

ISSUES

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**women and men in the church:
HOW CAN WE WORK TOGETHER?**

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reflections

A 1986 STUDY OF THE SECULAR WORKPLACE found that 56 percent of workers reported having an affair with a coworker, customer, or client." That sentence in one of the major articles in this edition of *Issues* caused me to stop and reread it. Surely that must be an erroneous statistic, I thought. The very next paragraph, however, went on, "A 1990 study of work groups found that over 86 percent of those interviewed had been aware of or had been involved in an office romance. Over 50 percent of those surveyed had been sexually propositioned by someone at work; 25 percent had sex in their place of work, and another 18 percent had sex with a coworker during working hours."

This edition of *Issues* recognizes that there are increasing numbers of females and males working side-by-side in ministries in congregations and other church institutions where changing relationships between men and women call for a recognition of potential problems and challenges in such relationships as well as opportunities for women and men to use their gifts in team ministries. Thus, the need to build solid, Biblically-based relationships between the genders is clear.

To be sure, it would be easy to ignore the challenges presented by men and women working together in ministry in the latter days of this century. As the editor, editorial committee, and I discussed the theme of this edition, the "safe" response to the challenges and opportunities of women and men working together in ministry for Jesus Christ would have been an avoidance of a topic which well may cause tension or unhappiness in the minds of some of our readers. But ducking such an important topic would be an error, I believe, because this publication deals with *issues* in Christian education, including difficult and knotty ones.

As noted below on this page, this edition of *Issues* has been written from a perspective of women and men working together in ministry in the church *outside the pastoral office*. For readers looking for a rationale for the ordination of women into the pastoral office, this edition will be a disappointment.

May our God richly bless you, our faithful readers, as you read, study, and pray about the relationships between men and women in various team ministries as they share the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

Orville C. Walz, President

Editor's Note: The writers of the articles, editorials, and book reviews of this edition delimited their study of the relationships of men and women in the church to contexts that did not include women and the pastoral office.

editorials

Learning a New Language

Writing an article on the changing role of men and women in the church reminds me of the words of a wise, older colleague. One day she exclaimed to me with obvious good humor, "When men talk about their pain, they remind me of colicky babies. If you try to pick them up and comfort them they resist and try to squirm away; if you put them down they twist around in obvious distress, seeking comfort."

For both genders and for the church, there is an "uncomfortableness," a "colicky-ness," when discussing the changing roles of men and women, not only in society but in the church. Although we might like to think in light of the women's and men's movements that we have come a long way in finding a common language between the genders, I would suggest that, as newborn babes, we are only just beginning.

Walt Whitman wrote that "the new times, the new people, and the new vistas need a new tongue." And he was right. More than ever, as we rediscover and reinvent concepts like "masculinity and femininity," and as existing roles change, the church must develop a new language. The language, however, is not necessarily one of diversity, but of unity and commonality. For in discussing men and women in the church, we begin where we begin with every other issue or concern, at the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. The language of love flowing from the pierced side of our Savior speaks loudly to the separateness and disunity prevalent among the genders.

Rather than beginning with our respective differences, in His broken body, our Lord calls us to himself in forgiveness and declares that there is neither male nor female, for all are one in Christ Jesus. In Christ, the barrier between God and man and man and woman has been abolished, and a new man and woman have come forth. In

Christ, men and women are free to examine their differences, their uniqueness, their roles, but always to do so within the language of love. When discussing these matters the church too often takes on the posture of the world and begins to use language that sounds surprisingly hostile and antithetical to the way of love. Too often when discussing male and female roles, we relate to one another on the basis of authority concerning who is the greatest rather than on the basis of service. As a result, power struggles erupt within the church even as in society.

But to say that "we are one in Christ Jesus," does not suggest that there are no differences or diversity between the gender roles. It is to suggest that as we discuss these differences, we must begin and end with a spirit of love and understanding. Our differences, however, provide an enriched sense of excellence. At the same time, because we are all human, our separateness as male and female may become the very thing that enriches our lives. We do not learn of gender roles to advance a political or male/female agenda. We learn about one another because it demonstrates how the vitality and creativity of humanity depend on diversity. I believe "East can talk to West," that man can talk to woman and woman to man, if neither makes its particular pole-preference ultimate; if neither forces the other to be known in its own language; if each recognizes that its language is only relative to the ultimate language they both share.

The struggle, the "colicky-ness" to know each other, to see each other, and to communicate deeply, may rest in the capacity of men and women to learn the universal language they share, the language of the Savior, the language of love.

In the midst of the tension between men and women and our roles in society and the church, I think we have the opportunity to give expression to the full complexity of being alive, of being human, of being male and female, of being redeemed.

Bryan R. Salminen
Director of Parish Services
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Appreciating the Gift of Differences

As much as I genuinely value my academic training, it seems that some of the best knowledge comes from those ordinary moments in which the human spirit is touched by insight and understanding through relationships with others. Persons who are suffering and who struggle to experience the love and care of God in the midst of that pain become teachers for those of us who seek to integrate faith and life. People whose life experiences dramatically depart from the experiences with which I am familiar enhance my abilities to perceive the complexity of life and respond compassionately to it.

Some people wonder what more can be said about men and women working together. There are those who would argue that little change has occurred, that opinions based on gender still impede the opportunities available and the relationships that result. Others would insist that an abundance of areas of service exist within church structures for men and women to live out their call from God. Will another article in any way impact what now is? Can further comment enhance the full expression and appreciation of the gifts of men and women in service to their Lord?

We are people of faith. We read the same stories again and again because we believe that God continues to speak in new ways through ancient words, and that His spirit transforms our lives and practices in direct proportion to our willingness to see and experience His reforming power. The hope that we will further enhance the richness of relationship between men and women working together toward a common goal is reason enough to engage in the search. We have the example of Zacchaeus and the Canaanite woman to show how persistence and faithfulness in the face of resistance are rewarded when trust is well-placed.

So much of the relationship between men and women in the church appears to be based on fear rather than faith, on rules and regulations rather than the example of Christ. The idea that relationship is nurtured by codes of conduct minimizes the potential for experiencing fully the wealth found in diversity. The notion that no parameters are needed denies the influence of sin

in our work life. The beauty of a creation in which even snow flakes are distinct pleads for an appreciation of the gift of differences.

In my twenty-four years of professional service I have had many valued male and female coworkers. The impact of women mentors in the molding and shaping of a woman's skills and personhood is undeniably crucial. Discovering who we are through the modeling of those who are like us is imperative. Equally important, though, is the influence of those who are different. Not only do we learn about "them," but we learn about ourselves in relationship to them. Although I have been Lutheran all my life, the depth of my spirituality was enhanced when I experienced the sense of awe and mystery found in Catholic brothers and sisters. My awareness of the dynamics of a German heritage was heightened when I exchanged my maiden surname Kruse for the name which now identifies my family ties. No less significant is the nurturing by my male colleagues in the formation of my personhood as a woman in service to her Lord and her Church.

If it is the action of God that has created gender, then that action is meant to be a blessing. Discovering the means to experiencing that blessing in relationship holds the promise of a transforming grace that enriches our affirmations of the gifts of others and ourselves. We can proclaim with Paul that "by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me has not been in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:10). May God's grace guide our journey toward insight and understanding of relationships between men and women.

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Men and Women Working Together: A Non-Issue?

The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose. . . . For we are God's servants, working together. 1 Corinthians 3:8-9.

Question: Can the church accept the concept of men and women serving together as a non-issue?

Recently, a missionary deaconess returned to the States and was allowed to serve *only* as the church secretary. Despite this most honorable position, she felt despair as other highly developed ministry skills were left to lie fallow. One wonders how this relates to Priscilla's and Aquila's planting and watering which God *allotted* to them (Acts 18:26). Do we sometimes block God's servants through "paradigm constructions-constructions"?

Gender differences are bestowed by God through His creation, who *calls each* of us before birth. "For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life" (Ephesians 2:10). Such callings were seen when a large mother church recently called a pastor, along with his deaconess spouse, to seed a congregation for visitation and teaching ministries. As a missionary-deaconess returnee, she is responsible for the "outreach" ministry of the church. Multitudes of men and women are planting and seeding in world-wide ministries, working together, living out their callings.

Do we have time for "petty luxuries of gender differences" when seen in the larger context of the Gospel's call in the midst of global miseries, rejection of the Gospel, and even persecution of Christians? Gender service-ministry issues pale in light of today's and tomorrow's need for laity and professional skills of Boomers, Xers, and older generations to "walk the walk" and "talk the talk" in cyber-space ministries, edge-city frontiers, ru-

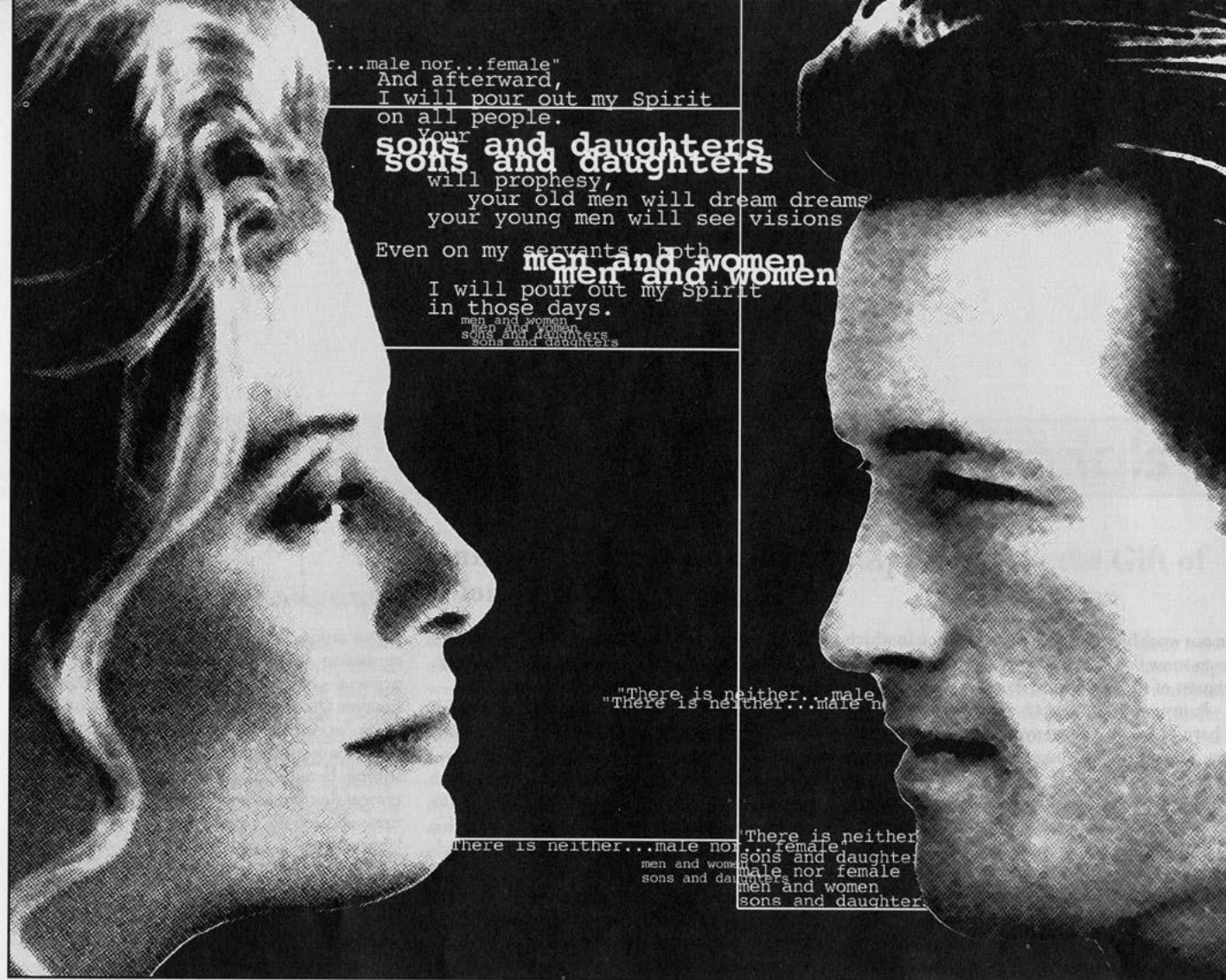
ral vacuums, and inner-city retrenchment and expansion in this country. Each of us has a personal calling and responsibility to share the timeless Gospel in countless ways that we often see as "accidental occurrences." One may be so bold to suggest that if a ministry setting becomes stifling because of gender service issues, it is *critical* that we serve in another context, as the time allotted to each of us is very short, the laborers are few, and our personal allotment of God-given tasks needs to be completed.

