

GOD'S WORD To WOMEN

**Hear the Word of the Lord, O ye women,
and let your ear receive the Word of His mouth (Jeremiah 9:20).**

**Rise up, ye women that are at ease:
Hear My voice, ye careless daughters.
Give ear unto My speech (Isaiah 32:9).**

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Pandita Ramabai of India

Scholar, Humanitarian, Revivalist, and Follower of Jesus

By Eddie L. Hyatt

God's Word to Women Executive Team Member

Pandita Ramabai (1858-1921) was born into a harsh world of sin, injustice, and darkness. But instead of cursing the darkness, she let her light shine and made an impact on her world that is still being felt today.

She was born near Bangalore in the State of Karnataka in SW India. Her father was a devout Hindu who diligently studied the sacred writings of the Hindus. Shortly after Pandita's birth, her father fell on hard times and lost the family home. He then became a public preacher of Hinduism and the family became religious pilgrims travelling throughout India. She wrote,

Ever since I remember anything, my father and mother were always travelling from one sacred place to another, staying in each place for some months, bathing in the sacred river or tank, visiting temples, worshipping household gods and the images of gods in the temples, and reading Puranas in temples or in some convenient places.

She Becomes a Recognized Hindu Scholar and Learns the Religious Basis for the Oppression of Women in Her Country

Even though most Hindu sects did not allow women to study the sacred Sanskrit texts, Pandita's father insisted that she and her mother learn Sanskrit and study the sacred writings of their religion. Pandita showed a remarkable ability to grasp the sometimes complicated teachings of Hinduism and, while in Calcutta, was invited to lecture on "the duties of women" according to the sacred writings. This led her into even more intensive studies of the Hindu scriptures, including the Vedas, the Puranas, and the Dhama Shastras. The Sanskrit scholars of Calcutta University were so impressed with her intellectual prowess that they conferred on her the titles "Sarawati" and "Pandita" (from which she derived her name).

Although she found varying views on different issues in the sacred Hindu writings, she found that the writings were all in agreement about the nature and status of women. She wrote,

Women of high and low caste, as a class, were bad, very bad, worse than demons, and they could not obtain Moshka (liberation) as men. The only hope of them getting this much desired liberation from Karma

and its countless millions of births and deaths and untold suffering, was the worship of their husbands. The husband is said to be the woman's god; there is no other god for her. . . . The extraordinary religious acts which help a woman to get into the way of getting Moshka (liberation) are utter abandonment of her will to that of her husband.

She Becomes a Christian.

While in Calcutta, Pandita came in contact with Christians and was given a Bible for the first time. Through contacts with Christian missionaries who recognized her unusual abilities, she was given the opportunity to go to England and study in a Christian school. As she read her Bible and listened to Christian teaching, she was struck by the fact that the forgiveness and freedom offered by the Gospel were available to both men and women and that there was only One Mediator between the individual and God, Jesus Christ. This was very good news to her. She decided to become a Christian and was baptized in the Church of England in 1883.

With characteristic diligence, she set out to study in depth the

Christian religion and was surprised to find so many different doctrines, creeds, and sects. There were some whose teachings she recognized as having been imported from her homeland. She wrote,

Their teachings were not new to me. I had known them in their old eastern nature as they are in India; and, when I met them in America, I thought they had only changed their Indian dress and put on Western garbs, which were more suitable to the climate and conditions of the country.

Two years after changing her religion, Pandita came to the astounding realization that she had accepted the Christian religion but had not accepted Christ. She said, "One thing I knew by this time: I needed Christ and not merely His religion." She was born again and experienced the witness of the Spirit in her heart that her sins were truly forgiven. What light and joy now flooded her soul!

She Establishes Mukti Mission to Care for Outcast Girls and Widows.

One day while reading the story of George Muller, she asked why missionaries in India had not established a similar faith-mission that relied on God alone for its sustenance. As she pondered this question, she heard the Holy Spirit speak in her heart, "Why don't you begin to do this yourself, instead of wishing for others to do it?"

As a result of this experience, she established the Mukti Mission in 1889 near Kedgaon in the State of Maharastra, for the purpose of

caring for widows and orphan girls. *Mukti* means "liberation" or "salvation."

