Since cohabitators' predilection to betray their partners stands out even in statistical models that control for differences in personal values, the researchers reason that "cohabitators' " lower investments in their unions, not their less conventional values, accounted for their greater risk of infidelity."

Many cohabitators, of course, do eventually marry. However, belated wedlock does not end the relatively common betrayals among such couples. The researchers' data reveal that even after taking into account the nontraditional values generally linked to cohabitation, "living together before marriage raised the net odds of marital infidelity by 39% ($p < 0.05$)."

Source: Judith Treas and Deirdre Giesen, "Sexual Infidelity Among Married and Cohabiting Americans," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 62[2000]: 48-60.

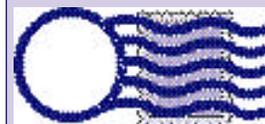
Superior With Spouses

Married mothers believe that women in their social circumstances make better parents than do single women. What is more, single mothers agree. The way marital status affects social perception of parents recently attracted the attention of psychologists Mark Bennett and Lynne Jamieson of the University of Dundee in Scotland. In their survey of 200 students aged 17 to 47, the researchers found that compared to divorced or never-married parents, married parents (particularly married mothers) were more likely to be "judged to possess traits of nurturance; similarly, married parents [especially married mothers] were seen as less likely to have negative traits." On the other hand, "never-married parents were seen as significantly more likely than any of the other groups to have poor family relations and parenting skills."

This study corroborates earlier research showing that "all mothers, regardless of their own status, perceived married mothers to be significantly more satisfied with motherhood than single mothers."

Source: Mark Bennett and Lynne Jamieson, "Perceptions of Parents as a Function of their Marital Status and Sex," *Infant and Child Development* 8 [1999]: 149-154, emphasis added. ■

New Research on the Family is a product of the Howard Center for Family, Religion, & Society, a non-profit, educational organization based in Rockford, Illinois. Visit them on the web at <www.profam.org> or call them at (800) 461-3113 for more information about their products and services.



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Please pray for us and for this work. Thank you for your continuing support.

The Holy Vocation of Singleness

THE SINGLE PERSON IN THE FAMILY OF GOD

BY JOHN CHAPMAN

Why Think about This Topic?

Everyone starts by being single. Some people remain single, and at least half of the married will end by being single again when their spouses die. This needs to be thought about and prepared for so that life is full and useful for the single person. How does a Christian think about and prepare for a full and useful life as a single person?

Temporary Dwellers

Before we begin, it is worth reminding ourselves that in this world we are temporary dwellers — aliens — and that our real citizenship is in heaven. In Philippians it is described like this: “But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables Him to bring everything under His control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body” (Phil. 3:20). A firm grasp of this truth will be helpful as we reflect on where our deepest affections should be.

When we settle down in this life as if this is all there is, as if we belong in this world, we will find all Kingdom decisions difficult to make. They may seem unfair and unreasonable. We may begin to think that, as Christians, we are deprived. Yet, in the light of heaven, nothing could be further away from the truth. We need to remind ourselves that now, in the world, the extension of the Kingdom of God and the spread of the Gospel are our highest priorities. When we take our place in the New Creation there will be time and opportunity to pursue everything that is good, which for the urgent sake of the Gospel as single people we set aside in this life.

The Bible Has a Positive Attitude to Singleness

I often was made to feel that being single was a drawback for a Christian. Yet, the Bible has a different attitude altogether. In answer to the question “Can a man divorce his wife for any reason at all?” Jesus says that he may do that only if adultery has been committed. The disciples are astonished by the answer and conclude that they had better be single and not marry at all if this is the case. To this Jesus replies “Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given. For some are eunuchs because they were born that way; others were made that way by men; and others have renounced marriage for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it” (Matthew 19:11–12).

Being single, then, is affirmed by the Lord Jesus as a holy vocation — as a gift — given by God, “for the sake of the Kingdom of heaven.” So, even though it is the norm for people to marry (Gen. 2:18), those who can accept the saying of the Lord Jesus should. Singleness is

a gift from God — as marriage is — yet neither is better; neither is inferior. God forbids one to be made superior to the other. Paul condemns men “who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods, which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth” (1 Tim. 4:3). It is clear from this passage that God will not allow man to proclaim marriage or singleness greater than the other, for this would be to forbid either institution on a certain level.

The Single Person and the Lord’s Affairs

The Corinthian church had written to the Apostle Paul asking questions about marriage. It is not clear what the exact question was, as Paul’s answer ranges widely over the topics of divorce, marriage and singleness. We know from Genesis 2 that God designed marriage for companionship and for having children — the propagation of a godly seed. Paul adds that in the Corinthian situation marriage was a guard against immorality and the strain of unfulfilled sexual desire (1 Cor. 7:1–2; 9).

For those who can, however, the Apostle advises singleness. He gives two reasons for this advice. He wants to spare them “trouble in this life” (v. 28). Second, he knows that in singleness they will be able to give themselves completely to the “Lord’s affairs” (v. 32–35).

Marriage, while a gift and a blessing, does bring difficulties. In Australia one in three marriages ends in divorce — I suspect that among Christians this is less. However, many Christian couples have children who don’t become Christians. These are just two trials that can make life very difficult for married people. Even in Australia, then, we see the benefits Paul is discussing. Staying single spares the person the troubles of married life. Singleness still allows us to give ourselves totally to the work of the Gospel. Not only that, but single people generally have more time and money with which they can devote themselves to Gospel ministry. They have a flexibility that is not always possible for married couples because of the consideration which must be given to spouse and family. Consequently, for reasons such as these, singles are expected to use their gifts and time in a way that married people cannot.

I think one of the most trying times in my life as a single man was between the age of twenty-five and thirty-five. Many of my Christian friends urged marriage on me. They had recently become married and wanted me to share the same wonderful experience they had. I understood this, but when they tried to make it a Christian responsibility and suggested that my ministry would be incomplete without marriage, I was irritated. This is not what the Bible teaches. Indeed we should be asking single people to consider if, as the

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JOHN CHAPMAN

Lord Jesus says, they can receive this saying, and whether, for the sake of the Gospel, they should stay single. I don't think I ever consciously made a decision to stay single. I was just too busy with ministry and so didn't get around to it. But that is part of Paul's point: singles can be busy with ministry. They are not distracted with the troubles of the world. Without me ever stopping to think about it, God has given me the gift of singleness.

I want to reiterate what I said before. A careful reading of 1 Corinthians 7 will show that God wants the best for us. For some that will be marriage and for others singleness; neither is better than the other. If you are single and you think you are hardly done by then, let me advise you to dwell on the advantages you have in flexibility and time for ministry — and be happy. You would be wise not to idealize marriage as if it were a perpetual state of bliss.

The Temptations of the Single Person

Since marriage is designed for companionship and for sexual expression, the particular temptations for a single person are usually loneliness and sexual fantasy. Active steps are needed to avoid falling in these areas. Rather than struggle alone, you are able to phone friends and speak with them or invite them to your home. Keep feeding your mind on what is wholesome. This is Paul's command: "Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely . . . let your mind dwell on these things" (Phil. 4:8). Those who are married should pray for single people in these areas of temptation. They may have a gift from God to stay single. That, however, does not immunize us from temptation; singles are sinful like everyone else. Singles need the Church, as do married people, to grow in their love for the Lord.

The Single Person and the People of God

Consider the story of the rich young ruler who asks the Lord Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus tells him to sell his goods and give them to the poor, that he might have riches in heaven. He leaves sadly after hearing that, because he is very wealthy. At the end of the story Peter says, "We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?" Jesus replies, "I tell you the truth, no one who has left home or brothers or sisters, or mother or father or children or fields for me and the Gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields — and with them, persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first" (Mark 10:29–31). There are great blessings for serving God as a single person.

Single people are not alone. They have the presence of God with them and they belong to the large family of the church. I have no children or grandchildren, but at church I have more "grandchildren" than I can relate

to. I visited a church in Northern Ireland where each Sunday school class had "grandparents" from the congregation. These grandparents had the children around for tea from time to time and prayed for them and their teacher. I noticed that several of these were single people. With examples like this of the family of God, no one — not even singles — needs fear loneliness.

Another point to remember is that it is possible for parents to so "worship" their biological family so as to neglect the family of God. This "cult of family" can be a subtle form of idolatry. Jesus addresses this kind of idolatry in Luke 14:26: "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple."

Some Advice to Marrieds

Let me make some final comments to married couples about some matters which have been helpful for me and some which have been less helpful as a single man. Perhaps these will help married couples minister to singles more effectively.