Wanted in 1996ff. Men, women, laity, church professionals, young and old, engaged in ministry. In 1990, 2,700 congregations of the 6,000 LCMS congregations saw only one adult baptism or confirmation . . . Decreasing numbers of college-age students may significantly affect the number of LCMS-certified teachers available . . . Auxiliaries are challenged with new ministry frontiers. . . Yet new seedlings continue to emerge . . . with seeding/planting by men and women, and God doing the growing.

Women and men working together using their God-given gifts is simply . . . a non-issue. Just do it!

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Men and Women Working Together in Ministry: *Biblical Perspectives*

Norman Metzler and Carol E. Becker

GOD OFFERS HIS CHURCH TREMENDOUS CHALLENGES in the mission which he gives her—"... go and make disciples of all nations. . ." (Matthew 28:19). The proclamation of the Gospel to all nations in a way which winsomely invites discipleship demands the very best of the gifts and energies of all God's people. From the very beginning, accordingly, the Christian mission utilized the skills of all disciples, male and female—and these both Jew and Gentile, young and old, slave and free. The priority of God's coming Kingdom and the urgency of the mission to proclaim the Good News of that Kingdom claimed the efforts of all Spirit-filled members of Christ's body, transcending all traditions with their attendant divisions and discriminations.

The prophets of old, looking beyond the present suffering of God's people, foresaw the coming of a new day, a Messianic era when the old order with its discriminations

and divisions would be overcome. The prophet Joel specifically envisions the radical empowerment of all people, male and female, in the latter days preceding the eschatological Day of the Lord:

And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days (Joel 2:28,29; cf. Acts 12:17,18).

The New Testament amply portrays the arrival of this Spirit and its effects upon attitudes toward the established

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traditions with their divisions and discriminations. The ministry of Jesus, the reports of the early life of the church in the Book of Acts, and the letters of St. Paul everywhere reflect the breaking down of the old stereotypes of male and female, in view of the Spirit-inspired vision of God's coming Kingdom.

However, the coming of Jesus the Messiah, while inaugurating the birth pangs of the new age, still occurred (contrary to most Jewish expectations) very much within the context of present human history with all of its sinful inadequacy and incompleteness. The bursting of the old wineskins of Jewish tradition by the Spirit-driven Christian movement still evidenced struggles with the traditional, legalistic, patriarchal and discriminatory aspects of its religious/social/cultural circumstances. The vision of the Kingdom, while mightily grasped and embodied in the life of the new Christian community in many ways, would yet come clearer to succeeding generations in its implications for various aspects of the Christian life, including the roles and relationships of women and men in Christ's church and ministry.

Because Christian women and men look to the Bible for authoritative guidance and direction in matters of faith and Christian life, it is entirely understandable and appropriate that they explore Scriptures specifically for clues to developing the most Gospel-oriented, Spirit-directed and Kingdom-led ways for women and men to work together in ministry and leadership in the church today.

Contemporary Christian women, in particular, are very interested in probing the Bible for models of women in active involvement and leadership, which might give guidance for their own leadership roles in the Christian community today.¹ Obviously, many women are mentioned in the Bible, but they are seldom central figures in the Biblical accounts. Their stories, if they are told at all, are incomplete and seldom told from the woman's own point of view. Modern women believe that their female forebears did make a significant contribution to the faith life of their communities, both in Old and New Testament times. However, some theologians use the relatively scant representation of women in the Bible as evidence that women did not play major leadership roles then, and accordingly should not do so now.

Male and female theologians today are beginning to look more carefully at the stories of women in the Bible, their partnership with men in ministry, and their contributions to the life of the church—at the same time that many Christian denominations continue to limit opportunities for women to exercise leadership in the present-day life of the church.² These theologians are finding there more evidence than previously supposed for a serious reexamina-

tion of the role of women in leadership in the church.

Such an examination of the Holy Scriptures must necessarily take into account the historical, developing character of Biblical interpretation, which allows for new insights into the meaning of Biblical texts, including the texts dealing with women in the church and women and men in leadership ministries within the church. While the New Testament was written by apostles and others immediately surrounding the life of Jesus some 2000 years ago, the ultimate horizon of meaning of what Jesus lived and taught and of what those witnesses wrote about is nothing less than the eschatological (end-time) Kingdom of God, the end goal and destiny of all history.³ As Christians today, empowered by the Holy Spirit and motivated by the vision of that Kingdom, continue to probe the Scriptures for guidance, they may well discover new facets of that Kingdom vision and its significance for their Christian life and witness which they did not see before.

For example, many American Christians in the nineteenth century came to see that the Biblical vision of the Kingdom in relationship to slavery was interpreted more adequately to mean the abolition of slavery as an institution rather than the humane treatment of slaves by Christian owners who perpetuated the institution. While on the one hand St. Paul had counseled the latter in the case of a particular runaway slave (letter to Philemon), not appearing to challenge the institution but to work within it (see also Ephesians 6:5); on the other hand, he described the new life in Christ—living in anticipation of the coming Kingdom which Jesus proclaimed and for which Christians fervently hoped—as a life which transcends the discriminations and barriers of slavery (Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:11). Neither slavery nor its abolition could create God's heavenly Kingdom on earth, but the abolition of slavery better reflects that Kingdom vision and its power among believers than the perpetuation of slavery.

The measure of the authority and relevance of particular passages of Scripture, therefore, is their relationship to Jesus' vision of the Kingdom. Priority is given appropriately, therefore, to those passages which reflect the new and radical character of Spirit-life lived in anticipation of the Kingdom over those passages which tend to perpetuate the old ways of status quo tradition and culture, with their attendant barriers and discriminations.⁴

This principle of interpretation logically applies also to the understanding of the role of women and their partnership with men in ministry in the church of Christ. Passages pertaining to women and men in ministry are read appropriately in order to discover their tendency toward or anticipation of the Kingdom as their ultimate horizon of

meaning. Viewed from this perspective, the Bible can yield new insights into the church's utilization of the Gospel mandate. This study is an effort to delineate the Biblical bases for such possible new insights.

Religious/Cultural Contexts

In order to better understand the Biblical issues relating to women and men working together in ministry, it is important for us to recall the religious and cultural setting of first century Judaism. Jesus lived and worked within a strongly patriarchal social/cultural context in which men were considered superior to women and dominant over them, and women were seen as inferior creatures subservient to men.

Now it must be acknowledged that while the Old Testament period was also clearly patriarchal, women are depicted in the Old Testament as participating much more fully and freely in all aspects of community life than at the time of Jesus. Societally, women engaged in commerce and real estate as well as in manual labor (Proverbs 31; Exodus 35:25; Ruth 2:7). Jewish law in many ways provided for the protection of women, and women were meted equal punishments with men when the law was breached (Deuteronomy 22:13-19; Deuteronomy 17:2-5; 22:22,23). Spiritually, they were present for the institution of the Mosaic covenant and were required to attend the public reading of the Scriptures on the Feast of Tabernacles (Deuteronomy 29:11, 31:12). While they could not serve in the Temple priesthood (due to their ritual uncleanness associated with their monthly period), they participated in Temple worship by praying and playing music in the sanctuary (1 Samuel 1:12; Psalm 68:25), and singing and dancing with men in religious processions (2 Samuel 6:19,22).

Furthermore, women exercised leadership roles socially and spiritually. Miriam, a prophet, led the women of Israel in worship (Exodus 15:20-21); Deborah was both a judge and a prophet (Judges 4:4); and the prophet Huldah instead of Jeremiah was consulted by King Josiah (2 Kings 22:14-20).

In general, women were held in high regard: God told Abraham to listen to his wife (Genesis 21:12); Proverbs 19:14 says an intelligent wife is a gift from God; Abigail's wisdom so impressed King David that he married her (1 Samuel 25:23-42); and it was a wise woman of Tekoa who was sent to persuade David to lift the ban on his son Absalom (2 Samuel 14).

However, by the time of Jesus the role of women had changed very much, even though in theory women were still held in high regard in Jewish society. Very possibly under the influence of Greek and Roman social customs, women were relegated to a virtual "imprisonment" within the private sphere of their homes and families. Respectable women were rarely seen outside the confines of their home; indeed, the meaning of a prostitute was "one who goes abroad." An upstanding woman normally did not even go out to do her own shopping, although she did have the right to go to the Temple or synagogue, and could attend a wedding feast, visit a house of mourning, or go to see her relatives (Mishnah Ketubot 7:5). If a woman did venture out, she was to be heavily veiled and was prohibited from speaking to men.

Women were seen chiefly as wives and mothers, and were considered the property of males. A young woman was the property of her father, was bargained away into marriage when she was capable of bearing children, and became the property of her husband in marriage. The wife normally referred to her husband as "master" ("ba'al") or "lord" ("adon"), and was not permitted to divorce her husband. As a widow, she could not inherit her husband's estate and would be left destitute unless they had borne a son. In the home, women stood while the men ate, serving the men. It is interesting to note that a woman's testimony was not even accepted in a court of law.

In the spiritual realm, women were considered exempt from the commandment to learn the Law of Moses (Deuteronomy 4:9 says, "Teach them to your sons"); indeed, the Talmud states, "It is foolishness to teach Torah to your daughter" (Sotah 20a). They received no formal education, which meant that the women with whom Jesus spoke were very likely illiterate. Women were not permitted beyond the confines of the Women's Court in the Temple, where they could pray silently, and were to sit at the entrance hall or rear of the synagogue in silence. Rabbinic discussions questioned whether women could be a part of the covenant because of their uncircumcision, and some even questioned whether a woman could have a soul.

In view of all this, it is not surprising that Jewish fathers often taught their sons the prayer: "Praised be God that he has not created me a Gentile; praised be God that he has not created me a slave; praised be God that he has not created me a woman."

The Role of Women in Jesus' Ministry

Against this religious and cultural backdrop, one cannot fail to recognize the truly radical and revolutionary character of Jesus' treatment of women and his relationships with them. Just as his burning vision of the Kingdom and its inclusion of all people moved Jesus to champion the cause especially of those discriminated against, oppressed and rejected by religion and society, so he frequently ignored and even countered social custom and propriety in demonstrating his love and concern for the disparaged societal class of women. In so doing he often shocked even his closest disciples by defending a woman caught in adultery, receiving a foot washing from a prostitute, talking with and instructing in public a Samaritan woman of dubious reputation (John 8:1-11; Luke 7:36-50; John 4:7-42).⁵

Many women among the crowds of thousands heard Jesus teaching and witnessed his miraculous healings (Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44). Although the closest group of followers of Jesus was 12 males, women were certainly a trusted and important part of the larger group of disciples that traveled about with Jesus, receiving his teaching, witnessing his miracles, supporting and serving him. Indeed, Luke names some of these closer, trusted women along with the Twelve, and points out that they were women of means who had been recipients of his healing love and who supported Jesus and the Twelve in their ministry and travels (Luke 8:1-3; Matthew 27:55). These women are depicted clearly as fellow workers with Jesus in his Kingdom mission, and often are portrayed as the most appreciative of his ministry.