Trusting God alone as her Provider, she established a grade school, a high school for the girls, and a Bible Institute. She also established a vocational school to teach the girls and widows various trades so that they could live successfully on their own. Over time, a hospital was established and a printing office that employed 30 men. Before long there were over 1500 residents at the thriving Mukti Mission.

During a severe famine in 1896, Pandita toured area villages and rescued thousands of outcast children, child widows, orphans, and other destitute women. Although none were pressured to become Christians, multitudes turned to Christ because of the help they received and the love they experienced from Pandita and her helpers. The Hindu governor of the state heard of the amazing charitable work of the Mukti Mission and paid them an unexpected visit and commended them for their work.

Revival Breaks Out at Mukti Mission.

At the beginning of 1905, Pandita was led by the Lord to start a daily prayer meeting. She says,

There were about 70 of us who met together each morning, and prayed for the true conversion of all the Indian Christians including ourselves, and for a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit on all Christians of every land.

The number of those attending the daily prayer meeting soon grew to over 500.

On June 30, 1905, while Pandita was teaching a girl's class from John, Chapter 8, the Holy Spirit fell as in the Book of Acts. Everyone in the room began to weep and pray aloud. This work of the Spirit spread to other classes and Pandita suspended regular school activities, giving the Holy Spirit free reign in their midst. It was obvious that their prayers for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit were being answered.

In the beginning, the meetings were dominated by much weeping, repentance, and confession of sin. Some fell to the ground writhing and contorting as demons came out as in the New Testament. Then came glad singing, wonderful praise, and joy-filled dancing. Many began to experience the baptism in the Holy Spirit and to speak in tongues as in the Book of Acts. Visiting English-speaking missionaries were amazed to hear illiterate Indian girls speaking in fluent English, giving glory to God.

This was the beginning of the Pentecostal Revival in India and it spread throughout the nation. It was also 9 months before the revival began at Azusa Street in Los Angeles. No doubt, the prayers of the Mukti Mission played a vital role in the outbreak of the world-wide 20th century Pentecostal movement.

She Leaves an Amazing Legacy.

In addition to her administrative and teaching duties at the Mukti Mission, Pandita translated the



Bible from the original Hebrew and Greek into Marathi, her mother tongue. She also authored books and tracts that were printed on the Mukti printing press and distributed throughout India. She passed away in 1921 after a very full and fulfilling life.

In commemoration of the 100 year anniversary of the Mukti Mission, the government of India, in 1989, approved the issuance of a commemorative postage stamp in Pandita's honor with her photo. In 1999 *The Australian* newspaper listed Pandita as one of the top 20 humanitarians of the 20th century.

That same year, the well-known Indian author, Vishal Mangalwadi, recognized Pandita as the one who began reforming India's attitude toward women and, therefore, "a builder of modern India" and "the Indian woman of the Millennium."

Yes, Pandita came into a world filled with injustice and darkness. Her response, however, was not to curse the darkness but to turn on the light. She would probably say to this generation of both men and women, "Go and do thou likewise."

About the Author: Dr. Eddie L. Hyatt has served as a pastor, teacher, missionary, and professor of theology in the U.S. and Canada and has ministered in India, Indonesia, England, Ireland, Sweden, Poland, and Bulgaria. His ministry is characterized by a unique blend of the anointing of the Holy Spirit with academic excellence and over 40 years of ministerial experience. Eddie has made a life-long commitment to the study of Scripture, church history, and Spiritual

renewal. He holds a Doctor of Ministry from Regent University where he majored in church history and spiritual renewal. He also holds the Master of Divinity and a Master of Arts in Pentecostal-Charismatic Studies from Oral Roberts University. Eddie has lectured on revival, church history and various Biblical themes in churches, conferences and some of the major educational institutions in the world today, including Christ Church (Oxford University), Oral Roberts University, Zion Bible College, Celebration Bible College, and Christ For the Nations Institute. He has authored several books, including the highly acclaimed *2000 Years of Charismatic Christianity*, which is used as a textbook in colleges and seminaries around the world. The Lord's mandate to Eddie for this season of his life is to "feed My sheep." He and his wife, Susan, reside in Grapevine, Texas, from which they carry on a ministry of teaching, preaching, writing, and publishing. (www.EddieHyatt.com and DrEddieHyatt@gmail.com).