Several people have invited me to be with them when they celebrate their children's birthdays, or when they have been on a family outing — especially when the children were young. I can't always go but I like being asked. When describing the nature of your church please don't exclude me by saying, "This is a family-oriented church." You could as easily say, "We aim to cater to all ages of people here at this church." I'll feel as if I belong then. If you invite single people to dinner, don't feel you have to "match" them with someone else at dinner. It is possible to have odd numbers. Finally, please pray for and encourage single people to be faithfully serving Christ. ■

John Chapman is an Anglican Minister. In 1995 he retired as the Director of the Department of Evangelism for the Anglican Diocese of Sydney. He is a Canon of St. Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney.

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JOHN CHAPMAN

The Wildman Transformed

THE THIN VENEER OF MEN'S MINISTRY

BY RUSSELL POWELL

*We don't want
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RUSSELL POWELL

Christian history documents many instances of “Christianizing” secular events. Easter was originally a Pagan festival and is increasingly more and more like its heathen original than anything “Christian.” Likewise, Christmas, outlawed by the Puritans in a great display of prophetic insight, has long since reverted to a celebration of sheer materialism. When Christians ride on the coattails of any secular movement or event, we always run the risk of having that movement’s origins return to haunt us.

You can just imagine a spectator at Cardiff Arms Park in Wales describing the atmosphere before a Wales/England rugby football match: “...We held hands and sang our hearts out. Praising what God had made, thousands of happy faces — men of all backgrounds — united in one song ‘Bread of Heaven... feed me now and evermore....’ I felt a great sense of encouragement being with these men. I thought, despite the difficulties... we will prevail....”

It is somewhat disturbing to see how this proclamation sounds so much like a Promise Keepers rally might sound.

The men’s movement in society has sprung out of a series of social changes, and Christian work among men has also been given a strong push by those same developments. It is important that we think clearly about those changes and the origins of the secular movement, to make sure we are being faithful to God when we minister to men. We don’t want a christianizing of the Wildman — that primitive, tribal man some pagan men’s movements try to capture — we want lives changed by the power of God’s Spirit. We want to see the Wildman transformed into God’s man.

I am not just throwing stones from the sidelines. I have, and will retain, a deep involvement in ministry to Christian men. Our Lord commands it, and I have marveled at His work in the hearts of thousands of men. However, I want to offer words of warning and counsel. We need to build our ministry to men on the lasting Rock of Jesus Christ and God’s Word. We must resist being influenced by a transitory social phenomenon. The rugby quote above could be referring to a successful Christian men’s meeting. But after reading the source, it becomes apparent that it is a very different type of fellowship. How do we take hold of the opportunities to minister to men today, without being hijacked by the secular agenda of the men’s movement?

The Secular Men’s Movement

The men’s movement that has emerged in many countries since the Seventies has not been a single unified development. Rather, it consists of several divergent branches, each of which spring from a common origin: the changing role of women in society.

As women began to leave the home and enter the workforce, men found themselves increasingly challenged to define their own manhood.

Men were left without a sense of calling as the cultural supports of biblical manhood were removed (“Dad’s job is to provide”). Thrust into a world that no longer supported, but rather attacked, the identity of men, many turned to various secular “men’s movements” for help. Sensitive New-age stockbrokers, divorced construction workers, homosexuals, herbal healers and super-fit footballers are all members of this movement, each having a very different agenda.

The Wildman Strand

One of these groups, the “mythopoetic” strand (personified by the writer Robert Bly), has received a lot of publicity for its “Wildman” theories. Men beating drums in the backwoods on weekend retreats makes for good copy, and there has been media coverage in abundance. In fact, for many people, this *is* the men’s movement.

The Men’s Liberation Movement

Another group is the “Men’s Liberation” strand which stands in direct opposition to the Feminist movement. These are angry men, usually divorced or separated. Their activism can be seen in court battles for fathers to have the same child custody rights as mothers. The size of this strand is very large; some have estimated that 50 percent of those involved in the men’s movement in Australia are divorced or separated.

S.N.A.Gs

The members of the “Men’s Liberation” group are the direct opposite of the third strand, the sensitive New-age guys (S.N.A.Gs). This group is usually pro-feminist, pro-gay rights, and paradoxically, pro-fatherhood. It is precisely at the point of fatherhood where they believe many of their problems started. The group is filled with baby-boomers who grew up with remote fathers and now desire to be reconnected. These men rebelled as teenagers and want to experience a prodigal-like reunion with their fathers. A mid-life crisis, a yearning for their youth, and the hollowness of materialism all push these men to search for their identity in the men’s movement.

Looking Inward

Whether “mythopoetic,” “Men’s Liberationists,” or S.N.A.Gs, each group has this in common: they all seek to find masculinity outside of Christ. Despite their apparent differences, each of these groups look inward for the solution. This inward look promises healing of

estrangement from their fathers. This inward look holds out the hope of New-age “connectedness” with the “Wildman” past, or “getting in touch with one’s feminine side.”

Yet, the heart is deceitful above all things (Jer. 17:9). These men don’t realize that true masculinity can only be found in Christ. Looking inward they will not find what they are seeking. Not that there aren’t significant things to be gained for them in the men’s movement. Like all good post-war men, they are consumers, looking for what they can get. They often look longingly at women-to-women relationships; the men’s movement promises that same kind of intimacy. Men’s groups also give them a sense of belonging and support they can find nowhere else. They gain advice on handling the stresses and strains of modern life and being a good parent (the secular men’s movement would prefer this gender-neutral term) more readily and more reliably from these kind of meetings than from any bar stool. As well, these men have often rejected the stoic “real men don’t cry” attitude of their fathers’ generation, and have found that the cathartic release of emotion feels good. I’m sure beating a drum in a steamed-up tent sounds attractive compared with watching re-runs on television.

The Church, often caught in the compromising position of following culture, rather than leading it, has seen a parallel boom in men’s gatherings. These meetings are ostensibly “Christian.” But in reality, they are only the secular overlaid with a Christian veneer. The Promise Keepers and hundreds of other men-only ministries have flourished because the conditions are right: men are looking for something more. I don’t decry this. It is an opportunity Christians should seize. If secular society asks, “Is that all there is?” we should answer with a resounding “NO!” However, we must remember that our answers are radically different from those being given by the men’s movement gurus. We cannot overlay the secular men’s movement agenda with a Christian veneer. We have to build a Christian men’s movement from the ground up.

Christian Men’s Ministry

In essence, ministry is ministry, whatever group you are trying to reach. Christ must be proclaimed and God’s Word taught to all types of people. Though it can be done in many different ways, the basics are the same. However, I want to give three specific recommendations about ministry to men: it must emphasize male fellowship, it must have biblical integrity, and it must emphasize love towards our brothers and families. Though meeting in men-only gatherings is not the only way to minister to men, I contend that it is one of the best. In these settings, pastors can be more direct with their language, speaking specifically to men about where they really live and move and have their being. Men will be more open and responsive when their wives are not around. They can talk frankly about their failures, and recommit themselves to godly goals. This male-only fellowship is indispensable for a Christian men’s ministry.

On the down side, men are very good at intellectualizing matters and talking in the abstract, which is often an attempt to avoid dealing with the real issue. Men must be called upon to stop this and to deal with reality. Are we growing spiritually? Are we being good stewards of our time and our money? Are we loving our wives? Are we providing for our families? Are we spending large amounts of time with our children? Ephesians 5 sums up the main thrust of what needs to be emphasized constantly.

The exhortation on these topics must come from a solid doctrinal foundation, something that is not always present in some ministries to men. Emphasizing truth over emotion is distinctively manly. We do not promote a vague spirituality, but rather believe in the basic truths of the historic Christian faith as revealed in God’s Word. We need to call on men who have forsaken their first love to stop being lovers of self and lovers of money and begin again to love God, their families and their churches. And we need to call each other back to these basics again and again.

Conclusion

I once read a book in which a Christian psychologist dissected the conversion experience, and pointed out the common elements between a conversion to Christianity and becoming, say, a communist. He went through all the similar psychological elements: the honeymoon, the finding of people with common interests everywhere, and the overwhelming desire to talk about new-found belief systems. When I read it, I was very edgy. The author was describing my conversion experience, saying it would have been similar if I had been converted to Marxism. By the end of the book, I was forced to reexamine the object of my faith. Was it faith in my “experience,” in my conversion, or in all the little coincidences? Even granting that these are God-given, my faith does not rest in them, but in the God who is there and in His Son Jesus Christ. Likewise, just because men are meeting together and sharing doesn’t make it particularly *Christian*. Remember, you can get a similar type of experience in the bleachers at a football game. ■

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*Whether
“mythopoetic,”
Men’s Libera-
tionists, or
S.N.A.Gs, each
group has this
in common:
they all seek to
find masculinity
outside of
Christ.*

RUSSELL POWELL

Gift of Singleness? You're not Serious?