In fact, these faithful and supportive women disciples are mentioned specifically as having stayed with Jesus right through his crucifixion. The male disciples had fled in fear at Jesus' arrest, and only "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (likely John) is reported as having come back for the crucifixion; yet the Gospels make it a point to state that "many women" were present for the crucifixion, and names some of them by name (Matthew 27:55,56). They went to see where Jesus was buried (Luke 23:50-56), and were the first witnesses of his Resurrection (Matthew 28:1-10; Luke 24:1-11). Amazingly, these women who were unacceptable witnesses in court became the first witnesses to the most crucial event in the life of the Messiah!

Throughout his ministry Jesus not only instructed women, but praised them for their interest in his teaching; such is the case of Mary of Bethany, who with her sister Martha and brother Lazarus were close friends of Jesus (Luke 10:38-42; John 11:1-45). It is important to note that Martha is depicted by John as much more than just a "housekeeper," concerned about the detail work of life; she is one of only two disciples specifically quoted in the Gospels as confess-

ing faith in Jesus as the Messiah; the other is Peter (John 11:27; Matthew 16:16). Jesus held up women as models of faith (Luke 1:5-38; Matthew 15:21-28), clearly giving them equal honor and recognition as Spirit-empowered children of God alongside men, equally destined for fellowship with God in his inbreaking Kingdom.

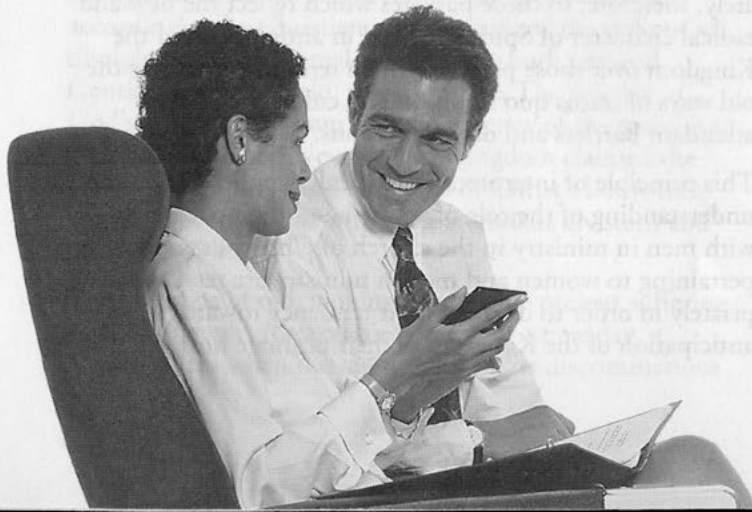
Given the strong religious and cultural prejudices against women outlined above, one dare not miss the extraordinary statement being made by Jesus in the positive and prominent role he accorded women in his ministry. His compassionate respect for and empowerment of women unambiguously proclaimed the transforming power of the Gospel in the lives and relationships of all people, including the relationships between women and men. And it is no neutral matter that all of the canonical Gospels plainly report this revolutionary approach of Jesus toward women; they were affirming the new understanding of men and women in Christ for the early Christian communities to which they were written. The Gospel of Luke takes especial pains to mention the significant role of women in Jesus' life and ministry.⁷

Luke's second volume, the Book of Acts, clearly portrays the partnership of women and men in the early Christian community. Women gathered with the disciples in the days immediately following the Ascension of the Lord and were baptized into Christ right along with the men (Acts 1:14; 8:12). It was surely no accident that Jesus instituted baptism as the New Covenant mark of membership in the family of God, replacing the Jewish ritual of circumcision.⁸ Women were just as much the object of Christian evangelism efforts as were men; just as receptive to the Gospel; and just as assertive in their faith responses (Acts 16:13,14; 17:4,12). Women suffered for their faith right along with men (Acts 8:3, 9:2; 22:4), and were just as liable as men for their betrayal of the faith (Acts 5:1-11). In short, the call and the claims of the Gospel applied equally to women and men in the Christian mission, and figured equally in the growth of the young church.

Partnership in the Early Christian Community

No one person reflects more fully the life of the early Christian church than St. Paul; more than half of the Book of Acts deals with his ministry, and most of the letters of the New Testament are Pauline. One naturally and necessarily looks to the writings of Paul for indications of the role of women in those Christian communities. And a close examination of Paul's letters reveals an attitude and approach very consistent with that of Jesus and the early Christian community.

Now it cannot be denied that there are a few passages in Paul's letters which appear to limit the service of women



and reflect the older Jewish religious and cultural traditions out of which Paul came. Indeed, these few passages have been, and still are, used in some very hurtful ways to restrict or prohibit women's ministry and leadership within the church. Much has been written and discussed concerning how these passages should be interpreted and applied, unfortunately resulting in bitterness and division. This study will not avoid dealing with these passages, but will rather attempt to set them in their proper context of Paul's larger Christian vision and the role of women relative to the coming Kingdom of God.

The Book of Acts makes it clear that the focus of Paul's ministry, like that of Jesus, was this Kingdom of God (Acts 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23,31). While his letters relatively seldom mention the Kingdom directly and refer more to life in Christ and its implications, the whole context of Paul's writings is his faith and confidence in that Kingdom for which he fervently hoped.⁹ It was the vision of the Kingdom which motivated his ministry and shaped his advice to the various congregations and Christians to whom he wrote. Paul clearly reflects the Kingdom vision, for example, when he writes, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

Now to be "in Christ" means to be "heirs according to the promise," that is, the promise of the Kingdom. Christians no longer live by the past/the law, but by God's future/the promise. To live a Christlike life is to be motivated by the same Kingdom vision which Jesus anticipated in his life and ministry; it is to be empowered by the Spirit of Christ which is the Spirit of God's Kingdom at work in the present age, as a deposit or first fruits of the new age to come (2 Corinthians 1:22; Galatians 1:14; Romans 8:23).

In terms of the relationships between women and men, the future heavenly Kingdom certainly will remove all divisions and discrepancies between male and female, as also between slave and free, Jew and Gentile. To live for the Kingdom, therefore, means to work toward that new reality by breaking down divisions and discriminations as much as possible already in this present age. It means to rejoice in the present working of the Spirit in the lives of all people, and to celebrate the unity in Christ which anticipates the Kingdom, where divisions and injustices will be overcome.

This perspective is not developed as a separate theological topic in Paul's writings, but it definitely permeates his life and his letters:

- It was the Kingdom vision which moved him to write, "There is neither. . . male nor female. . ." (Galatians 3:28).
- It was the Kingdom vision which informed Paul's response to marriage issues at Corinth

(1 Corinthians 7). Paul advises a socially revolutionary kind of total parity and mutuality between husbands and wives: the body of neither belongs to him or her alone, but also to one's spouse; neither should disrupt a marriage permanently; neither should make a unilateral decision concerning sexual relations. Furthermore, by pointing out certain practical advantages to Christian women and men remaining single, he infers that both male and female Christians could be complete persons without marriage, implicitly rejecting the social demand that a woman should gain her identity from her closest male relative (father, brother, husband, husband's brother).¹⁰

- It was the Kingdom vision, prophesied already by Joel and quoted by Peter on Pentecost, that created the setting in the early church where Paul could refer simply in passing to women prophesying and praying in worship, alongside the men (1 Corinthians 11:5), a revolutionary new set of circumstances compared with Jewish religion and culture.¹¹

It was this same Kingdom vision which so transformed the social structures and empowered women in the early church that enabled Paul to refer as a matter of course in his letters to women as well as men in positions of leadership:

- In some of his letters he sends greetings to and from particular women by name, as well as men, implying their special positions of leadership in the church (especially Romans 16, but see also 1 Corinthians 16, Colossians 4, 2 Timothy 4, Philemon 2). Paul particularly commends certain women (Romans 16:12) as "hard workers in the Lord."

Women as well as men are mentioned as hosting local churches in their house, implying positions of responsibility and leadership for these women (Romans 16:3-5; Colossians 4:15).

- He describes both women and men as "fellow workers" (Greek: *synergoi*); this term clearly implies those who were leaders in the church along with Paul (Romans 16:3; Philippians 4:2,3). Paul considers those who are associated with him in the cause of the Gospel to be his equals, not subordinates (cf. also Philippians 2:25).
- Euodia and Syntyche, two female "fellow workers" in Philippi, were considered important enough in that community that Paul addresses the tension between them in his public letter, and encourages their reconciliation (Philippians 4:2,3).
- Priscilla and Aquila, a husband and wife team who were "fellow workers" and close associates of Paul, became instructors of Apollos, a very influential leader in the early church. By referring to Priscilla

first when mentioning her with her husband, Luke calls attention to his high regard for her ability as a teacher of Christian doctrine.

- A woman, Junias, is specifically mentioned in Romans 16:7 as an "apostle," and a notable one at that, although the term is likely used here in a wider sense than the Twelve, referring to preachers/evangelists of the Gospel recognized by the churches (see Acts 14:4, Barnabas as an apostle). She clearly had a leading position in the Christian mission, and suffered imprisonment right along with Paul for the sake of the Gospel.
- Phoebe is commended by Paul to the church at Rome (Romans 16:1,2) as a "deacon" of the church at Cenchrea, a recognized office in the early church (1 Timothy 3:8ff).¹² Paul describes her as a "prostatis," a term which in general Greek usage refers to "a leader, a presiding officer, a ruler, a guardian, an administrator, or one who stands before and protects someone else,"¹³ and which here likely has the sense of "one who has the position and means to be a protector/helper."

These examples make amply clear the extent to which the power of the Holy Spirit working among the early Christians challenged and transformed the existing religious/social orders in light of God's ultimate order, the Kingdom of Heaven. We dare not miss the extraordinary witness which the new Christian community was making to the world around it, a witness to the Kingdom vision revealed through their Lord, Jesus Christ, calling people to see life and relationships in a whole new way in light of this Kingdom vision.

Pastoral Advice

It is in the context of this "new order" that we must weigh those passages which appear to demean or subordinate women in relation to men, running counter to the Kingdom vision. Paul at one point honestly admits that ". . . we have this treasure in earthen vessels. . ." recognizing the human limitations and inadequacies involved in proclaiming and living the vision of the Kingdom which we have received from Christ. He did his very best to embody the Kingdom vision in his mission and ministry, but would readily acknowledge his own weaknesses and limitations. We need to keep this in mind as we consider his pastoral advice to churches that were experiencing serious difficulties in the worshipping fellowship.

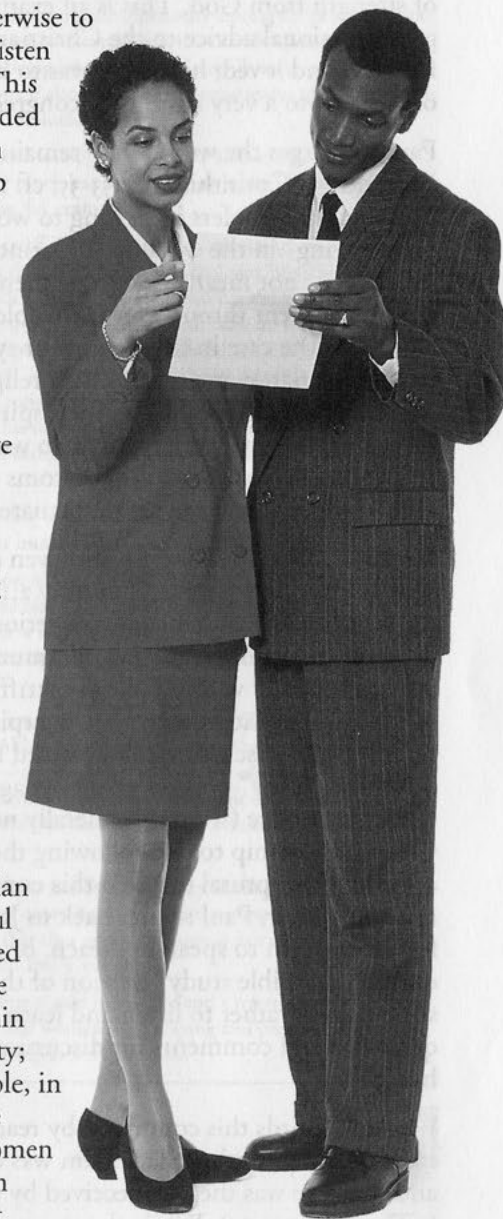
Paul's basic Kingdom vision relative to confusion and turmoil in the worship was, "God is not a God of disorder but of peace" (1 Corinthians 14:33). Therefore, it was for the sake of peace and order, which among Christians pointed

toward the ultimate "shalom" of the Kingdom, that he urged quietness and control among those leading and participating in worship at Corinth (1 Corinthians 14:26-40).