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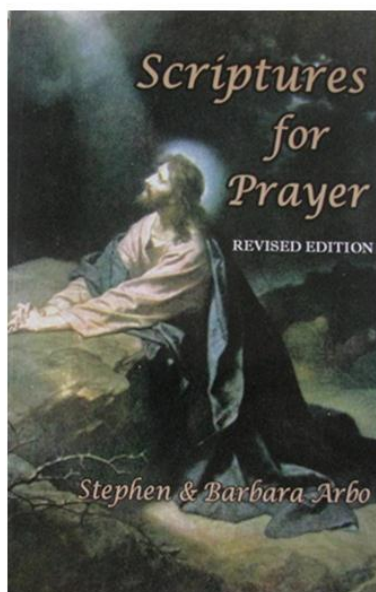
Joyously meeting needs and warmly infusing lives with the power of God's Presence, Barbara brings the Word of God alive as she relates it to achieving the victorious life today.

Wife to Steve and mother of two sons, Barbara has traveled extensively for over thirty years, preaching the Gospel throughout the USA, in Canada, Europe, and the Caribbean.

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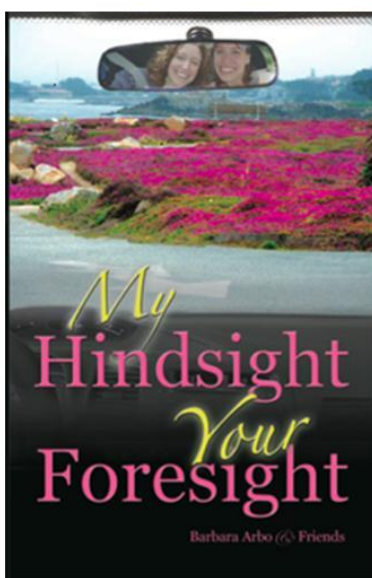


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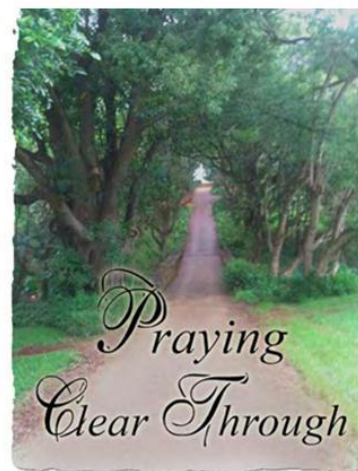
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Have You Ever Been Called “A Feminist”?

Name-calling is usually a fear tactic used
to tame a person through blame and shame,
but the Truth sets us free.

By Susan Stubbs Hyatt
God's Word to Women Executive Team Leader

Feminism seems to have become a very bad word, a negative term with nasty overtones. In fact, it is often used as a derogatory term to try to shame and tame those of us who have discovered our equality with our Christian brothers.¹ So, are we *feminists*?

The real issue isn't the label or the name calling. What is important is the content of our belief. Does it line up with the Bible, correctly interpreted? And how does this compare with what feminists believe?

The Bible, accurately interpreted, teaches the equality of men and women in terms of substance and value, privilege and responsibility, function and authority in all areas of life, ministry, and marriage. This has been substantiated by the best Conservative scholars. So, then, with godly wisdom and confidence, we should proclaim this aspect of Jesus' Message. We

are reminded of His words in the Great Commission that we are to teach ALL that He commanded (Matthew 28:18-20), thus, making God's ways known on earth and His salvation among all nations (Psalm 67:1-2).

So what exactly is the *Word and Spirit Model* of Biblical equality for women? And how does it compare with other belief systems that teach the equality of women, such as Conservative Evangelical Feminism and Liberal Religious Feminism.

Two strategic facts clearly reveal the Biblical position. The first of these is The Word of God, correctly interpreted through informed and sound methods of interpretation. The second is the activity of the Holy Spirit throughout the centuries.

The Jesus of the Gospels Is the Only Legitimate “Starting Point.”

Sound interpretation begins with what Jesus taught and did not teach in word and deed. For example, He didn't teach women to submit to male “headship.” But He did clearly teach the following 10 things:²

1. Women are equal with men.
2. Women are not property.
3. Women are more important than religion.
4. Women are equal partners with men in marriage.
5. Women have equal responsibility and authority in ministry.
6. God is not male (God is Spirit), and women can represent God.
7. Women are equal with men in God's family values.
8. Women are not confined to the kitchen (*i.e.*, to culturally defined gender roles).
9. Women are not saved or evaluated by child-bearing.
10. Women can be apostles.