A LOOK AT PAUL'S CALL TO SINGLENES IN 1 CORINTHIANS 7

BY KIRSTEN BIRKETT AND LOIS HAGGER

[W]e are in a time when the urgency of the situation demands that singleness be seriously considered for the purpose of devoting one's life to Kingdom-work.

KIRSTEN BIRKETT/
LOIS HAGGER

The Idol of Relationships

1 Corinthians 7:40 says it is better to be single than married. What statement could be more outlandish in our culture? Most Christians probably react to this with confused acceptance. "Yes, I can see it's true in theory — and the apostle says it, so I believe it, but that's just not my gift."

Finding a partner is the essence, or at least the required sub-plot, of just about every sitcom, movie and popular novel. The majority of us grew up expecting to become a part of a couple. It is hard to get our minds around the idea that being single is better than being married, or even (more incredibly) that it is possible to be *happier* single, as 1 Corinthians 7:40 says. How could this be?

Indoctrinated as we are by our relationship and sex-worshipping culture, it can take us some time to understand the reasons behind Paul's thinking. We have to get over our culture shock first. Nevertheless, it is a very worthwhile exercise for us to face a portion of God's Word that may seem quite foreign to our mindset. It convicts us that what we believe may be wrong, and forces us to confront our own unwillingness to conform to Scripture.

Reasons to Stay Single

So why is it better to be single? The reasons are very straightforward. We live in a unique time of history, a time of crisis, as we see in verse 26: "I think then that this is good in view of the present distress, that it is good for a man to remain as he is."

This time of crisis is what should shape our decisions about whether or not to marry. The Christ has come; the Kingdom of God has begun. We are just waiting on the last knife-edge of time before the world ends. Why this short delay? So that more may come to repentance, according to 2 Peter 3:9. This is why Paul urges us to remain single now.

Verse 34 tells us that as singles we can be devoted to the Lord, which is a great blessing even if our sinful hearts don't realize it. It means we can have a mindset more like the Apostle Paul. It means time to be committed to and sharing in the work with the Lord and Creator of the universe. That is an amazing privilege.

While marriage is part of creation, and a good gift central to our humanity, we are in a time when the urgency of the situation demands that singleness be seriously considered for the purpose of devoting one's life to Kingdom-work. Marriage is good; but the Apostle Paul tells us that given the task we have, and the short time in which to do it, singleness is better.

There are many people yet to hear the Gospel, yet to be challenged about its meaning, yet to be talked to and made to think; it is good to deny ourselves even such a blessed thing as marriage in order to take up these tasks.

Overcoming Loneliness

Does this stir your heart to consider the godliness of singleness? Maybe it does in the moment you read it but selfish desires won't take long to assert themselves. We all have at the center of our being the fear of loneliness. We crave relationship; it drives our fantasies and thoughts even in times when society at large is not as obsessed with sex as it is at the moment. God created marriage because it was not good for the man to be alone — the only thing not good in his whole marvellous creation. Marriage is partly designed to answer loneliness, and for that reason it will always be attractive.

However, we need to say more about loneliness. For we no longer live in the garden; we live in a fallen world after the resurrection, which adds further elements to the issue. In our fallen state, marriage is in itself no guarantee of *not* being lonely. Many married people are lonely. Also, for Christians, loneliness is not a necessary product of singleness. In the family of God we need never be lonely. Jesus has given us family members beyond counting. Contentment is something which can and should be learned, either married or single, and it is a matter of knowing that your heart belongs to God. No earthly relationship will ever come close to that.

Misconceptions of Marriage

Practically speaking, only a short time of reflection shows that we should not be too romantic about marriage. Marriage does not solve your problems, particularly your emotional ones. It may remove some issues, but it will bring along its own complications — complications which make dedicated work for the Kingdom of God more difficult to do. Younger singles usually fail to appreciate the reality that being single means being free from a whole range of burdens and sorrows. The single person has no day-to-day worries about raising children or working out issues with a spouse. Married women face the possibility of death in childbearing. Childlessness, or the death of a child, can be so heartrending as to destroy the marriage itself. Anyone who has seen a friend go through this terrible pain starts to appreciate the blessing of being spared such a possibility. Parental worries never quite go away, either. Will your teenage children turn the wrong way? Will they get into danger? What if they reject Christianity? You cannot guarantee that your children will be saved.

It is also wrong to assume that the relationship itself will be permanent. Marriage is the closest of human relationships, and this very closeness means that anything that breaks the relationship is dreadful. The death of a husband or wife, divorce, or adultery: these are real possibilities that happen to people. Your own spouse, whom you think is a true Christian, committed to the Gospel, may gradually become liberal to the point at which you no longer share the same views. He or she may even give away Christianity entirely, and may leave the marriage. There are so many things that can break a relationship, and sinful human beings are only too likely to find them. The blessing of marriage comes with risks, and requires constant, prayerful effort — sometimes even that is not enough.

The Freedom of Singleness

In the face of the fallenness of the world and our call to do God's work in these critical times, we can begin to appreciate why being single, in the words of the Apostle Paul, might be better. Both the joys and the sorrows of marriage cause Christians to be concerned about the things of the world, not the things of the Lord (1 Cor. 7:32–33). Marriage ties Christians to this world instead of leaving them free to look to the next. Married people are called upon to live for the new creation just as much as single people — but they will find a great many more distractions that take their minds away from this goal. Paul describes them this way: “their interests are divided” (v. 34a).

We congratulate people when they get married, and so we should, for it's a marvellous blessing — but it's good also to remember Paul's down-to-earth attitude. Far from congratulating couples, he allows marriage as a concession, and urges people to avoid it if possible that they might be “free from concern” (v. 32) and have “undistracted devotion to the Lord” (v. 35).

There will, of course, be difficult times during singleness. It is hard to face grief alone, and grief will come, even to the single person. Parents, brothers and sisters will die. Accidents and illness will happen. Sometimes you just want a big hug and there's no one there to give it. Coming home to an empty house, making meals by yourself, and not having anyone to talk with can be overwhelming at times, pushing the single Christian to his utter limit.

However, on balance, the practical benefits of singleness far outweigh the practical problems; we just find it hard to see them. It is very distressing to see single people bitter, angry and torn up by their single state, for if they only opened their eyes they could find great advantages in being single. We need to recognise these things — not in a hedonistic and selfish way, but just to appreciate that singleness is a blessing in a complicated world.

Pragmatically, staying single means being able to accept invitations or go places without the restrictions of someone else's timetable. It means, probably, having

more money to spend as you wish. It gives more time for going out, pursuing hobbies, and catching up with friends.

Without viewing these as freedoms to aid us in our pursuit of pleasing the Lord (v. 32), they would be rather selfish reasons to stay single. There can also be very selfish reasons for getting married. Consider your true reasons for desiring marriage. Is it because you want to serve your spouse and give your life to his or her welfare? Or have you accepted society's decree that a life without sex is not worth living? Perhaps you are conscious of your lack of social status as a single and want a handy partner for all those social occasions? Examine your heart carefully and see if your desires are truly conformed to those of our heavenly Father.

Jesus has risen, and we are called upon to live for Him in a difficult and fallen world. This does not mean that we *must* be single, or *must* get married. It does mean that we must make our decisions carefully, based on what we know to be true, not on what we are deceived into believing. Any life will have trials, but let's be realistic; is being single really that much more difficult than being married? Our work is the same: to serve God, to glorify Him and make Him known to others. The great gift of singleness is being given so many more opportunities to carry out our common goal. ■

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*Consider your
true reasons
for desiring
marriage. Is it
because you
want to serve
your spouse
and give your
life to his or
her welfare?*

KIRSTEN BIRKETT/
LOIS HAGGER

Over time, however, people come to understand that the preacher who is always positive cannot be trusted with the truth.

PHILLIP JENSEN

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of teaching, as do most studies in advertising and public relations. Also, the relativism of today's postmodern thought is positive about all statements — all statements, that is, except negations! The ideology of a multicultural society requires positivity about alternative views and frowns upon any communication that threatens the fragile peace that has been established between communities.

Second, the current climate in religious circles favors affirmative preaching. Courses in pastoral counseling point to the advantages of non-judgmental, positive communication. Pastors have to perform. The key to evaluation is no longer God's judgment on the last day (1 Cor. 4:1-5) but the growth in congregational numbers, budget and buildings. Leaders in the church are tempted to be like modern politicians, leading by following the popular sentiments expressed in surveys and polls.