It should be noted that Paul is not speaking just to women: he addresses first those who are speaking out loud in tongues (presumably male or female) during the worship, instructing them to speak in an orderly fashion, one at a time, and then only if they have an interpreter. Obviously, part of the problem at worship in Corinth was a cacophony of tongues-speakers disrupting the service.

Secondly, he turns to those, male or female, who were causing a commotion by jumping up and trying to prophesy all at once; he urges them to take turns prophesying, and otherwise to sit down quietly and listen to the one speaking. This would have corresponded roughly to the sermon portion of the worship service as practiced in churches today, except that the norm in Paul's time was apparently to have more than one preacher. Once again, the problem must have been a number of prophet-preachers trying to speak all at once, distracting from the proper worship of God.

Only in third place does he address the issue of women speaking up in the service in such a way that it was causing a disgrace to the Christian community. Now Paul certainly was concerned about the image of the Christian church within the surrounding society; that is why, for example, in 1 Corinthians 11:3ff he presses the issue of women covering their heads in worship. He fears that



women who exercise their freedom in Christ and so worship with their heads uncovered will bring dishonor to the cause of Christ and shame upon the Christian community, based on the fact that a woman who took off her usual head covering and let her hair down in public was a prostitute or woman of loose morals.

Paul even buttresses his instructions with an appeal to what seemed to him to be an obvious argument: women naturally have long hair and men naturally have short hair; therefore, women should worship with their heads covered. Such an argument is quite evidently culturally conditioned and no longer seems relevant to most Christians today. . . . not to mention the fact that it ignores the famous Biblical story of Samson's long hair, which was his glory and source of strength from God. This is an example of where Paul gave occasional advice to the Christian churches he had founded and loved; his intent was to bring propriety and order back to a very conflicted congregation.¹⁴

Paul also urges the women to "remain silent in the churches" (1 Corinthians 14:33-35; cf. 1 Timothy 2:12). Inasmuch as he refers in passing to women "praying and prophesying" in the worship (1 Corinthians 11:4,5)¹⁵, he clearly does not mean that the women had to remain absolutely silent throughout the whole service. That would have been the case in the Temple or synagogue, but Christ freed Christian women from such religious discrimination and empowered them to use their spiritual gifts also in their participation in worship. Christian worship significantly reformed the Jewish worship customs from which it came and which in many ways it perpetuated.

However, their speaking up and even domineering over men (Greek *authentain*, 1 Timothy 2:12) at some points in the worship were other causes of serious disorder and disruption in some Christian communities. If one takes this passage together with 1 Timothy 2:11ff, it may well have been the case that women were usurping the rabbinic teaching-and-discussing role reserved for males during the "Scripture study" portion of the synagogue and early Christian service (which is generally no longer practiced in Christian worship today) following the reading of the appointed Scriptural texts. In this context, for the sake of restoring order, Paul reverts back to Jewish tradition and forbids women to speak up, teach, or dominate the men during the "Bible study" portion of the service, and instructs them rather to listen and learn quietly, and save their questions and comments for discussion at home with their husbands.

Paul undergirds this command by reaching back to the creation story, stating that Adam was created first, not Eve, and that Eve was the one deceived by the snake, not Adam (1 Timothy 2:13,14). While these statements are found in

Genesis 2 and 3, the suggestion that Eve, the first female, was somehow more of a sinner than Adam, the first male, clearly runs contrary to Paul's own theological argument in Romans that sin entered the world through one man (Romans 5:12-14), emphasizing Adam, the male, as the prototypical sinner. Furthermore, in Romans 3 Paul affirms the inclusive nature of sin; there is no difference, for all have sinned, male and female, Jew and Gentile, and fall short of the glory of God.

Thus it is clear that Paul was presenting an argument to buttress his command designed to bring propriety and order back to the worshipping congregations. At the same time, weighed against his larger Kingdom vision, these arguments need to be put in their proper perspective and not be used to perpetuate divisions and discriminations among men and women in the church.

Focus: Complementarity in Relationships

The foregoing Biblical evidence, then, points toward a full partnership and complementarity in relationships between Christian women and men, also in ministry and leadership in the church.

Gender and sexuality are certainly good creations of God, to be cherished by his people and used to his glory. However, in view of the coming Kingdom and our anticipation of it in the new life in Christ, gender is not the real issue in the church; the real issue is giftedness by the Holy Spirit for service. The numerous examples cited above of males and females, single and married, working together in discipleship and ministry—the male and female disciples of Jesus; the male and female workers greeted together by Paul in his letter to the Romans; Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchrea (NSRV); Euodia and Syntyche in the Philippian congregation; Priscilla and Aquila teaching together in Ephesus; Nympha and the brothers in her house church in Laodicea; Junias and Andronicus, fellow apostles and prisoners with Paul—attest to the gender-transcending "team ministry" which developed in the early Christian movement.

Paul's advice to Christians regarding sexual immorality, impurity and obscenity clearly indicates the kind of healthy, God-pleasing relationships which he envisioned among male and female ministry teams destined for the kingdom of God (e.g., Ephesians 4:29-5:5). His guidance to husbands and wives suggests the kind of mutual love, humility and respect that ought to apply in all male/female relationships (Ephesians 5:21-33). The instruction to the young pastor Timothy to treat older women as mothers and younger women as sisters implies a healthy family-style working relationship among male and female Christians in leadership among God's people (1 Timothy 5:2). There is no

room for sexual harassment of any sort, not even the hint of sexual impropriety, among women and men driven by the vision of the Kingdom. For them gender and sexuality certainly are recognized and honored, but these must play no divisive or discriminatory role in the calling to serve Christ.

Implications

What is the relevance and urgency of this Biblical understanding of the roles and relationships of women and men in ministry and leadership in the church? Simply that women and men professional church workers today are being looked to increasingly by their fellow Christians as models of what it means to be males and females working together in Christ. The proper place of gender and sexuality in service to Christ is in ever greater need of healthy modeling in a society where the concepts of family, gender, and sexuality are becoming increasingly confused and perverted. Younger persons in the church are especially vulnerable to this confusion and in need of guidance from church leaders. Such guidance is given much more powerfully through example than through cognitive instruction.

It is therefore incumbent upon church leaders, male and female, to "get their heads straight" about the equal partnership of women and men in ministry, and their equal empowerment by the Holy Spirit, according to their gifts, for that ministry to which they are called. They must explore anew and in earnest the Biblical precedents and directions for team ministry, taking into account particularly the horizon of meaning of those Biblical texts in the vision of God's coming Kingdom. Women especially are to be encouraged to pursue their spiritual gifts and interests in whatever ways they can be of service in the church, and to seek out Biblically-inspired opportunities to labor joyfully alongside men as fellow-workers in Christ. Only then will the church give the most effective witness to the transforming power of Christ in the lives of his people, and more adequately reflect the vision of the Kingdom which their Lord proclaimed.

Footnotes

¹See Carol E. Becker, *Leading Women: How Church Women Can Avoid Leadership Traps and Negotiate the Gender Maze*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996.

²Thoughtful, accurate and sensitive preaching about women in the Bible and their ministries working with men could do much to help women and men gain insight into shared ministry and leadership today.

³For the priority of the Kingdom of God in the life and ministry of Jesus, see for example: Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God*, Westminster Press, 1969; Johannes Weiss, *Jesus' Proclamation of the Kingdom of God*, Fortress, 1971; Norman Perrin, *Jesus and the Language of the Kingdom*, Fortress, 1976; Richard Hiers, *The Historical Jesus and the Kingdom of God*, University of Florida Press, 1973.

⁴The truly radical and novel character of Jesus' life and teaching over against his

religious, social and cultural setting is a commonplace of Biblical studies. What is not so commonly recognized is that the radicality of Jesus' life and teaching derived directly from his Kingdom vision and mission.

⁵This latter story, the most extensive account of Jesus' interaction with a woman, indicates that this woman at the well became the first female missionary inviting people to faith in Christ.

⁶The skeptical reception by Zechariah of the angel's birth announcement is set in stark contrast to the humble, trusting response of Mary to a similar announcement by Gabriel.

⁷It also must be noted that the Gospel of John, which is different in style and emphasis from the synoptic gospels, includes two of the most extensive and intensive New Testament stories dealing with women, the Samaritan woman at the well and the woman caught in adultery.

⁸One must not underestimate the significance of the baptism of women in early Christianity. The crucial Jewish mark of membership in God's covenant community, circumcision, was necessarily limited to males, and the early Christian Judaizers' insistence upon the circumcision of Gentiles had the effect of perpetuating traditional male superiority among the people of God. Therefore, Paul's opposition to circumcision for Gentile Christians not only countered new legalisms being introduced into the Christian understanding of salvation by grace alone; it also defended the equal status of women in the Body of Christ, the new and inclusive Israel.

⁹The Kingdom is directly referred to only 14 times in Paul's letters, which is not infrequent, but obviously much less frequent than in the Gospels—55 times in the Gospel of Matthew, for example.

¹⁰The real thrust of Ephesians 5:21ff is also this kind of mutuality, even though Paul refers to the man as the head of the wife. Paul may be speaking to marital problems in which Christian women who felt the freedom of the Gospel and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit were no longer showing common courtesy and respect to their husbands (v. 33). Even in this case, however, Paul's advice to Christian husbands shows that it is not a one-sided submission, but rather a reciprocal relationship of love. Indeed, to compare a husband's devotion to his wife with Christ's devotion to his church commends an even more extreme level of commitment than the wife is called upon to make!

¹¹Compare also Acts 21:9, referring to Paul's visit to the home of Philip the evangelist, who had "four unmarried daughters who prophesied."

¹²It is true that Paul's description of the office of deacon in 1 Timothy presupposes males ordinarily filling the office. Nonetheless, Paul's reference here to Phoebe as a deacon (there is no feminine form for the term in Greek) indicates that women were not excluded from this office in the earliest church.

¹³H.D. Liddell, R. Scott, H.S. Jones, and R. McKenzie. *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford, 1958), p. 1526. Although used as a noun in the New Testament only here, Paul uses the verb form in 1 Timothy, for example, to designate one who manages (3:5) or rules (5:17). The Septuagint uses the term to translate into Greek the Hebrew terms meaning "overseer, officer" (1 Chronicles 27:31).