Correct interpretation must also be applied to all Biblical passages, including the so-called “difficult passages” in Paul's letters and in the Genesis account.³ What did the Author and author really mean? What did a word or passage really mean to the original readers, and how does it apply to us today?

The Biblical position is also revealed throughout the 2000 years of church history. Whenever God has poured out His Spirit, there has always been a corresponding elevation of women toward equality with men to the

¹ The substance of this article comes from pages 120-125 of *A Biblical Theology of Womanhood for Spirit-Oriented Believers: A Course Designed for Pentecostal/Charismatic Training Contexts*, my doctoral dissertation at Regent University School of Divinity in 2000. It shows that a Word and Spirit Biblical Doctrine of Equality for Women is based in the Word of God, accurately interpreted, and on the activity of the Holy Spirit, seen both in the Early Church and Revival History.

² Susan Hyatt, *10 Things Jesus Taught about Women and a Few Things He Didn't Teach*. Tulsa: Hyatt Press, 2009.

³ Susan Hyatt, *In the Spirit We're Equal*. Dallas: Hyatt Press, 1998.

degree that the prevailing culture allows. (*Revival* is the intrusion of the Spirit of God and the culture of Heaven into human culture. It confronts and offers to change the prevailing human culture, allowing bits of Heaven's ways to prevail.)

But then, as the revival wave ebbs, a corresponding return to the subordination and silencing of women returns.

It is, in fact, both the Word of God and the Spirit of God that lift women to that place of equality and dignity that God intended from the beginning. The Word and The Spirit agree, and all of the evidence shows that both speak "equality."

How Does This Compare with Conservative Evangelical Thought and with Liberal Feminism?

This Word and Spirit Model of Biblical equality for women does share some common ground with a Conservative Evangelical position. For example, both hold the Bible in highest esteem as the inspired Word of God, authoritative for every aspect of life. Further, both agree on crucial doctrinal issues such as the deity of Jesus Christ, the reality and necessity of His life, death, resurrection, and ascension, and return, and the need to be born again.

Nevertheless, the Word and Spirit Model and the Conservative Evangelical understanding disagree on major issues concerning the Holy Spirit, such as the Baptism of the Spirit (e.g., Acts 1:8; 2:4), divine healing as in the Atonement, and the gifts of the

Spirit. This difference is because the historical roots are in different theological soil. This difference is demonstrated by the late Biblical scholar, David M. Scholer, commenting on 1 Timothy 2:11-12:

Generally, persons raised within holiness, pentecostal and certain Baptist traditions experienced women teaching authoritatively in the church long before they were equipped to interpret 1 Timothy 2:11-12 and never found that passage a problem. Conversely, persons raised in many Reformed traditions knew long before they were equipped to interpret 1 Timothy 2:11-12 that women were to be excluded from authoritative teaching in the church. They grew up finding the verses clear support for what they believed.⁴

It is important to note that some common ground does exist between the Word and Spirit Model and any Feminist Model. However, this common ground is determined by the definition of the word *feminism*. As defined by highly respected theologian, Clark Pinnock, *feminism* is "an advocacy of the right of women based on a theory of the equality of the sexes."⁵ Using this definition, it can be said that a Biblical theology of womanhood (a Word and Spirit Model) is, in fact, feminist!

⁴ David M. Scholer, "1 Timothy 2:9-15 and the Place of Women in the Church's Ministry," *Women, Authority, and the Bible*, ed. Alvera Mickelsen (Grand Rapids: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 215.

⁵ Clark Pinnock, "Biblical Authority and the Issues in Question," *Women, Authority, and the Bible*, 51.

Feminism, then, is a broad term, but the Biblical Model (the Word and Spirit Model) differs from Secular and Liberal Models in its stance on the authority of Scripture. The Word and Spirit Model upholds both the inspiration and inerrancy of The Bible in the original manuscripts. However, Secular and Liberal Feminists deny its inspiration and inerrancy.

Another important distinction between the Word and Spirit Model and other forms of feminism is the "starting point." Liberal Feminists begin the development of their doctrine with female experience. Contrary to this, The Word and Spirit Model points to Jesus as the only legitimate starting point.