Third, the pastor's own congregation often pushes him to preach affirmatively. These churches do not choose ministers to change them, but rather those who will confirm them in their current beliefs and practices. There is a feedback system at work. The affirmative preacher is affirmed by the congregation into greater affirmation in his preaching, while the negative preacher is constantly negated out of preaching negatively. There are hardly any attempts these days to negate affirmative preaching or to affirm negative preaching. Our sinful desires to be well-thought of by people encourage us to think well of them and speak positively to them. The pressure on pastors to maintain what is already there — and therefore to preach positive sermons that unite all parties in the congregation — is massive. The sinful hearts of the preacher and the congregation seek pleasant, peaceful things that will confirm them in their sinfulness rather than remind them of judgement and challenge them to repent.

Advantages of Affirmative Preaching

Even though we face these pressures, there are advantages to affirmative preaching. The affirmative preacher rightly reflects the generous graciousness of our God and Savior and of the Gospel we preach. There is something ill-fitting to the Gospel of Grace to see a mean-spirited negative preacher denouncing everything and everybody.

Evangelistically, the affirmative preacher being more inclusive in his language, content and manner will be appreciated by a larger and wider audience. His width of appeal makes it easier for the congregation to invite all sorts and conditions of men to hear the message. When people come they are less likely to be offended by trivial, minor and irrelevant issues as the preacher will be more attuned to confirm them in their present position.

Pastorally, the more affirmative preacher will establish and develop relationships within the congregation that will enable him to minister privately to people. The non-confrontational, non-judgmental attitudes from the pulpit increase people's openness to talk about problems, issues and sinfulness, knowing that the preacher is sympathetic and supportive.

Disadvantages of Affirmative Preaching

Over time, however, people come to understand that the preacher who is always positive cannot be trusted with the truth. He may make you feel good, but he is not addressing the real issues of life. The public relations kind of saccharine preacher is first loved, believed and trusted, then questioned, doubted and finally despised.

The positive preacher finds it very difficult to change roles in private counseling to say anything negative. People who come to him will not expect to hear the truth, but to be confirmed in their opinions. Being negative about a topic when speaking to a congregation is considerably easier than being negative to a person about his behavior privately and face-to-face.

Affirmative preaching encourages ministers to be "men pleasers" (Galatians 1:10). I cannot recall publicly speaking against Roman Catholicism without being criticized — even though as a Protestant, I should be expected to be critical of Roman Catholicism. Yet whenever I make even a small positive mention of Rome, I am always commended by people.

Woe unto you, said Jesus, when all speak well of you and blessed are you when men revile you and say all manner of falsehood against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad for this is how they treated the prophets of old and because your reward in the kingdom of heaven will be great (cf. Matthew 5:11–12). These words are not necessary for those who are called to preach a popular message, but for those whose task is likely to lead to unpopularity.

Biblical Evaluation

The outcome of an action should not be ignored, but Christians ought to make decisions based on the rightness of the action, not on its outcome. The rightness of an action is revealed in the Scriptures.

Because God is the author of Scripture and the Creator of the world, we can expect the right actions, revealed in Scripture, to have the best outcome in God's world. Sometimes the outcomes will be long-term rather than immediate. Sometimes it is only in eternity that we will be able to see the outcomes or the value of the outcomes.

In preaching we are instructed by God to speak "the very words of God" (1 Peter 4:11). These words from God are sometimes negative and sometimes positive. The faithful preacher will deliver both in proportion. As it is the negative that currently needs reinstating in our culture, let us look at that side of the Bible's teaching.

First, we must note the biblical evidence for negative preaching. It was the false prophets in Jeremiah's day who preached "peace, peace" when there was no peace. Isaiah's task in preaching was to confirm people in the judgment that was coming upon them. Nathan was not affirming King David when he said, "You are the man!" It was Paul who had to contend with Peter and even Barnabas over the truth of the Gospel by opposing Peter to his face. It was our Lord Jesus himself who preached woes, warned people of coming division that he was bringing, and called upon people to hate even their closest family members. Remember, Jesus was the one who introduced the word *Gehenna* (i.e., "hell").

Second, we need to note that certain key concepts are by their very nature negative. The classic example is repentance, since it means the denunciation and renunciation of our present and former lives. It is to say *no* to yourself as well as taking up the cross and following Jesus. Paul described his settled evangelistic ministry in terms of declaring "to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus" (Acts 20:21).

Just as becoming a Christian requires this negative action of repentance, so growing and going on as a Christian requires negating ourselves. Being led by the Spirit of God requires all Christians to "put to death the misdeeds of the body" (Romans 8:13), as our dying with Christ also requires us to "put to death ... whatever belongs to our earthly nature" (Colossians 3:5). Mortification is negative, painful work, but one which will bring forth great joy.

Third, the preacher must preach in such a way as to negate the sinful, worldly, and self-determining patterns of fallen humanity. Not in the way of the world, but by divine power he must fight, demolish strongholds, and take every thought captive to Christ by demolishing arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God (cf. 2 Corinthians 10:4–5). The preacher must not just personally flee idolatry but also denounce it and warn others against it. The prophets of old used sarcastic mockery to ridicule idolatry. The overseer is not only to exhort in sound doctrine, but also to refute those who contradict (Titus 1:9).

The preacher is called upon to use the Word of God in the way it was intended, which includes negative preaching. Since God's word teaches, rebukes, corrects and trains in righteousness, so the preacher must teach, correct, rebuke and train in righteousness with great patience and care.

Fourth, there is the logical power of the negative found in the text of Scripture itself. So the more powerful part of the words of Jesus is not His claim that He is the way, the truth and the life, but that there is no other way to the Father except through Him. Or to say that somebody should be born again is not as strong as to say that no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.

Advantages of Preaching Negatively

The power and clarifying effect of the negative is why preachers today must also preach negatively. For some years we have run University missions under the title "Know Christ, Know Life." It is a useful pun for we are also able to preach on "No Christ, No Life."

Most people patiently patronize the positive expression (Know Christ, Know Life). They feel glad that knowing Christ has been such a positive experience for us that we feel now in touch with life itself. They have had the same experience through Buddha or transcendental experience or even golf. However, when we preach the negative they become angry, because we are confronting them with the claims of Christ. The negative proclaims more clearly that without Christ there is no life. Thus we make clear what we mean when we say that with Christ we know life.

In an age of postmodern relativism any assertion is believed, but the hardest ones to accept are negatives. When all views are equally valid, negative views push the relativism into the absurd — from which some people recoil.

But it is not just evangelistic preaching that needs to be negative. Christians need to be warned about the dire consequences of continuing in sin. Some evangelicals believe theoretically in sin, but are too naive and trusting about human nature in practice.

How does this responsibility to preach "the negative" affect our preaching on manhood and womanhood?

In today's cultural climate, it is important that preachers, especially pastors, have the courage to address the issue as it appears in the Scriptures. We must not avoid the potentially divisive passages like 1 Timothy 2 for the sake of holding the congregation together and causing no offence.

In particular, it is critical that preachers negate the feminist worldview as it collides with biblical truth. This must be done both in terms of the world outside the church and in terms of the inroads that feminism has made amongst Christian people. To only preach those aspects of the relationship between men and women where the world and the Bible agree is seriously to distort not only the Bible as a whole but also the very passages where there is agreement — because they come in the context of a Bible which is quite alien to feminism.

Negative preaching is not everything and is not to be encouraged as an expression of personality, but it does need a good deal of affirmation, in order that it might return to its rightful place amongst those who would speak the very words of God. ■

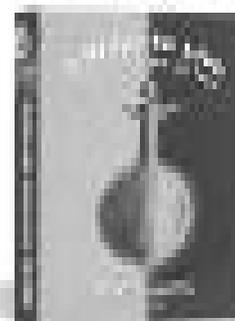
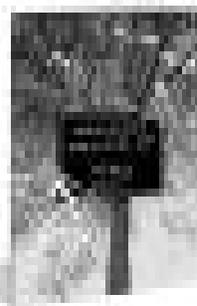
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“If the Son Shall Make You Free . . .”