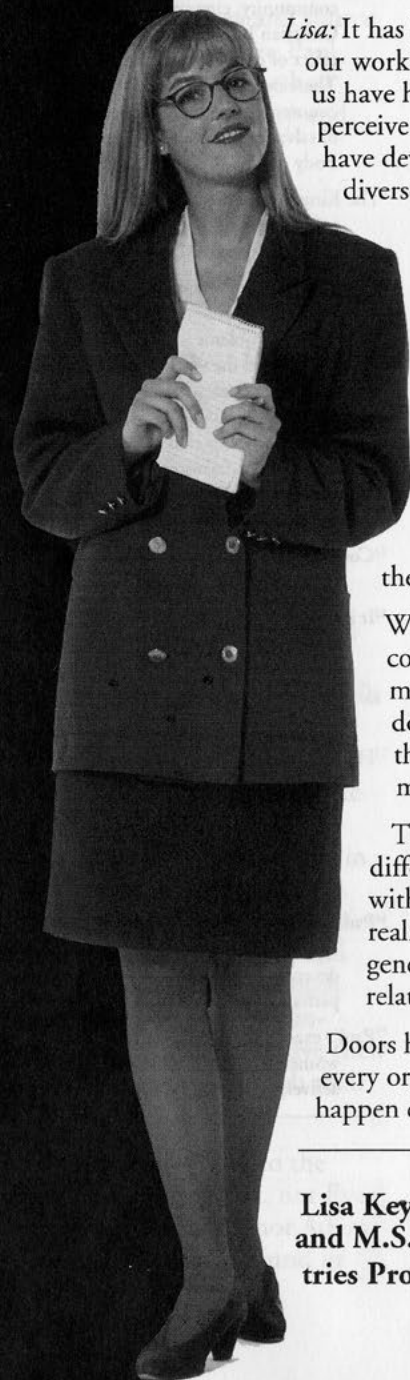
¹⁴Paul's concern that the Christians not bring dishonor to the church likewise led Paul in 1 Timothy 2:9ff to urge Christian women to dress modestly and decently for worship, so that they would not appear extravagant, proud, or perhaps even immoral. (cf. also Titus 2:3-5)

¹⁵Paul's exactly parallel use of this phrase in verses 4 and 5 referring to men and women strongly implies that women were praying and prophesying just as actively in the public worship as were the men.



Strengthening the Partnership: *a dialog between women and men at work*

WHAT ARE YOUR STEREOTYPES ABOUT WOMEN? You hear that a team leader/boss is a woman. What is your first thought about *her*? Did you think of her appearance, her IQ, her aggressiveness? What is your first thought about the men who work under her?



Lisa: It has been interesting in the last year to hear people's reactions to our working relationship in which I serve as team leader. The two of us have had the opportunity to converse and react to how people perceive our female-led team. We have also had a lot of fun as we have developed into a well-matched and competent, while very diverse, team.

Mark: An example of our diversity is this article. I think we each brought different perspectives to the issue, yet we both agree on some components.

Lisa: During my five years in this position, one of the issues I have dealt with is how to work in what has been a male-dominated field. For example, at a recent meeting of 18 college professors, two of the women present commented that they preferred to have conversations with men rather than women. As the only other female present at the meeting, I could have been insulted. Instead, I agreed with them, knowing that I, too, appreciated conversations with men.

Which came first? Did these women always prefer conversation with men, and so more easily integrate into a male-dominated world? Or, as a result of working in a male-dominated world, have they become acclimated to the culture, thus preferring the conversation of men? I wonder how the men in that group would vote.

The females were acknowledging that there is something different between conversations with men and conversations with women. This "stereotyping" demonstrates one of the realities of men and women working together—we operate and generalize from assumptions that can hinder or help work-related relationships, and, thus, the organization.

Doors have been opened for women to work with men in almost every organization of society, but we have not discussed *how* that is to happen effectively. We have assumed, since we are all adults, that we

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should be able to figure out what it will take to work successfully. So the result of this "trial and error" approach is living out in the workplace the way we have always done business: for males this means operating as if women are the same as men; for females it means figuring out how to survive in a man's world.

The work world is different today than fifty years ago. The majority of women in the United States are working full time outside of the home. Most of these women continue to be in female-dominated positions, "overrepresented in clerical and service occupations and underrepresented in production, craft, and labor occupations" (*Statistical*, p. 64, 1991). With more women working, the potential for difficulties between men and women in the workplace is higher, especially when it is recognized that women and men have different styles in approaching work.

The solution must be helpful conversation which educates males and females about similarities and differences in work and relational styles. Both genders must listen and learn from each other, especially in the Church as ministry itself is at stake. The Church, the people of God, will benefit when men and women, complementing each other, work together to glorify God. Ultimately the goal is men and women learning to relate as co-workers and friends, without threatening either's personhood, competence or spouse. Flexibility and mutual understanding are the keys according to Tannen (1994, p. 126). Whitehead and Whitehead (1991) label it "partnership" which celebrates diversity and focuses on enriching the relationship, as opposed to "equality," which is more concerned with making sure I get what you get. As Prybylski writes in her editorial, "The hope that we will further enhance the richness of relationship between men and women working together toward a common goal is reason enough to engage in the search." Relationships can be, as she suggests, based on *faith* rather than fear.

We are not talking exclusively about pastors, directors of Christian education, school teachers, deaconesses and other professional church workers. The discussion must also be about lay men and women who are very involved in their congregations as board members and chairs, as Sunday school teachers, as those who are modeling for our children and youth what the church will be like in the future.

Mark: The discussion of gender roles and how they impact the workplace is certainly needed and useful, and I do not want to diminish that at all, but I think that a danger can

exist if we look primarily at gender issues when we talk about male and female team relationships in the church. The available information regarding team ministries indicates that we are far from operating at an ideal level in the church, but the failure of teams takes place among multiple male staffs as well as mixed gender staffs. To make gender issues the preponderant component of why teams do or do not work well together would be narrowing the field of influences too significantly.

For example, a study prepared by Dr. John O'Hara in 1990 which looked at team ministry issues found that a "significant minority" of female team members were somewhat less positive in assessing their position on the team. These same women were also more likely than their male counterparts to feel "coerced by their teammate, powerless in the team, and less credible in the eyes of the congregation" (O'Hara, p. 6, 1990). Initially then, one would see a direct relationship between gender and perceptions of team. Yet, as the researchers point out, those that had these feelings relative to team also tended to be younger and have shorter tenure on the team—two factors which certainly could influence perceptions of power and independence.

I mention this one example not for the purpose of diminishing the importance of furthering our understanding of males and females working together, but to encourage us to look more fully at the whole picture. This picture portrays two equally competent and equally committed individuals (in most cases—but once again the issue of competence and commitment is not a gender issue) and asks, given these parameters, and the fact that these are individuals, "How can we enhance the full scope of who we are in our working relationship?"

In a 1994 article in *Christianity Today*, Katherine Kersten speaks of the dangers that may be faced when the assumption is made that a clarification and correction of societal wrongs relative to gender inequities becomes the rallying cry for enhancing women's opportunities, particularly in the workplace. Kersten feels that this can promote a victim mentality among women which she refers to as an "empty vessel" perspective which defines women not by their individuality and strengths but by their suffering and victimhood. She also says that "by embracing utopian ideals that can never be satisfied (relative to changes within a patriarchal societal perspective and treatment of women), such people ensure that they will always have much to complain of" (Kersten, p. 23, 1990).

One way this victim mentality is promoted is seen in the use of the term "male-dominated." An over-emphasis on the concept of the world being "male-dominated" can also skew our perspective—especially if we do not define what we mean by that term and we misunderstand how others may be interpreting the term. To say that the LCMS today has more full-time male professionals is probably accurate. To say that the ordained ministry with the LCMS is populated only by males is certainly true. To say that the clergy have a greater say in the direction of the earthly operations of the church body is probably true. To summarize those realities by the term "male-dominated" certainly does not take into account the full dynamics of the situation and may even convey the concept that the issue of maleness is the only issue, or that this dominance is a premeditated act that is based solely on gender. In our effort to communicate, we need to tighten our terminologies so we understand each other. To fully consider the issue of men and women working together we need to look at the integral components of what makes for effective team ministry, analyze how we enter into a teaming relationship, and ask "considering who I am, and who my teammate is, how can we enhance our team relationship in every area?" One component of that process is the consideration of each team member's gender, but it is only one part.

A quick look at some resources relative to team ministry finds many components commonly referred to as integral to team effectiveness. Some of these components do seem to be especially influenced by issues related to one's gender, but they are merely one piece to the overall puzzle of working together as a team. While all components are impacted to some degree by our sex since we are sexual beings, some of these components affecting team are possibly impacted more significantly by gender-related issues. I will highlight two of these in particular.

Effective Communication. Effective communication is one component of teaming which is deemed essential by most who analyze multiple staff ministries (Geib, Donnelly, Mitchell, Nuechterlein, Karpenko). A number of researchers have studied communication techniques and how men and women differ in their use of them, especially in work relationships (Loden, Tannen, Gray). There does indeed seem to be some very real differences in how males and females communicate—not just the conveyance of content but also the communication methodology. For example, men talk more in meetings and mixed-group discussions than women (Tannen 1991). Nonverbals also differ as men often sit in a relaxed, stretched-out position, and women tend to sit more "gathered in" (Tannen 1991).

These few differences touch just the tip of the iceberg relative to the differences in communication styles between

men and women. One would be naive to deny that such differences exist, but one should recognize these differences merely as existing realities that need to be recognized and understood rather than perceiving them as a threat from the other person which needs to be changed.

Strong Relational Foundation. While this component is assumed by most researchers as a key issue in teaming, it is singled out by others (Henkelmann). The relational nature of team ministry does have implications relative to the sex of the team members. Because of the nature of our prior experiences and present work patterns, the pressure that society puts on us relative to relationships with the opposite sex, and our sinful self, we must look at how our sinful and skewed perspective of having any type of "relationship" with a member of the opposite sex may influence how we work together.

A 1986 study of the secular workplace found that 56 percent of the workers reported having an affair with a co-worker, customer or client (Blotnick, 1986). Societal norms and trends may have influenced this statistic (especially the trend of having more females in the workplace), since in the 1970's the number reporting having an affair was only seven to nine percent.

A 1990 study of work groups found that "Over 86 percent of those interviewed had been aware of or had been involved in an office romance. Over 50 percent of those surveyed had been sexually propositioned by someone at work; 25 percent had sex in their place of work, and another 18 percent had sex with a co-worker during working hours" (Maineiro, p. 5, 1990).

These statistics would not likely be replicated in the church, but the need to develop a clear understanding of how to develop appropriate relational foundations with members of the opposite sex is critical to effective teaming. Looking at the totality of the teaming relationship while being cognizant of the role (not a minor role, but also not the central role) that one's sexuality plays within each component of effective teaming is the key.

Lisa: You have highlighted communication patterns as one of the differences between how women and men interact in the workplace. I agree that this is one of the key areas to be discussed. However, I do not think authors who suggest that women need to both literally and figuratively find their "voice" are talking about women as "victims," but as those who have not been enculturated into a world where men operate very differently. Tannen (1994) describes one of the man's communication patterns at work as "ritual opposition." While the man is comfortable with and expectant of debate of his ideas, the woman may take such an "attack" personally.

The woman may approach a committee differently. I know some women who are not comfortable talking in meetings which are comprised primarily of men. There is a difference between meetings which consist exclusively of men or women, as well as both-gender meetings. It is at the both-gender meetings that participants must learn the patterns of the other gender in order to work most effectively as a team. We learn by our role models, and so finding a same-sex mentor who can talk through the work situations will assist one in learning *how* to work. An opposite-sex mentor can also assist one in learning about how someone from a different perspective sees the same meetings and assignments. I have had two wonderful female mentors who have helped me learn about how to work in higher education. And you, Mark, have helped me learn more about how to effectively use my influence, something which does not necessarily come easily to women. Males also benefit greatly by association with someone who knows the work world which the younger worker is entering.