A further distinction is also worthy of note. Liberal Feminists, and today, some Conservative Evangelicals, would be open to contemplative practices and mystical experience. The Word and Spirit Model accepts no extra-biblical practices, experiences, or phenomena. Instead, it accepts only *bona fide* expressions of the Holy Spirit, biblically affirmed.

Nevertheless, the Biblical position does agree with Liberal Feminists on two important points:

1. Women, including God's women, have been wrongly diminished, disregarded, and mostly written out of history.
2. The Church's traditional theology of womanhood has been laced with a dislike for women (*i.e.*, *misogyny*).

Despite similarities with forms of feminism, the Word and Spirit

Model of Biblical equality for women is a distinct model not derived from either the Conservative Evangelical Model or the Liberal Feminist Model.

- The Word and Spirit Model of Biblical womanhood embraces the manifest activity of the Holy Spirit in and through Spirit-baptized believers. This is not the case with Liberal Feminists nor with Conservative Evangelicals (if they remain true to their historical-theological roots and cessationist stance on the Holy Spirit).
- The Word and Spirit Model of Biblical womanhood embraces the inspiration and inerrancy of the Scriptures in their original documents. Conservative Evangelicals agree; Liberal Feminists disagree.
- The Word and Spirit Model of Biblical womanhood has had to grapple with the institutional Church's terrible history of misogyny. Conservative Evangelicals tend to be blind to this history and hold tenaciously to the erroneous notion that women are subordinate.⁶ To their credit, a more honest contingent of Conservative Evangelical scholars is attempting to correct the errors of the past.⁷ Liberal Feminists

⁶ A good example of this position would be the Council for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood which articulates its version of the traditional theology in its *Danvers Statement*. Leading proponent of this position are Wayne Grudem and John Piper.

⁷ The leading advocacy group holding this position would be Christians for Biblical

agree that the traditional theology of womanhood is misogynous and unacceptable, and they see the Bible as hopelessly patriarchal and feel they must "leave Christianity in order to participate in Jesus' discipleship as equal."⁸

So, What Is A Biblical Theology of Womanhood?

Because it is so fundamental, it is worth repeating that the Word and Spirit Model of Biblical equality for women must be defined in terms of both Word and Spirit—adequately informed and accurately understood—because the two agree. Of course, this agreement is found in Jesus. And historically, it was found in whole or in part, in the beliefs and practices of revival people. One example would be Charles Fox Parham and his wife Sarah Thislethwaite Parham and her sister Lilian Thislethwaite, the trio who founded the Pentecostal revival of the 20th Century. Another example would be the early Society of Friends.⁹ ¹⁰,

Equality and such scholars David M. Scholer, Catherine Clark Kroeger, Millard Erickson, and Roger Nicole.

⁸ Virginia Mollencourt writes, "I am beginning to wonder whether indeed Christianity is patriarchal to its very core. If so, count me out. Some of us may be forced to leave Christianity in order to participate in Jesus' discipleship as equal." Virginia Mollenkott, *Christian Century* (7 March 1984): 252. See also Rosemary Radford Ruether, "The Task of Feminist Theology," *Doing Theology in Today's World*, ed. J. D. Woodbridge and T. E. McComiskey (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 359-376. See also S. Hyatt, *In the Spirit We're Equal*, 275-290.

⁹ Hyatt, Doctoral Dissertation, Chapter 3, 83-89.

¹⁰ S. Hyatt, "Biblical Equality and The Friends," *In the Spirit We're Equal*, 83-130. See also S. Hyatt, *Seeking Equality and Finding an Answer in a Spirit-Led Approach to Biblical*

especially in leaders like George Fox, William Penn, and Margaret Fell. Further, research has uncovered historical evidence that points consistently to this reality.

Also, today, through the diligent research of Conservative Biblical scholars like the late Catherine Clarke Kroeger and the late David Scholer, we have the keys that unlock the original intent of previously troublesome passages.

With this reality as our lens, we can confidently trust in the truth of the Word and Spirit Model of Biblical equality for women.