JESUS AND THE LIBERATION OF MEN AND WOMEN

BY PETER G. BOLT

While the movement towards the liberation of women is well underway, many within the movement wish to press further. Though some seem to be fairly disillusioned about achieving much more, others continue to work aggressively toward a more complete liberation.¹

At the present time some feminists are urging the use of the blunt instrument of International Law against religious groups who promote any distinction between men and women. They consider that the “liberty and equality rights” of women should belong amongst the “human rights and fundamental freedoms” protected by the United Nations Charter of 1948. If such a move is successful, then those who hold to the biblical portrait of male-female relation — a view which I will call Biblical Relationalism — will be amongst those targets whose beliefs and practices will be declared illegal at the bar of International Law.

After discussing this move, I will attempt to show that this attack upon orthodox doctrine springs from feminist fundamentalism. Against the assumption that Biblical Relationalism is a slavery from which women need to be liberated, the article then shows how this pattern of relationships between men and women actually flows out of the great freedom that can be enjoyed in Christ and promotes the common good of society. Since the United Nations protects religious belief and practice, and encourages every person to pursue what is for the common good, it is a pity that feminist fundamentalists seek to use its political power against those who are explicitly protected by it.

No Exemptions for Churches

In February 2000, Hilary Charlesworth, professor and director of the Centre for International and Public Law at the Australian National University, an international lawyer with Roman Catholic roots, argued that International Law should be used as part of the strategy to prevent church practices which assume that men and women are different.

Due to previous successful lobbying, Australian churches enjoy exemption from certain aspects of the Sex Discrimination Act that protects, for example, the beliefs and practices of those churches which still only ordain suitable males. This exemption is problematic, according to Charlesworth.

As well as using all the normal means of political lobbying, Charlesworth thinks that Australian women should also “use available international remedies to argue against the exemptions.”² Under the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Australians can take a case to the

United Nations Human Rights Committee “if Australian laws can be shown to violate the guarantees set out in the Covenant. Here, the claim would be that the religious exemptions under the Sex Discrimination Act breach the guarantee of non-discrimination on the grounds of sex set out in the Covenant.”³

Courtney Howland (senior fellow, International Rule of Law Center and scholar-in-residence, The George Washington University Law School) similarly argues that religious fundamentalism, which she finds in Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism, is a particular threat to the “liberty and equality rights” of women. A state that allows a religious body to subordinate women or “that creates a zone of autonomy for religion to impose such religious laws upon women, is in violation of the Charter.”⁴

Against Feminist “Fundamentalism”

Jean Curthoys, until recently a lecturer in philosophy at Sydney University, has taken issue with her feminist colleagues over the nature of their argumentation. Although she was responding in the first instance to *Bodyjamming* (a collection of essays from those within Australian academic feminist circles in reaction to a book by Helen Garner, a prominent Australian author intrigued by gender relations), her criticisms apply more broadly to feminist argumentation such as found in Charlesworth and Howland.⁵

Curthoys maintains that feminist theory found in *Bodyjamming* “is not just poor theory, but . . . it is pseudo-theory, by which I mean that it violates the norms of reason. . . . This violation is effected by conceptual moves which transfer the burden of proof from evidence and argument onto the alleged political character of the theory but which conceal that transfer within a maze of confusions.”⁶

Since the book is filled with “unsubstantiated claims about what Garner purportedly maintained,” and makes almost no appeal to evidence or reason, the conclusion is clear. We should accept the conclusions of *Bodyjamming* because of the “special capacity for insight of the author and/or their standing as an established intellectual.” It is simply an appeal to authority which “settles theoretical questions on the basis of political loyalties.”⁷

Because politics thereby replaces reason, and becomes the “concealed criterion of truth,” argumentation suffers. Curthoys demonstrates this by reference to “the most popular theme in contemporary academic feminism,” namely, the patriarchal dualisms of Western thought. Here, confusion arises from three central

Continued on next page

[F]eminists are urging the use of the blunt instrument of International Law against religious groups who promote any distinction between men and women.

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Bolt continued from previous page

moves: (1) the assertion that Western thought is dominated by “dualisms”; (2) the assertion that dualisms are hierarchical and patriarchal; and (3) the conclusion that a radically new form of thought is required, namely, feminist theory.⁸

To establish the governing role of dualisms, attention is diverted from the content of the dualisms to the form. Lists of dualisms are simply presented in order to show their governing role. The dualisms are then declared to be patriarchal, an easy way to dispose of ideas without ever having to meet them.⁹ Curthoys shows that this second move relies upon confusion. The dilemma is that fault must be found with the binary form, which is absurd, for as a logical form it is simply and always neutral. The final result is that it is “feminist thought,” with its “sexing of language,” that provides the refuge against confusion. The three moves lead to “feminism itself as the arbiter of intellectual worth.”¹⁰

Thus, feminism has become authoritarian, a kind of fundamentalism. “The transformation of radical movements into authoritarian ones — their corruption, in short — is marked by the fact that they cease acting on the basis of morality and reason but rather set themselves up as the measure of the good and the true. At that point their intellectual and moral claims become fraudulent, a mere disguise for the attempt to exercise unjustifiable power.”¹¹ The danger at the moment is that this “unjustifiable” power is seeking to use the strength of the United Nations against any who does not hold to the agenda set by feminist theory. Feminist fundamentalism is now pitted against what it deems to be religious fundamentalism.

The “Fundamentalist” versus Feminist Fundamentalism

This present article by no means seeks to defend all “fundamentalisms” in all religions. Howland lumps enough groups together to enable her to portray “fundamentalism” as the fount of all kinds of evil, but too many to enable any insight into the real people concerned. However, since this article assumes a Biblical Relationalism that proposes that men and women are complementary, on this criterion alone it would place the author under Howland’s “fundamentalist” label.

Rather than seeking to expose all the fallacies present in the arguments of our international lawyers, this article seeks to answer what seems to be a fundamental attitude problem for both Howland (more stridently) and Charlesworth (more moderately). Both authors assume what seems to be an inescapable part of feminist thought, namely, that the pattern of male and female relationships found in Biblical Relationalism is a slavery from which women need to be liberated.

This would be a great surprise to the biblical writers. They would see that the “liberation” being

offered to women by today’s feminism is the slavery from which they need to be rescued. The New Testament presents its own pattern of relationships as part of a glorious new freedom that is found in Christ.

Pairs and Freedom

In New Testament times, people knew what it was to be a slave or to be a free person. Jesus drew upon the institution of slavery in His teaching (e.g. Matt. 10:24–25; 13:27), and He was in contact with slaves (Luke 7:8,10) and slave owners (Matt. 8:9; John 4:51). Although it is a matter of speculation as to whether Paul himself used slaves, his letters, like those of Peter, show that he was well acquainted with the institution and its abuses, and the famous case of Philemon reveals that on at least one occasion he was involved in a case of returning a runaway slave to his master. As the Gospel penetrated every level of society, slaves and free “sat together” as part of the same Christian congregation (1 Cor. 7:21–22; Col. 3:22–4:1; Eph. 6:5–9; 1 Tim. 6:1–2). Slavery was a part of the society at large, as well as part of the society of Christian churches. The use of the metaphor of freedom was therefore well anchored in these social realities.

The paired terms “slave and free” appear in the New Testament alongside other pairs or dualisms. There are different kinds of paired terms, however. Some are given to show how far-reaching something is — a “limiting pair.” By including two boundaries along a particular axis, these pairs can be used to show just how inclusive something is: “great and small,” “rich and poor,” “Jew and Greek,” “circumcised and uncircumcised,” or, to return to our topic, “slave and free” (cf. Gal. 3:28; 1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 6:8; Col. 3:11; Rev. 6:15; 13:16; 19:18).

But there are also “relational pairs.” The use of these terms implies some kind of complementary relationship exists between the two. Sometimes these can be symmetrical, such as “brothers,” “sisters,” and “fellow-workers.” But at other times, they are “asymmetrical,” that is, they cannot be reversed: “husband and wife,” “parent and child,” “mother-in-law and daughter,” “master and slave,” and “ruler and citizen.”¹²

Whereas the “limiting pairs” are used in the New Testament to show that all people have equal access to Christ (e.g., Gal. 3:28), these “relational pairs” provide how to live properly amongst other human beings — how to behave in their social relations. The feminist who rejects all “dualisms,” risks losing the New Testament’s wisdom on how she might properly relate to her fellow human beings.¹³

Freedom in Christ

Because God did not spare His Son, but gave Him up for us all, we can be assured of God’s love and His willingness to finish what He has started (Rom. 5:1–11; 8:28–39). The Cross is the source of true liberation.

Paul warns the Galatians about allowing anyone to enslave them again, for Christ died to set them free (Gal.

[T]he

“liberation”

being offered

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is the slavery

from which

they need to be

rescued.