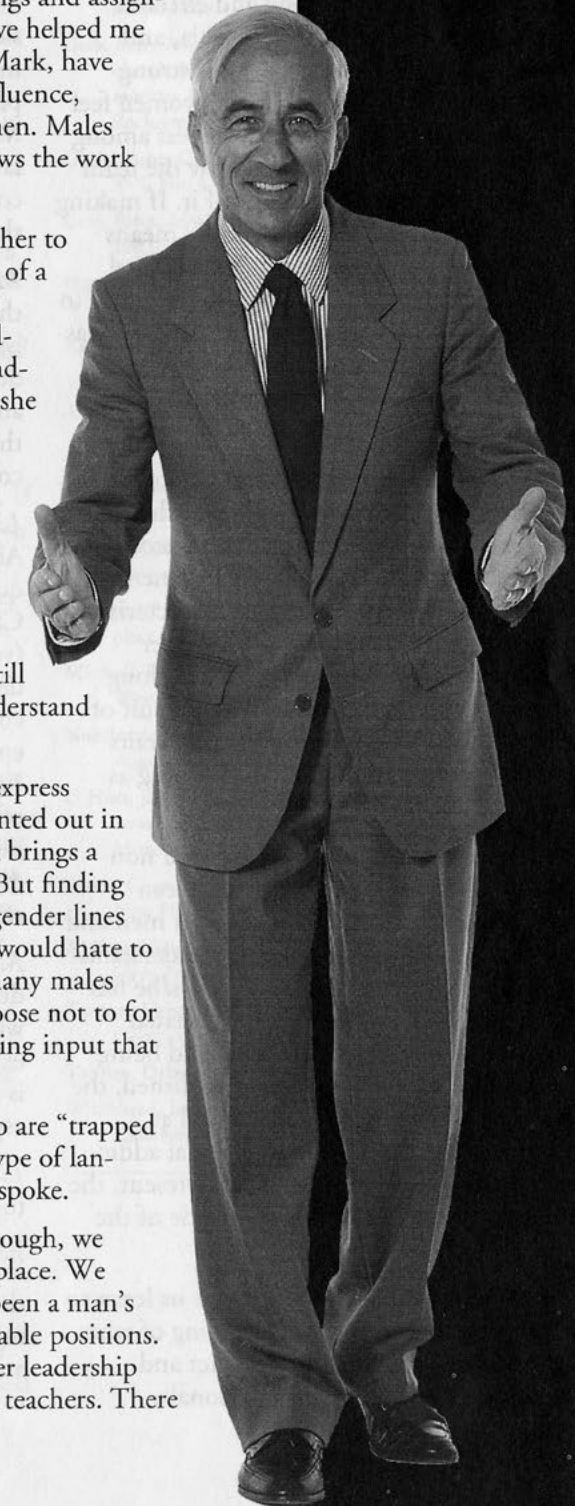
Each woman has a background and history which equips her to do a job competently. I have been blessed by the example of a number of very strong, competent women in my life who have worked in leadership roles. Models throughout childhood and youth assist women and men both in understanding the possibilities for women. A woman needs to know she can contribute. Her perspective and voice add important components to the conversation, especially when that conversation is about ministry to God's people.

Becker (1996) suggests that we are talking about culture. Women are "aliens" in the culture, the man's world: "... women do not know the language or culture, and they are often trapped in difficult situations that they cannot interpret" (p. 31). She believes that the church is still searching for successful ways for males and females to understand each other and lead together (p. 26).

Mark: I agree with the concept of women feeling free to express themselves in any team relationship. As you have just pointed out in reference to my observations, a person of the opposite sex brings a view or perspective that may be unique from one's own. But finding one's voice is an individual need which can apply across gender lines depending on the interpersonal skills of the individual. I would hate to focus only on how this applies to females when I know many males who could and should contribute more of a voice but choose not to for some reason. Are there common needs relative to facilitating input that we can address?

I also would be wary of describing women as "aliens" who are "trapped in situations which they cannot interpret." To me, that type of language perpetuates the victim mentality of which Kersten spoke.

Lisa: In order to really benefit from that point of view, though, we would have to completely reinterpret the church as workplace. We cannot get away from our history which indicates it has been a man's work world, a place where men have dominated the available positions. Only in this century have women begun to take on greater leadership roles as directors of Christian education, deaconesses and teachers. There



is going to be some mentality that the woman may not yet feel at home in the environment, if we are simply perpetuating what has been, rather than restructuring the workplace to take into account both ways of working.

Mark: What do you mean by "perpetuating" what has been? I, too, was influenced by a strong role model in my mother who served as a vocal and effective critic in a career which was full of male influence. The Old and New Testaments give many examples of strong and effective women including Miriam, Ruth, Esther, Priscilla, and Mary. Throughout history we have examples of strong women leaders. What should be done to make women feel more "at home"? If it involves increasing awareness among both sexes regarding gender differences and how the team relationships can be enhanced, I am in favor of it. If making women more "at home" in the workplace simply means putting more women into these previously male-owned positions by decreasing the level of competence necessary to succeed, I am afraid that may go a long way toward decreasing the strong women role models that we have while increasing the tokenism that can take place relative to this issue.

Lisa: The goal is to model leadership and competence, challenging each person to develop in such a way that one is using his/her God-given talents. We strive for an acceptance of a multitude of styles, encouraging women and men to consider that they may successfully integrate characteristics which traditionally may have been those of the other gender. What is essential is a willingness to be a lifelong learner in how to work with other people. The pursuit of healthy relationships directs us toward developing traits motivated by love and service, rather than something as narrow as gender.

Problems such as ineffective communication—and non-acceptance of the other gender as peers at work—can contribute to greater problems within the team. If men and women are told to work together, but have no understanding of where to begin, each will resort to the way s/he has related before. Men and women have related as sexual beings in the past, seen in flirtation, conquest, and being subordinate to another. If a new way is not established, the old way of relating can result in situations labeled as harassment and misconduct. And if the traditional addiction of church workers—workaholic—is also present, the workers are not having personal needs met outside of the office.

Essential components in an education that helps us learn to work together are: 1) developing an understanding of what constitutes and contributes to sexual misconduct and harassment; 2) balancing one's work with personally

fulfilling outside activities with spouse or non-work-related friends; 3) listening to each other in order to understand new and better ways to relate to each other in the workplace; and 4) accepting co-workers as individuals rather than as male or female.

We are learning new ways to relate to each other as we address issues, such as sexual harassment and sexual misconduct, that previously have not been discussed. A common definition of sexual misconduct is the abuse of the professional role. In such a relationship between two people, misconduct occurs when the one who has influence or "power" over the other takes advantage of the situation. Misconduct can include inappropriate touch, remarks, or language. We expect the professional to maintain his/her conduct because s/he is a *professional*, one who has earned the respect and trust of those with whom one works.

Mark: I like the concept of professionalism and a focus on the individual driving how we deal with some of these issues. We need to expand that concept beyond how most define the term "professional" because we are also talking about numerous volunteer positions and other situations that may differ from the traditional concept of the white-collar professional.

Lisa: The Spring 1995 newsletter of the Pastoral Center for Abuse Prevention highlights sexual harassment, and it quotes the definition of harassment of the Presbyterian Church USA as: "Any unwanted sexual advances or demands (verbal/physical) which are perceived by the recipient as demeaning, intimidating or coercive." According to our court system, sexual harassment can include a hostile work environment and sexual bargaining or pressure (Geoly, p. 64, 1995). Sexual harassment and misconduct are products of not taking seriously our co-workers as contributors to ministry, and of not recognizing that the workplace is different than fifty years ago when we did not adequately respect and accept individual differences.

Mark: I also think that sexual harassment is often the product of a co-worker (usually male) with a low self-concept who feels that s/he can somehow increase self-worth by exerting power over another human being. You are right, it is a misperception of the role and worth of the co-worker, especially what that person's role is in relation to you.

Lisa: Models of men and women working successfully together do exist, and there are definitely ways to proceed if we recognize there is an issue which needs to be examined intentionally. Pierce and Page (1986) developed a continuum which describes the "path to collegiality." The male moves from the need to control women, through anger at having to change while recognizing there is much to learn and unlearn, to a recognition that the process of

getting the job done is as important as the assignment (colleagueship). The female moves from controlling men, through an anger that seeks another reality than the male-dominated world, while recognizing that her learned behaviors also influence her perception. Her journey leads to empowerment where mutuality, or partnership, is valued. I have done their continuum injustice by summarizing it briefly. However, this pair has been able to describe the male and female "journeys" in such a way that a helpful educational process emerges.

Mark: Well, we work together, we like each other, we have experienced success so far. I have not experienced what it is like to be a female breaking into a workplace which is populated mostly by members of the opposite sex, so I know I do not understand all of the complexities. How much either of us will ever truly understand the other sex's perspective will be limited. Some of the different perspectives, partially based on our gender, are evident in this article, which indicates that dialog will indeed enhance (and probably complicate) the discussion.

Lisa: And ongoing dialog is, indeed, very necessary. Churches today are fraught with so many challenges, and with a great deal of work to do as we faithfully serve God. If there is something concrete, intentional that can be done to strengthen the Church's ministry, let us pursue that path. The "women/men working together" dialog is an example of something concrete that can lead to greater cooperation in ministry.

Conclusions

To truly see a fellow worker as neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female, is impossible for us in this lifetime. Much discussion has been attempting to forward the development of a multi-cultural society, one in which any culture can be accepted as equal and important. The only problem is that there *are* differences between the cultures, differences that should not be denied and cannot be ignored. How do we recognize and *accept* the differences, while not assuming that each member of that race—or gender—will act in a particular way, based on his/her race, or gender? It is a fine line: Do not *discriminate* because of differences, but recognize there are differences.

A strong spiritual foundation must be the first and final word in any team relationship. It is only in Christ that we have the freedom to live as female or male, recognizing that He gives us all things necessary for ministry. And it is in Christ that we receive forgiveness, as women and men continue to learn to work together through trial and error. May we be open to learning and growth, remaining focused on glorifying Him!

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MEN AND WOMEN WORKING TOGETHER: *Guidelines for Satisfying Work Relations*

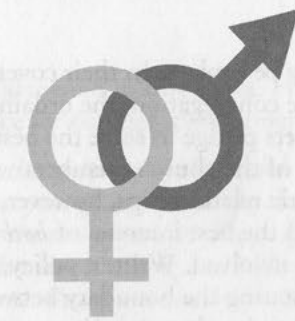
The church should be our sanctuary, or safe place—not just for worship, but also for work and ministry. Insuring a “sanctuary” environment requires a church’s intentional commitment to healthy working relationships which respect each individual’s dignity, strengths and perspectives. Women and men bring distinctive styles, values and language to their ministries, often making sexual respect and equality difficult issues, needing interpretation and special clarity. Therefore, every congregation needs policies concerning sexual ethics and guidelines for handling grievances and complaints. Then the *sanctuary* policies and guidelines need to be enlivened with conversation and training of all paid and unpaid staff, the personnel committee and the congregation.

Three Elements of Work Sanctuary

Personal and spiritual maturity grow from the inevitable discoveries brought by respectfully working with others of different experience, upbringing, attitudes and sex. For these growth opportunities to occur, however, the work place must attend consciously to gender considerations, including the changing role of women in our society and in our congregations.

1. *Work equity* is the primary concern in creating an atmosphere of work *sanctuary*. While women’s role in supporting the life and mission of the church is generally understood as irreplaceable, their measure of participation in the sacramental and administrative life of the church is functionally limited. The church must look at its traditions of power and opportunity to affirm Paul’s and Jesus’ call to the equality,

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- before God, of women and men. This equality must be implicit in the expectations of church staff and members, and explicit in the salary scales and policies adopted by congregations and denominations.
2. Dignity and shared power assure wise stewardship of the talents of all staff, volunteers and congregation members. Of course, prudent management practices demand a division of responsibility and hierarchy of supervision. Yet an environment of cooperative decision-making and goal-setting permits broader staff contributions, respect and cooperation.
 3. The weighty tasks of ministry can hamper spiritual growth among clergy and lay leaders; boundless commitment to God’s work can become burnout. A *sanctuary* work-place also requires appropriate concern for health, time off, professional and personal development.

Romantic Relations

Men and women working together in ministry can lead to conflict or compatibility—and the temptation



Creating a Policy to Prevent Abuse of Sex or Gender

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God's first words to Moses on Mount Sinai included, "build me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among you" (Exodus 25:8). Building a sanctuary for God to dwell among us is no easier now than it was for those early Hebrews.