It is characterized by the following:

- A high view of Scripture as the Word of God.
- Respect for the cultural context of the passage.
- Respect for the literary context of the passage.
- Respect for literary genre of the passage.
- Regard for the author's purpose and intent.
- Awareness and application of the best scholarly data regarding the actual meaning of the words used by the author.
- Awareness of patterns, paradigms, and principles, as opposed to *hapax* or "cut and paste" methods of interpretation, in arriving at beliefs.
- Recognition that the Holy Spirit existed before the Written Word and was The

Interpretation, Unpublished manuscript, (Dallas: Hyatt Press, 1996).

Agent inspiring the Written Word.

- Recognition of the use of metaphors and symbols in Scripture, but refusal of interpretations of Scripture that employ *eisegesis*.¹¹
- Respectful cooperation in reaching agreement, but without denying or diminishing the priesthood and prophethood of all believers.
- An informed questioning of any and all interpretations of womanhood derived from Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, and Calvin.¹²
- Recognition and obedience to the Lordship of The Living Word, Jesus Christ, as the only legitimate starting point for all theological formulation.

We Have Good Reason for the Hope that Is in Us.

For Christians, a Biblical theology of womanhood should begin and end with Jesus and be consistent with His teaching on womanhood. It then looks at the continuation of Jesus' message through the activity of the Holy Spirit in relation to women among the first Christians. It proceeds to Paul's letters to the young churches where it deals with some of the

¹¹ *Eisegesis* (from Greek εἰς "into" and the ending from *exegesis* from ἐξηγεῖσθαι "to lead out") is the process of misinterpreting a text in such a way that it introduces one's own ideas, reading into the text. This is best understood when contrasted with *exegesis*. While *exegesis* draws out the meaning from the text, *eisegesis* occurs when a reader reads his or her interpretation into the text. As a result, *exegesis* tends to be objective when employed effectively while *eisegesis* is regarded as highly subjective.

¹² See Hyatt, *In the Spirit We're Equal*, 39-221.

key topics used by traditionalists to define biblical womanhood. Finally, it looks at passages in Genesis.

When this is done with sufficient, accurate information and sound principles of Biblical interpretation, it is abundantly clear that the Bible teaches the equality of women with men. It can be confidently stated that the evidence simply does not support the doctrine of authoritarian male headship and female subjugation. Again, the foremost authority on this issue, the late David M. Scholer writes,

I am fully convinced that the Bible does not institute, undergird, or teach male headship and female submission, in either the traditionalist or complementarian forms of evangelical thought, which exclude women from equal participation in authority with men within the body of Christ, whether in ministry or marriage or any other dimension of life.¹³

When the scriptural strongholds used to subjugate women are read in context and with historical accuracy, it is clear that these interpretations are terribly inaccurate and extremely self-serving. It is also clear that their *intended* meanings agree with Jesus' teaching in which men and women are regarded as equal in both substance and value, privilege and responsibility, function and authority. Accurately interpreted, these formerly

troublesome passages also confirm the equalizing activity of the Holy Spirit in Revival Moments through the centuries.

Based on this biblical evidence, it is clear that woman stands before God equal in every respect with man. And in this scenario, function is not legislated by roles determined by fallen culture's preferences imposed on God's Word. What we do and do not do is simply governed by God's giftings and by our willingness to be led by the Holy Spirit.

So is this *feminism*? Is the Word and Spirit Model of Biblical equality for women a feminist doctrine?¹⁴ Or is it simply Biblical truth?

About the Author: Dr. Susan Stubbs Hyatt has a DMIN from Regent University, two MAs from Oral Roberts University, a BA, and is a graduate of the University of New Brunswick Teachers College and Christ for the Nations Institute. She also did post-graduate studies at Fuller Theological Seminary and is a Certified Life Skills Coach. She has ministered internationally and written substantially. She is CEO of the Christian Historical Society of Canada and God's Word to Women, and is co-founder of Hyatt Int'l Ministries. She represented was a participant at the *Colloque Femmes et Religions* (2001) in Brussels. She has received several academic awards. (DrSueHyatt@live.com)

HOW TO KNOW GOD'S WILL

RECOGNIZE who you are & what you have
VALUE who you are & what you have and
GIVE who you are & what you have
To Those Who
RECOGNIZE who you are & what you have
VALUE who you are & what you have and
RECEIVE who you are & what you have.