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5:1). Jesus told the crowds that “the truth shall set you free” (John 8:32), and that the freedom brought by the Son of God was “truly freedom” (John 8:34). He explained that sin led humanity into being “homeless” in the world (cf. John 8:34–35). John’s Gospel shows that Jesus came to “liberate” from such slavery — to give us a permanent home (14:1–7), to bring eternal life (3:16), and to raise people up on the Last Day (6:40).

Paul repeats these same themes. We have been “freed from sin” (Rom. 6:18), and “enslaved to righteousness,” which is the exact opposite of the way it used to be (Rom. 6:20). And then, after a discussion of the negative effects of the law when it meets sinful people like ourselves (Romans 7), Paul declares that “the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death” (Rom. 8:2).

Christ’s victory on our behalf has given us a new lease on life. The Spirit of God lives within us, and our lives are transformed. Our rejection of God led to a messed-up world (Rom. 1:18–31). The Gospel brought liberation from “the futile ways of life inherited from your forefathers” (1 Peter 1:18; cf. 4:3–4), such as the fornication and idolatry mentioned in the apostolic decrees issued for the Gentiles (Acts 15:29). The new life of the Spirit leads to a lifestyle of freedom, for there is no law against the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22–23).

But freedom from sin means much more than this. Because His death conquered “him who had the power of death,” He has freed us from our slavery to the fear of death (Heb. 2:14–15). Jesus Christ has broken the stranglehold of sin. Our world is under the wrath of God, and the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). Because Jesus died and rose from the dead, we look to our ultimate liberation in God’s glorious future, but for now we begin to experience the freedom from that slavery to sin that has now been broken. Even now our life is transformed, as we put on the resurrection life (Rom. 6:12–14).

The Paradox

The paradox of Christian freedom is that it leads to “slavery.” Paul says, “Though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all” (1 Cor. 9:19). He placed this pattern before the Corinthians (1 Cor. 11:1), the Romans (“we have been freed from sin, and enslaved to God”; Rom. 6:22), and Galatians (“through love become slaves to one another”; Gal. 5:13). Peter, likewise, calls his readers to live as “slaves of God” (1 Peter 2:16). The paradoxical nature of these sayings is clear from the sense that the language of slavery is no longer strictly correct, for we are adopted as God’s children (Rom. 8:15; cf. John 8:35–36). Any talk of slavery is speaking “in human terms” (Rom. 6:19). The paradox goes back to Jesus Himself, who spoke of the first (i.e., in status) being the last (i.e., of least importance), and then used this paradox of Himself. He was the greatest, and yet He became “a slave of

all” (Mark 10:44), “to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45).

We have been freed to become slaves! But slavery was no longer a metaphor loaded with contempt, for Jesus Christ had transformed the metaphor when He died as a slave on behalf of humanity (Phil. 2:6–11). The Christian life can now be described as “slavery,” as long as it is understood along the lines of Jesus Christ.

The New Testament brings to light the many horrendous forms of slavery that exist in this world. It also points out that people can embrace a form of liberation that is really a deadly slavery (e.g., Gal. 5:1,2; Peter 2:19; cf. Phil. 3:18–19). But when the metaphor of “slavery” is applied to the Christian life, it is in a highly paradoxical way. For this “slavery” is freedom, and freedom indeed.

Freedom to Serve

Being set free by Christ from self-interest, we now serve others from genuine love (Gal. 5:13). Service of others focuses upon their need to be saved and molds us into being flexible for their sake (1 Cor. 9, esp. 19; 10:31–11:1). In this way, freedom leads to a service that can be described as being “a slave to all, that I might win the more” (1 Cor. 9:19).

This doctrine of self-subjugation is tempered by the notion of complementarity. The Spirit of God has gifted each person in some way, and this gifting is not for his own self-aggrandizement, but for the benefit of others. This is Paul’s theory of ministry — a servitude to the interests of others, and a stewardship that was at work in the Christian community (cf. 1 Cor. 1–4).

The risen Christ has equipped His Church for the work of service (Eph. 4:11–12). The various gifts are given to the Church — they belong to “us”, not to “me”. They are to be used, when needed, for the sake of the other person, to be exercised with enthusiasm, appropriately, and governed by love (1 Cor. 12; Rom. 12; 1 Peter 4:8–11). In our freedom we are equipped, so that we can have an impact on others, so that they too might share in that ultimate freedom at the Resurrection Day.

Freedom to Serve in Society

Although Jesus lived with all the constraints of a man in a particular society, He operated by a view of reality that relativized human political structures, and enabled Him to function with a certain freedom from them (cf. Luke 17:26; John 18:36). Paul enjoyed this same sense of being, free from obligation to others (e.g., 1 Cor. 9:1, 19). The Christian’s first loyalty is to the Kingdom of God, not to the earthly kingdom in which he belongs. He will be different from the world around him — in worldview, values, commitments, and behaviors. This causes the persecution of Christianity from time to time, for the State only tolerates civil religion well, rather than the alternative commitment necessary to Christianity.¹⁴ But it does not mean that

Continued on next page

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Christians will be bad citizens, for the duty to be a good citizen is another aspect of Christian freedom (1 Peter 2:16).

Because Christ is Lord of this world, the freedom to serve Christ extends into ordinary social life. We are to live as free people (1 Pet. 2:16), knowing that we have only one master. It is a fact of history — even if it is not an argument to retain the institution of slavery — that those first-century slaves in the New Testament churches had found a freedom that enabled them to transcend the social institution in which they lived. They were liberated by the knowledge that their ultimate master was in heaven and they could serve with their eyes on Him (Eph. 6:6–7; Col. 3:22–25; 1 Tim. 6:1–2; 1 Peter 2:18–25). No matter what your situation in life, Christ frees you to serve.

Freedom and Order

Service is rendered within our social relations. Our service is shaped, firstly, by who *we* are. If an elder, then there is an elder's role in the church (1 Pet. 5); if a new convert, there are certain responsibilities to avoid (1 Tim. 3:6); if further down the track, there are other problems to avoid (2 Tim. 1:6–7). It is also true that the structure of service is different for males and females in the New Testament (cf. 1 Tim. 2:12).

Our service is shaped, secondly, by our “slavery” to those we serve. Because everything we have has been given to us by God (1 Cor. 4:7), and all for the common good (1 Cor. 12:7), the relationships in which we live must necessarily shape our service. Love is to guide the use of what we have been given (Gal. 5:13; 1 Cor. 13), so that Christ's church might be strengthened (1 Cor. 12–14).

This means that our service must be rendered in the context of a proper orderliness: “all things should be done decently and in order” (1 Cor. 14:40). Our sinful hearts tell us that freedom must be from *all* restraints (cf. Gen. 3). The “freedom generation” that arose in the closing decades of the twentieth century gradually crossed all boundaries. The post-modern world is left with so many blurred edges that there seem to be no more boundaries to cross. As we enter the twenty-first century, our society provides much evidence of fragmentation and disorder — the glorification of chaos. But is freedom from everything that orders life true freedom?

The Bible tells us that God made the world an orderly place, not a chaos, so that it would be habitable (Isa. 45:18–19). Sin is the attempt to throw off God's order. This is portrayed for us in Genesis 3–11. Here boundaries are crossed, and, in particular, God's creation order is overturned between man and woman.¹⁵ But when Christ sets us free, we find that we are now free to live within God's order once again. Freedom does not imply disorderliness, spontaneity, haphazardness, or simply an *ad hoc* responsiveness to the ever-changing situation. Freedom from slavery to sin, means that we are now permitted to live in God's

way, according to plan, ordered by our Creator, living by His will. It is in this orderliness that we find true freedom.

So, for example, we find that even tongues and prophecy, the spiritual gifts that are regarded by many today as the most spontaneous of gifts, are to be exercised with due order: a limited number of speakers, speaking in turn, with interpretation, and judged by others (1 Cor. 14:26–33). As is well known, the same chapter also regulates the relations between women and men in the congregation. Women are to ask questions of their husbands at home, rather than in the congregational setting, while a prophecy is being judged. This illustrates both the ordering of the assembly, and the ordering between husband and wife.

A few comments on this ordering of the relations of husband and wife are in order. First, the dualism is neutral, describing a “relational pair,” which shows that we are created to be related. Second, this is an ordered relationship. If using the term “hierarchy” has too many negative connotations, then it can be described more neutrally as “asymmetric” (i.e., the man and woman are not reversible in the relationship). But if we don't use hierarchy then something is lost. When human life is considered relationally, and human beings are regarded as deeply interdependent, then a hierarchy allows a responsibility for care.¹⁶ Third, it must also be stressed that this ordered relationship is amongst people of equal value and status in the eyes of God, and one in which there is genuine complementarity (for we are all gifted for the common good). However, there is a definite order and asymmetrical responsibilities, for the male has the primary responsibility of care, and the woman is called upon to respond to that care through submission. Fourth, it is in this orderly life that we serve. The Gospel frees us to live according to the “order” that we find not only in age and station, but also in gender. Instructions can be found for proper relationships between the elder and the younger, parent and child, master and slave, ruler and citizen, and even the weak and the strong, as well as men and women.