Protecting *sanctuary* usually relies on a personal safety policy for church workers and members. Though an *ad hoc* committee may be assigned to write a policy, its ultimate success depends on the entire community's understanding and supporting the concept and dynamics of *sanctuary*. Just as it takes a whole village to raise a child, it takes a whole community to promote *sanctuary*.

In many churches the governing board begins the process by adding a statement to their bylaws similar to:

In recognition of the spiritual and public trust given to this faith community, the _____ Church is committed to being a true sanctuary, both nurturing and protecting its members and visitors. Worship of God requires openness, trust, intimacy, vulnerability and a safe supportive community. Abuse and harassment are, therefore, violations of the faith shared by this congregation. Accordingly, the congregation will maintain official policies and procedures which assure prevention of future instances of abuse, appropriate intervention into alleged incidence of abusive behavior, and care for all involved. These procedures will be reviewed by the (governing body) annually to correspond to changes in civil law and the congregation.

Because a bylaw change requires a vote by the whole congregation, the vote in itself promotes education, implementation and support of *sanctuary*.

The personnel committee concentrates on developing, updating and implementing the personnel policy and procedure

call may be broken. In their covenant with the congregation, the ordained or lay leaders pledge to serve the best interest of the church members. Romantic relationships, however, focus on the best interests of *both* persons involved. Written policy, clearly stating the boundary between professional and personal/romantic relationships, should require oversight by the personnel committee of the congregation. If such a break in ministerial covenant is sought by a church worker and church member, the personnel committee should be notified to insure that pastoral care for the church member is provided by another pastor and congregation whose ministry has not been impeached by romance. The personnel committee must also insure that the pastor who is engaged in such a relation is receiving professional supervision through this emotionally complex situation.

Additionally, notifying the personnel committee avoids an illicit nature to the romantic relationship. Secrecy fosters unhealthy intimacy; the couple is linked by their secret, and therefore isolated from others. Romance, in such situations, loses elements of celebration, spontaneity and community recognition, all aspects of healthy affection.

Describing Workplace Sanctuary

No guidelines can be developed to protect *sanctuary*, without a description of what is to be protected. Just what is a positive model for a workplace for men and women? For most church workers, workplace *sanctuary* includes:

- Clarity of vision, direction and goals
- Physical, emotional and spiritual safety
- Opportunities for creativity
- Openness in relationships appropriate to the workplace
- Honest support and understanding

- Respect of differences of needs and interests
- Lack of jealousy and secrets
- Appropriate humor
- Trust of others' and of one's own perceptions
- Encouragement for spiritual growth and self-care
- Appropriate emotional, ethical and work boundaries
- Work equity
- Clear ethical policies and practices

Even a healthy workplace will struggle with creative tension as men and women work together, seeking ways to put gender differences to work for the good of the staff, the congregation and its ministry.

Discerning Potential Problems

Too often indicators of workplace difficulties may be overlooked or "forgiven" in hopes they will just vanish. However, passive solutions are rarely effective and usually maintain the unwelcome dynamics. Without awareness and guidelines for response, intervention and change are impossible. To sharpen that awareness, people need to identify some of these signs of workplace gender-related conflict, such as:

- Chronic misunderstandings
- Competitive attitudes
- Rumors
- Development of "special" relationships (and inappropriate intimacy)
- Obligation to carry secrets
- Inappropriate humor
- Abuse of power or its inappropriate use (for personal gain)
- Lack of regular communication
- Sexist practices in the workplace
- Misplaced anger
- Indirect ways of asserting needs and making decisions (the expectation that others at work will be mind-readers, or hearing of work decisions from someone

outside the direct chain of authority, or using another person who is not present as rationale for a decision)

Instead of overlooking or just accommodating workplace tension, churches need to acknowledge their responsibility as employers and supervisors of volunteers, provide clear policies and effective staff support and supervision, and be aware of professional resources for employee support and management consultation.

What to Do When Problems Occur

A single individual faces stiff resistance if trying to change established work patterns alone. Dealing with relationship problems is best done with objective, trustworthy help and a "pathway" of action in mind. A scripturally suggested pathway says:

1. First acquire clarity. Consult with a trustworthy, objective advisor outside the situation and the workplace, even outside one's family and denomination (a good friend, a spiritual director, an effective therapist).

(Anyone whose professional role includes pastoral responsibilities should have once-a-month job-related conversations with a trusted counselor or supervisor who is outside the pastoral setting. These guidance sessions help identify ways that one's own emotional needs can creep into the guidance and pastoral care offered to others.)

2. Then follow Jesus' conflict management teaching. Congregations should have policies which clearly define and protect workplace *sanctuary*. The personnel policy should also outline a procedure for expressing and resolving the inevitable grievances that occur when people work together. Foreseeing relationship problems, Jesus realized individuals would need

guidance to resolve them. His guidance for conflict management is:

If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or more witnesses. If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Matthew 18:15-17 (NRSV)

a. First, use direct communication (when appropriate).

Direct communication not only resolves the problem in the most straightforward and efficient way, it also creates an expectation of honesty and cooperation that will serve both people well in the future.

However, Jesus' advice was given as general direction; there are two exceptions. One should not attempt direct encounter alone in situations involving emotional, physical or sexual abuse. By attempting to solve the problem in person, some people have found themselves in greater danger and vulnerability than they were before attempting the intervention. A written request for change, or a shift to step (b), may be safer.

The second situation where direct conversation is not recommended is when sexual attraction is involved. Many people have found their attempts to resolve a growing romantic relation sabotaged by the ironic fact that sharing the concern with the other person is itself an act of deepening intimacy. In such situations, the help of an objective counselor is necessary.

b. Take. . . others along with you. Seek help for reconciliation.

Avoid isolation. While many problems can be resolved informally, the help of

manuals. The manual should describe the recruiting, screening, and selection of both volunteer and paid staff—with a sample application form, reference contact form, and necessary procedures and precautions to take in the selection process. The manual should also require that all paid and volunteer staff have job descriptions and signed contracts or agreements concerning the expectations of both the individual and the church. The manual should also assure adequate training and supervision of staff and include guidelines for behavior, evaluation procedure, disciplinary policy and maintenance of confidential personnel files.

To facilitate an understanding of *sanctuary*, the Christian education committee plans educational opportunities for adults and children on issues related to personal safety and healthy relationships. These may include classes as wide-ranging as handling anger, preventing child abuse, or curbing codependency. The pastors include *sanctuary* topics in pastoral prayers, newsletter articles, and sermons. The peace and justice committee or the outreach and mission boards focus for awhile on domestic violence shelters, violations of human rights, children in violent environments and other such concerns.

When the whole church community emphasizes *sanctuary* for its staff and members, the *ad hoc* policy design committee works with more inspiration. Their task should include comprehensive guidelines for congregational safety in relationships, including prevention and intervention of clergy sexual misconduct, child and elder/dependent adult abuse, and sexual harassment. Though policies may be borrowed from other churches or the denomination, each church policy must be tailored to the understanding of *sanctuary* in that setting and the relevant laws for that state.

Among its many decisions, the committee weighs the benefits of forming a standing church response team (CRT)

which can be activated by the governing board if a concern or complaint of abusive behavior needs addressing. (Please contact the Pastoral Center for Abuse Prevention for more information on how such teams function.) In selecting a specific intervention strategy, the committee must restrain the church's tendency to keep secrets and sweep rumors and complaints "under the rug" where they tend to smolder and blow up later. The policy must clarify the limitations of open information for the congregation and confidentiality, based on church and denominational practice and relevant state law.

In designing the policy, questions must be addressed for each of the three sections (clergy sexual misconduct, abuse, and sexual harassment). Following is an outline for a sexual harassment section and questions to consider as it is being designed:

1. Definition

Does the definition used by the church comply with state and federal statutes?

2. Initiation of a complaint

How is a complaint made (in writing, by phone, etc.)? To whom is the complaint officially made?

3. Immediate response

What are the initial steps in processing the complaint? How is the accused informed of the complaint? Will the accused be removed from job responsibilities temporarily?

4. The Inquiry (Inquiry is an investigation, not a trial!)

Who will conduct the inquiry? What procedure will be followed to determine the validity of the complaint and the need to make further report of the alleged situation to the insurance company, church lawyers, ecclesiastical or secular authorities? How will the rights of all involved be respected in the process? Who will know of the findings of the investigating committee (the governing council, deacons, the whole congregation)? Who will make the decisions

an understanding observer can create a healing attitude and, as Jesus implies, help avoid further misunderstanding. Enlisting the help of others also restrains passive conflict-avoidance methods like denial, withdrawal, rumor-spreading or character-assassination.

c. Tell it to the church. Turn to the congregational policy.

Use of the formal policy of the workplace may be necessary, particularly when dealing with an abusive supervisor or a colleague who "refuses to listen." Good policies are designed to protect the person with a grievance, as well as the rights of the person against whom a complaint is filed. Someone preparing to take such a step needs ample support and the guidance of others who are familiar with the church's grievance process and its inevitable frustrations. Someone taking this step must be willing also to cooperate with the formal policy and the people who are responsible for administering it. Though sometimes emotionally quite difficult, the individual releases control of the outcome and the results of the process by using a *sanctuary* policy; sometimes bitterness and revenge feel better, charging us with energy, yet blocking our spiritual growth.

d. Establish personal distance.

If there has been no response to offers of reconciliation, the grieved party must protect him or herself from further hurt and chronically abusive behavior. Jesus recognized this healthy need when he recommended creating emotional, and even physical, distance from the one with whom we have an unresolvable conflict.

Creating an environment of safety does not end the relationship. Jesus recognized that long after a relation has been cut off, the hurt and resentment can continue to preoccupy us. He told his followers, "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for

those who persecute you" (Matthew 5:44). By praying for the offensive person, one often discovers relief from the burden of anger and grief. We must remember that to pray for our enemies does not imply that we let them prey on us. We need to withdraw our vulnerability to such people and maintain our prayers at some distance.

Constructive Steps

It is not enough to know what steps to take under the duress of a conflicted situation. Staff, volunteers and personnel committees have an obligation to be proactive, to take seriously the ongoing commitment to create a workplace that has an environment of safety. Staff and personnel committees can take steps to foster conflict management and ensure that the work experience contributes to personal health and growth for members of the ministerial team.

Constructive Steps Every Church Worker Should Take

1. Ask for clarity in a written employment contract and job description. Discuss any unwritten job expectations, especially concerning time commitments. Thomas Merton wrote, "To allow oneself to be carried away by a multitude of conflicting concerns, to surrender to too many demands, to commit oneself to too many projects, to want to help everyone in everything is to succumb to violence."
2. Trust one's observations and concerns about workplace behavior and atmosphere. Seek resolution of problems before they magnify.
3. Remember, though church work is important, it may not nurture emotional growth and spiritual development. Attend to your soul: take quiet time to listen within, pursue spiritual direction, participate in Bible studies outside your congregation. It is impossible to give what one does not receive.

4. Maintain a broad support system that includes family, friends and others not involved in the church. Prioritize family relationships.
5. Monitor oneself for internal indicators of relational problems. Neither ignore emotional reactions nor indulge them; instead, use them to motivate change.
 - To keep one's behavior in check, seek the help of a professional counselor or spiritual director if sexual fantasies include co-workers. (Do not share them with the co-worker.)
 - Using church policy and Matthew 18:15-17, resolve resentment, hostility, anger, or jealousy so ill feelings from the workplace do not contaminate relationships with God or others. Particularly address any fantasies of revenge which indicate chronic anger.
 - Notice any temptation to manipulate situations to create personal encounters; these human "mating dances" signal an early step in movement toward an intimate, non-professional relationship. Also notice any personal temptation to "cover" for another, to protect secrets, to misuse one's position for personal gain, or to avoid direct communication.
 - Discern and address the unmet needs, anger, and other dis-ease which has stirred these hazardous internal responses to workplace dynamics.