Service occurs within these structures, as part of these relationships. Our freedom in Christ will one day issue in our ultimate freedom in the age to come. In the meantime, we have been freed to serve. This ordering of human relationships is for the common good of men, women, the Church, and society.

Conclusion

The United Nations Declaration provides for freedom of religious belief and practice (Articles 2, 18), and also the right and responsibility for all people to work towards the common good (in its entirety). Christianity is a voluntary movement, which people enter freely, even women, and so it is protected by the “right to freedom of peaceful assembly” (Article 20). As a missionary movement, Christians have always sought to persuade people in both public and private arenas to freely assemble with us. The freedom of speech and

opinion that allows this is also protected by the Declaration (Article 19). There have been times in history when, in the name of Christianity, power has been used to coerce people, but this is actually a lapse from the Christian way of gentle persuasion. Part of the task of Christianity in this day and age is to persuade the world about the biblical patterns of male and female relations. This bears upon our church practices (protected by Article 18), our family life (protected by Article 12), our patterns of marriage and family (protected by Article 16), and the special care and assistance afforded to mothers and children (Article 25), as well as society, since “the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society, and is entitled to protection by society and the State” (Article 16.3). Christians, like any other group in society, have the freedom, and in fact, the responsibility (Article 29.1) to work towards what they believe to be the common good, even using the appropriate channels of government (Article 21).

It is a great indictment on feminist fundamentalism that it loses faith in reason and persuasion, and resorts to political muscle against the Church. To attempt to use the UN Declaration against the freedoms of other persons is expressly against the Declaration itself (Article 30).

But there is an even greater tragedy here. If feminism manages to bring Biblical Relationalism before the bar of International Law, it will do so by tragically misperceiving the Lord’s ways as “chains and shackles,” when Biblical Relationalism is part of Christ’s glorious liberation for humanity. Christ is the way to true liberation for both women and men. “If the Son shall set you free, you shall be free indeed” (John 8:36). ■

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NOTES

1. Though I have used the singular “movement,” I am well aware of the great variety amongst feminists. See, Kirsten Birkett, “Man as Woman. Perspectives from Feminist Anthropology,” in *Who Am I? Perspectives on Christian Anthropology*, ed. R. J. Gibson, Explorations 14 (Adelaide, Australia: Openbook, forthcoming). I quote from the unpublished paper, with the author’s kind permission, parts of which will be included in her forthcoming book, *The Essence of Feminism* (Kingsford, NSW: Matthias Media).
2. H. Charlesworth, “Women and Change in the Australian Church in the New Millennium,” *Women-Church* 26 (2000), 14.
3. Charlesworth, “Women,” 14.
4. Courtney W. Howland, “The Challenge of Religious Fundamentalism to the Liberty and Equality Rights of Women: An Analysis under the United Nations Charter,” *Columbia Journal of Transnational Law* 35: 271 (1997), 274.
5. Jean Curtoys, “Do Men and Women Live in the Same World?,” *Quadrant* (April, 1998), 9–16.
6. Curtoys, “Men and Women,” 9.
7. Curtoys, “Men and Women,” 10–11.
8. Curtoys, “Men and Women,” 11.
9. Curtoys, “Men and Women,” 12–13.
10. Curtoys, “Men and Women,” 12–16.
11. Curtoys, “Men and Women,” 16.
12. I follow the suggestions made by Graham Cole, “Ordination of Women in Evangelical Anglican Perspective,” in *Personhood, Sexuality and Christian Ministry*, ed. B. G. Webb, Explorations 1 (Homebush West, NSW: Lancer, 1987), 77–78.
13. Once again, see the loss of womanhood and the loss of humanity identified by Kirsten Birkett, “Man as Woman.”
14. E. A. Judge, “The Beginning of Religious History,” *Journal of Religious History* 15.4 (1989), 395, 402.
15. J. T. Walsh, “Genesis 2:4b-3:24: A Synchronic Approach,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 96 (1977), 161–177.
16. Cf. “Created Male and Female: Sexuality, Personhood and the Image of God,” in *Personhood, Sexuality and Christian Ministry*, ed. B. G. Webb, Explorations 1 (Homebush West, NSW: Lancer, 1987), [43–56] 55.

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The public persona of homosexuality has received a complete makeover, which has largely taken place through the hard work and campaigning of gay activists.

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reporters. The presentation sometimes approaches the surreal, as the commentators introduce each float or group in the parade and say something nice about them: “And now we have the Fetishist Society, wearing their trademark black leather. They’re a small and very tight-knit group, the Fetishists, but they do a lot for the community, and it’s lovely to see them here tonight...” and so on.

According to prime time television, what was considered deviant thirty years ago is now a perfectly normal and healthy part of the community. How has our society changed to this extent in such a relatively short space of time? What has driven this remarkable transformation? In this short article, I want to consider that question from just one angle — the angle of spin.

The Public Persona of Homosexuality

In many respects, the victories of the gay lobby over the past thirty years have been PR victories. Homosexuality is not more prominent and “normal” today because of a massive increase in the number of homosexuals (the best most recent studies put the figure at between 1 and 2% for men, and less than 1% for women). Nor have there been any major scientific breakthroughs or discoveries that might account for the process of “normalization” that we have witnessed.

What has changed is the portrayal of homosexuality in public discourse — in newspapers, magazines, film, and the electronic media. The public persona of homosexuality has received a complete makeover, which has largely taken place through the hard work and campaigning of gay activists. They have succeeded in winning to their cause the opinion shapers and ideological gatekeepers of our community. It is hard to think of a metropolitan newspaper or major media outlet in Australia that is not positive towards the gay agenda, and some quite militantly so.

The ’70s

This PR triumph has had several landmarks. One of the first was the decision in 1973 by the American Psychiatric Association to declassify homosexuality as a treat-able disorder. It is now known that this decision was taken in large measure because of the behind-the-scenes activity and funding of the National Gay Task Force. The NGTF understood well that if the APA could be persuaded to remove homosexuality from its books, an important plank would be laid in the argument that being gay was perfectly normal and acceptable, like left-handedness. And so it proved to be.

It is worth noting, however, that in the 1970s and early 1980s, the focus of gay protest and PR was quite different from what we are used to seeing and hearing today. During the 1970s, the gay lobby was insistent that homosexuality was a choice, not a biological given. The key phrase in policy formation and anti-discrimination lobbying at this time was “sexual

preference,” not “sexual orientation.” In information kits, policy documents and public discussion, homosexuality was portrayed as an alternative lifestyle choice that could be experimented with and chosen. As prominent Australian gay activist of the period Dennis Altman so succinctly put it, “being gay is a choice.” Altman, and others in the movement, were alarmed at the prospect that if homosexuality were seen as having a biological or even psychological “cause,” then it could be bred out or cured. The activists of ’70s vehemently defended their right to choose their form of sexuality, and sought to persuade political parties and the media to support them in this right.

The ’80s

In the middle to late ’80s all this changed, and it is not unreasonable to suggest that the AIDS crisis was a significant factor. If homosexuality was a lifestyle choice, then AIDS represented a terrible curse on this choice, with wider health ramifications for society as a whole. The radical sexual choice of promiscuous homosexuality was no longer an exciting free-love product that could easily be sold. However, if gayness was not a choice but a biological inevitability, then AIDS could be cast as a further terrible cross for an already stigmatised minority to bear. The PR presentation of homosexuality became less the hip and radical lifestyle alternative, and more the biological flipside to normal heterosexuality. The cliché of the loving gay couple in a stable long-term relationship became a staple of gay publicity and a regular ingredient in popular films (e.g., *4 Weddings and a Funeral*).

The gay lobby’s own polling showed them that this was the way to go. Their PR research told them that if ordinary people could be convinced that homosexuality had an innate biological cause, then they would be more inclined to be tolerant of homosexuality. As Kirk and Madsen argued in *After the Ball: How America Will Conquer its Hatred of Gays* in the 1990s, the key to changing people’s attitudes was first to desensitize them to the “oddity” of homosexuality, to portray gays as normal people, “just like us.” The biological argument was important for this, because it placed gays in the category of a “normal” minority, like left-handers or redheads, rather than a subversive or radical minority, like skinheads or religious cult members.

The ’90s

The widely reported studies of the early ’90s, which purported to show some kind of biological or genetic “cause” for homosexuality, were thus a boon for the gay cause. It allowed them to run hard with the argument that being gay was simply the way some people were born, and that to deny or repress it was

pointless. Moreover, if “gayness” were simply part of the biological norm, then it could not be treated in any way as being harmful, dirty, sinful or deviant.

That these studies were stringently criticized by other scientists in their fields as being poor methodologically, and that the results failed to be repeated in subsequent experiments, never got in the way of a good media story. “Science discovers gay gene” was the headline.

Positive reporting and media coverage such as this has been critical to the gay lobby’s PR success. The Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras is a case in point. The dominant media have been complicit in the “mainstreaming” of Mardi Gras, not only by the publicity and coverage they have given it, but by their reporting, year after year, of extraordinarily inflated attendance figures. Despite the fact that it has been shown repeatedly that not more than 120,000 people (at maximum) could physically occupy the footpaths and buildings along the parade route, parade organizers annually claim that “more than 500,000” people come to witness the parade. One year, the figure was 700,000. These exaggerations are dutifully repeated by the media, and assume an aura of truth, thus further boosting the impression that homosexuality is normal, acceptable, and widely approved of.

Broader Public Still Suspicious

The interesting question to pose, in light of the gay PR victories, is how much the attitudes of the broader public have actually changed.

The strange thing is that accurate statistics regarding the ordinary Australian’s true opinions about homosexuality are very hard to come by. In researching this article, I scoured university libraries and databases with little success. The only vaguely recent research I could discover was an opinion poll from 1992. It asked two questions: “Do you believe all Australian states and territories should remove laws that make sex between consenting adults of the same sex illegal?” and “How accepting are you personally of people having homosexual relationships?”

The picture which emerged was that a fair proportion of Australians would like to see homosexuality decriminalized (45% said yes; 37% said no and 11% didn’t know). However, the proportion who were “very accepting” of homosexual relationships remained much smaller (only 12%; 39% were only “somewhat accepting” and 38% were “not at all accepting” of homosexual relationships).

What this poll suggests, and what anecdotal contact with ordinary Australians would confirm, is that many more people remain suspicious and intolerant of homosexuality than the barrage of positive gay PR would suggest. In other words, a great many Australians don’t want to see gays locked up for what they do in private, but they wouldn’t want their son to be one either.

Stand Strong

What does this mean for us as Bible-believers?

Primarily, it means that we must not lose our nerve. In the face of the media, it is tempting to believe that everyone is pro-gay and that we are the last pathetic minority to have the slightest misgivings. This is not the case. As the Bible itself would suggest, people know deep down that homosexuality is not normal or right. That perception is still abroad in our community to some significant extent. We may not think it is, as we watch our nightly news, go to the movies and read the newspaper — but we must remember that the illusion of reality which the media represents is just that, an illusion. The world that the media projects as the “real world” is a highly edited and tightly controlled construction, shaped by all sorts of forces and values. It is a painting, not a window.

The normalization of homosexuality in our society has been a PR triumph, but it largely exists in the manufactured world of media stories and newspaper editorials. This does not mean that this victory is not important or significant. Public perceptions have changed to some extent, and will continue to do so. But we must not change our message, nor be afraid to proclaim it. Some Christian leaders have sadly succumbed to the spin, accepted the normalcy of homosexuality, and “gone off message.”

Let us resolve not to follow them. We must continue to tell the truth, not only because it is the truth, but also because only the truth, in the end, will set people free. ■

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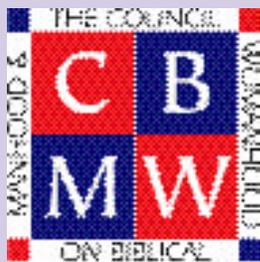
Matthias Church in Sydney).

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TONY PAYNE



The Danvers Statement **AFFIRMATIONS**

Based on our understanding of Biblical teachings, we affirm the following:

1. Both Adam and Eve were created in God's image, equal before God as persons and distinct in their manhood and womanhood.
2. Distinctions in masculine and feminine roles are ordained by God as part of the created order, and should find an echo in every human heart.
3. Adam's headship in marriage was established by God before the Fall, and was not a result of sin.
4. The Fall introduced distortions into the relationships between men and women.
 - In the home, the husband's loving, humble headship tends to be replaced by domination or passivity; the wife's intelligent, willing submission tends to be replaced by usurpation or servility.
 - In the church, sin inclines men toward a worldly love of power or an abdication of spiritual responsibility, and inclines women to resist limitations on their roles or to neglect the use of their gifts in appropriate ministries.
5. The Old Testament, as well as the New Testament, manifests the equally high value and dignity which God attached to the roles of both men and women. Both Old and New Testaments also affirm the principle of male headship in the family and in the covenant community.
6. Redemption in Christ aims at removing the distortions introduced by the curse.
 - In the family, husbands should forsake harsh or selfish leadership and grow in love and care for their wives; wives should forsake resistance to their husbands' authority and grow in willing, joyful submission to their husbands' leadership.
 - In the church, redemption in Christ gives men and women an equal share in the blessings of salvation; nevertheless, some governing and teaching roles within the church are restricted to men.
7. In all of life Christ is the supreme authority and guide for men and women, so that no earthly submission—domestic, religious or civil—ever implies a mandate to follow a human authority into sin.
8. In both men and women a heartfelt sense of call to ministry should never be used to set aside Biblical criteria for particular ministries. Rather, Biblical teaching should remain the authority for testing our subjective discernment of God's will.
9. With half the world's population outside the reach of indigenous evangelism; with countless other lost people in those societies that have heard the gospel; with the stresses and miseries of sickness, malnutrition, homelessness, illiteracy, ignorance, aging, addiction, crime, incarceration, neuroses, and loneliness, no man or woman who feels a passion from God to make His grace known in word and deed need ever live without a fulfilling ministry for the glory of Christ and the good of this fallen world.
10. We are convinced that a denial or neglect of these principles will lead to increasingly destructive consequences in our families, our churches, and the culture at large.

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Quoted and Quotable

The wise woman builds her house, but the foolish tears it down with her own hands.

Proverbs 14:1 (NAS95)

What is called patriarchy is simply moral anarchy, in which the mother alone remains fixed because all the fathers are fugitive and irresponsible.

G. K. Chesterton,
The Everlasting Man

Some forms of homosexuality today are of a similar nature, in that they are not just homosexuality but a philosophic expression. One must have understanding for the real homophile's problem. But much modern homosexuality is an expression of the current denial of antithesis. It has led in this case to an obliteration of the distinction between man and woman. So the male and the female as complementary partners are finished. This is a form of homosexuality which is a part of the movement below the line of despair. But this is not an isolated problem; it is a part of the world-spirit of the generation which surrounds us.

Frances A. Schaeffer,
The God Who is There

Back in the study, I asked Solzhenitsyn about his relations with the West. He knew that things had gone wrong, but had no intention of making any apologies. "Instead of secluding myself here and writing *The Big Wheel*, I suppose I could have spent time making myself likable to the West," he said. "The only problem is that I would have had to drop my way of life and my work. And, yes, it is true, when I fought the dragon of Communist power I fought it at the highest pitch of expression. The people in the West were not accustomed to this tone of voice. In the West, one must have a balanced, calm, soft voice; one ought to make sure to doubt oneself, to suggest that one may, of course, be completely wrong. But I didn't have the time to busy myself with this. This was not my main goal."

The New Yorker,
Feb. 14, 1994, p. 74

And this is an example that is worth noting, that the city, which was the abode and seat of wisdom, the fount of all the arts, the mother of humanity, surpassed all the others in blindness and madness. . . . And there is no doubt that God allowed the Athenians to fall into

extreme folly, so that they might be a warning to all generations that all the acuteness of the human mind, aided by learning and teaching, is nothing but foolishness, when it comes to the Kingdom of God. . . . The vanity of human wisdom is here branded by the Spirit with eternal dishonor, because in the place it had its chief seat, there darkness was thicker, idolatry was most rampant, and Satan had more freedom to drive the minds of men in circles with his capers.

John Calvin,
Commentary on Acts 17:16

It is a sad case that good (pastors and elders) should settle themselves so long in the constant neglect of so great a duty (as church discipline). The common cry is, "Our people are not ready for it, they won't bear it." But, isn't it rather the fact that you will not bear the trouble and hatred which it will occasion?

Richard Baxter,
The Reformed Pastor



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