Sanctuary in the workplace will require staff's self-awareness, self-care, and resistance to unreasonable demands.

Constructive Steps Every Church Personnel Committee Should Take

- Review annually the personnel policy, preferably with a knowledgeable consultant,

updating it as necessary to reflect changing culture, legal requirements and insurance mandates.

- Establish appropriate training of all paid and unpaid staff for their job responsibilities. Also include training sessions in sexual harassment, stress management, church policy, conflict management, professional ethics, legal and insurance issues. Document their participation in such training.
- Interview regularly all personnel to evaluate job satisfaction, performance and effective match of talent-to-responsibilities.
- Encourage each staff member to use vacation and continuing education benefits regularly and creatively.

Conclusion

The value of gender differences at work is difficult to overestimate. Emotional balance and flexibility are fostered when we work with people who possess a variety of perspectives. We learn to move beyond being defensive and offended when faced by another's needs. We learn understanding and communication. Since "feminine" and "masculine" traits are within us all, men and women working together foster broader self-understanding and self-acceptance for each other. We discover spiritual maturity and the opportunity to discover and accept aspects of ourselves we would otherwise never know.

Since we invest so much time in our ministries, we should take advantage of the theological, emotional and social aspects of vocation. We should create and celebrate what makes work satisfying and simulating and the church a place of growth and *sanctuary*.

regarding response to the findings? What guidelines insure suspension of the investigation when referral to the denominational authorities, law enforcement, child or adult protective services is mandated? How will appropriate and clear record-keeping be insured?

5. Recommendation for resolution

Who will formulate recommendations for intervention? To whom will those recommendations be made? Who will implement them? Does the policy insure a reconciliation process, including discipline or vindication for the accused, and a healing process for any injured by the abuse (the accused, accuser, their families and the congregation)? If discipline is recommended, is it tiered such that failure of timely compliance triggers more serious consequences? Does the discipline section allow any combination and/or a sequence of:

- censure of the accused;
- opportunities for acknowledgement of the violation and repentance;
- description of expectations for future behavior, which may include (but are not limited to) restitution, counseling, supervision, education, spiritual direction, and/or removal from susceptible environments within the church's ministry for a stated period of time;
- removal from active ministry and leadership positions, whether official or unofficial;
- removal from membership in the congregation?

6. Action by governing body

If any party involved in the complaint disagrees with the recommendations, who has ultimate responsibility for their acceptance, rejection or modification? To whom may the party turn if not satisfied with the ultimate resolution at the local church level? Finally, who will monitor the rehabilitation compliance and recommend further intervention, if necessary?

book reviews

AFTER EDEN: FACING THE CHALLENGE OF GENDER RECONCILIATION by Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen, Project Editor; Annelies Knoppers, Margaret L. Koch, Douglas J. Schuurman, Helen M. Sterk. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993.

THE ISSUE OF MALE-FEMALE WORK RELATIONS within the church inevitably brings up questions of feminism and its relation to women's ordination. However, the authors of *After Eden: Facing the Challenge of Gender Reconciliation* seek to broaden the focus beyond this single church office and a few select Biblical texts to a fuller discussion of gender relations in society, marriage, and all areas of the church. Indeed, *After Eden* offers an extensive overview of what the authors term "Biblical feminism" without touching directly on the pastoral office. Their scholarly, 600-page study critically examines past and present states of gender relations and broken ties in an effort to effect the restoration of *shalom* between men and women. The authors shared their Reformed perspectives on gender relations as part of an interdisciplinary study team sponsored by the Calvin Center for Christian Scholarship.

After Eden opens with a discussion of the Fall as the origin of the split between the genders and its resultant disruption of the mutuality of God's original creation. The authors suggest that human sinfulness consequently manifests itself in societal patterns that elevate some people and oppress others through gender, race, class and other areas. Christ's redemption is a step back toward the mutuality between the genders. The authors call for Christians to work to further healing, justice, and *shalom*.

In their next two sections, the authors deal with the phrase "feminist," recognizing the controversy surrounding this red-flag word. The authors outline various feminist approaches, including feminism that highlights the value of wives and mothers and their need to be active in home and church to radical feminism that either discounts religion entirely or views religion as something that should remain a private affair. The authors further categorize varieties of feminist theology from the Reformed tradition and how they relate to various feminist world views. The value of this section is that it cogently identifies goals and values of various feminist perspectives while simultaneously critiquing their effects on gender relations. Rather than choosing to give blanket condemnation or approval of "feminism," Christians may find commonality with some feminist perspectives, particularly the Biblical feminist values of justice or equality, without necessarily agreeing with all aspects of all feminist perspectives.

To see how gender roles may unconsciously shape our dealings with the opposite sex, *After Eden* surveys current cultural and societal constructions of gender. The authors overview how body image, clothing, and sports may shape and distort a power imbalance between boys and girls and men and women. The authors consider how single-gendered or gender-inclusive language choices may perpetuate our images of the masculinity and femininity of God and humans.

Finally, the authors consider gender relations in the home and workplace. Through case studies of Egyptian and Indian women, the authors demonstrate feminist values applied to domestic work and the nurturing duties of mothers. Their study carries over to the U. S. and how de-valuation of domestic nurturing is intensified by a gender split where value is assigned to public work and masculinity is defined by a man's ability to provide through a salary rather than through being a spouse and parent. Consequently, what is typically men's public waged work and life is valued

over women's private unpaid domestic work. The study further explores the concept of the devaluation of women's work in the public sphere (i.e. the wage differential between blue-collar and pink-collar work).

The final section of *After Eden* lends itself well to this *Issues*' focus on men and women working within schools, congregations and institutions of the church. The book raises questions as to how male Christian athletes balance the values of Christian gentleness and charity against a society that defines masculinity through aggressive and often-violent competition—the same society that often regards religion as too "feminine." Moreover, the authors suggest that masculinity is defined by the ability of a man to support his family on his own. If his wife works, her salary is often referred to as "supplemental income." How have lower salaries and the image of feminized religion affected our ability to recruit men to teach in Lutheran elementary schools? If we truly want to recruit more men into these classrooms, how do we counter these apparent "threats" to masculinity that seem to accompany these positions? Or, how do we break from society's hold to create a Christian image of what men should be? For female workers in the church, how do we deal with the perception that her position is merely "supplemental"? Do we in the church perpetuate a split in gender relations by continuing the wage differential between males and females? Or, how do we value the unpaid work of women and men in the church? Do we give as much value and encouragement to the less-public nurturing work of the Ladies' Aid as we do to the highly visible work of the Board of Elders?

After Eden does not provide easy or specific answers to these and other difficult questions related to gender reconciliation. It does provide an historical, cross-cultural basis for beginning a process of questioning injustices centered in broken gender relations and moving toward a relationship that recognizes the value of male and female as they are both created in God's image.

Lisa Ashby
Assistant Professor of English
Concordia-Seward

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FAMILY LIFE MINISTRY & EDUCATION

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1996 Summer Schedule

June 10-14 Theology 585 - Introduction to Family Life Education and Ministry

- What is Family Life Education and Ministry? - Dr. Joseph Barbour - Concordia Seminary, St. Louis
- Youth and Singles Ministry - Dr. Lisa Keyne, Concordia-Seward
- Small Group Ministries - Rev. Donald Reed
- Parent Educational Ministry - Jean Jones and DCE Jeremy Pera
- Boundaries and Interventions Between Family Education and Family Therapy - Dr. William Doherty, U. of Minnesota, June 13-14 (a "must" for all church professionals)

June 17-21 Psychology 555 - Life-Span Development

- Infancy and Early Childhood
- Middle-Late Childhood
- Adolescence
- Early, Middle, Late Adulthood
- Faith Development for all Ages

Drs. L. Serck, G. Grotjan, S. Bergman, and Prof. M. Blanke

June 24 - 28 Theology 583 - Sexuality and the Family

- Theology of Human Sexuality, Christian Sex Education Resources, Planning for Ministry
- Gender Acceptance in Church and Society; Male/Female Sexual Harassment; Images of Men and Women in Society; Male Identity Issues; *Intervention Skills*
- Sexual Dysfunction and Therapy, Family Life After Infidelity; Miscarriage and AIDS; *Intervention Skills*
- Forcible Sexual Behavior-Rape; Date Rape and Ministry; Abortion: Ministry for those Seeking and Those Who Had an Abortion; Sexually Abused Children and Future Problems; *Intervention Skills*
- Sex and The Law; Healthy Human Sexuality: What is Normal? What is Healthy? Aging and Healthy Sexuality, Dr. Paul Vasconcellos and Rev. Roger Sonnenberg

June 3-7 Aging, Spirituality and Religion Seminar

Theological Perspectives - Holistic Health; Bio-ethics; Faith Development in the Later Years; Worship Settings and Congregational Aging Models. Drs. T. Janzow, M. Bergman, D. Meyer, S. Bergman, and Rev. R. Baerwolf

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Participant Comment: "The impact of this program has had a profound effect on my ministry. It has opened doors to resources and is of great use in my ministry with families and youth."

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LEADING WOMEN. HOW CHURCH WOMEN CAN AVOID LEADERSHIP TRAPS AND NEGOTIATE THE GENDER MAZE by Carol E. Becker. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996.

WHAT KIND OF WORKPLACE IS THE CHURCH today for lay and professional women? How must the church change so that men and women in leadership roles can function equitably and utilize their talents fully? These questions guide Becker's study. To answer these questions, Becker utilized qualitative research techniques—a series of individual interviews along with several focus-group discussions. While she acknowledges that the data gathered are not statistically valid, her findings tap a rich range of experiences of women and men serving in a variety of roles in several Protestant denominations.

Becker's findings regarding the first question are discouraging, though not necessarily surprising. The church is an alien work environment for women. Men control the workplace, have organized it on hierarchical, patriarchal lines, and give

priority to their own tasks. They understand leadership as power. This is true even in denominations which ordain women to the pastoral ministry. Theology—essentially a male enterprise which emphasizes analysis and correct thinking—and language often work against women and remind them of their supposed inferiority. Church power structures often give little heed to women's leadership styles, which see tasks holistically, which emphasize human relationships, and which favor participatory and collaborative processes in dealing with problems and challenges. (Becker cautions, however, that we must avoid stereotyping; not all women use this leadership style, nor do all men reject it.) Women in leadership often receive the message, "You must fit in to men's ways of leading." Women are expected to act like men. Women also face "sexual zoning," which limits access to certain activities to one sex only. As a result, women are "ungifted" and their talents untapped because they do not conform to male patterns of leadership.

With regard to the second question, if the church wishes to encourage women and men to lead together, the prevailing paradigm must yield to a new one, one which must separate authority from dominance and service from bondage. Men must admit the sexism which exists in the system and in themselves. They need to listen to women,

to create a climate of safety and acceptance for women, to share power, and to include them in decision-making. Women must come to terms with power, take pride in the power they already have, learn from men, and boldly be themselves.

Together, women and men need to reflect on the prevailing systems, honestly acknowledge each other, and then take action. They need to confront prejudices and address theological issues, making careful distinctions between theology, culture, and tradition. The church must develop new models which encourage women and men to cooperate in effective, Gospel-centered leadership.

Carol Becker has made an outstanding contribution to the church. Her book is highly relevant to the Missouri Synod whose leadership positions are overwhelmingly dominated by men. The LCMS needs to examine itself and to listen to the experience of those women who function as leaders. We need to know more about what it is like to be a woman teacher, principal, deaconess, director of Christian education, or member of a board. From what I have learned from women colleagues and graduate students, their experiences parallel those of the women whom Becker interviewed. This book should be an essential resource and a stimulus to extensive and honest discussion among men and women in leadership roles throughout the LCMS. Our church needs to make the fullest use of the God-given talents and insights of women in the Synod. We will enhance our witness to Christ and our faithfulness to being a serving and accepting community if we do so.

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