¹⁴ Author's Note: Every doctrine is like a puzzle of 1000 pieces. This brief article is one of those pieces. To assemble the full picture of the Biblical doctrine of equality for women, please, see my book *In the Spirit We're Equal* (1998) and my course, *The Spirit, the Bible and Women* (2000). Contact DrSueHyatt@live.com.

¹³ Scholer, 51.



Words of Compassion, Comfort and Healing with Gladys Raj



A few weeks ago, a cry for help came to God's Word to Women from "E." She writes,

About 14 years ago, we were in a church that made me afraid. Finally, when they thought I needed to be delivered from a demon, I ran out in fear. I am in bondage now. I have taken prescription drugs. I feel guilty. I repent about being immoral and a bad woman, mother, and wife. I repent, but it seems too late. I shrink inside. Please, can you help me?

Dear E.,

Reading your email I gather that you might be struggling and tormented with fear, guilt, and self-condemnation.

First of all, may I assure you that our God, the Creator of heaven and earth, is a loving God. He is the One who created us and He cares for us. He does not want anyone to perish but to have ever lasting life. That is why He sent His Son and our Savior Jesus Christ to pay the penalty on our behalf for our sin, mistakes, and wrong doings. He bore our sin and sickness and He took away our guilt, shame, fear, and self-condemnation.

As you know, there are two forces in this world – the forces of darkness (Kingdom of Satan) and the forces of Light (Kingdom of God). Jesus, God Himself, came to this world to destroy the works of the devil. Jesus defeated the devil 2000 years ago. Though he has been defeated, he has not been taken out of this world. Since he has not been taken out of this world, he still tries to torment people. The Good News is that once we repent of our sin and surrender our lives to Jesus, we will be freed from the power of Satan. We come under the protection of Jesus, as children of God, and we must believe, trust, and know that we are no more under the power of Satan.

Jesus paid the penalty on our behalf and bailed us out from bondage. I would, therefore, encourage you to accept and receive the Heavenly Father's love, forgiveness, and pardon, which He made available through His Son Jesus Christ. There is no sin that Jesus cannot forgive. Release your fear, guilt, and self-condemnation to Jesus. Let Him fill your heart with His peace, love and joy.

Gladys

ABOUT GLADYS RAJ. Gladys is on the Advisory Council of God's Word to Women. She was born in India to a Christian family. After completing her BA in Bombay, she worked for an oil company in that city before moving to the Middle East to escape an abusive marriage. Baptized in the Holy Spirit in 1985, she experienced the peace that Jesus promised in John 14:27. God also spoke to her from 2 Corinthians 1:3-4: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."

The Lord used her to pioneer the Women's Aglow Fellowship in the Middle East, and as an elder in the local church, she preached, taught, mentored, prayed for the sick, and set the

captives free. In 1993, she received her MA in Missions from Oral Roberts University, and in 1994, she was certified as a Clinical Pastoral Education at the Psychiatric State Hospital in Oregon, where she worked with a wide range of disturbed men and women. She later worked as a Staff Hospice Chaplain in Houston, TX, and at the Community Medical Hospital in Fresno, CA. She is a Board Certified Chaplain of the Association of Professional Chaplains Healing through Spiritual Care.

Gladys is a non-denominational, ordained minister. She has travelled extensively both in the United States and in many nations, preaching and teaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ and conducting Healing Seminars. The Lord Jesus Christ has used her to help those oppressed of the devil, afflicted by emotional wounds, bound by addictions, depression, and physical infirmities through one-on-one spiritual counseling, teaching, preaching, Healing Seminars, and deliverance prayers. The gifts of the Spirit are operating in her ministry for the glory of the Lord. Her web site is www.healingrestoration.org.



Beyond Biblical Equality In Ministry

By Linda Miller

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Biblical equality is often defined as equal access and privilege to serve in church or ministry settings. However, the tenants of respect, honor, and access to full personhood and potential must reach beyond biblical equality in ministry to encompass all of life. God's original intention was for us to live life in relationship with Him and one another; respecting, understanding, and encouraging each other to be His creation, without dominance or one up-man-ship (Gen. 1:27-28, 31; 2:8)

Sadly, in most cultures, we are far from God's original design. Men dominate women; children are abused and neglected; and interpersonal relationships reflect a model of pride and dominance, rather than equality or equal respect for each person's thoughts, abilities, and actions.

True biblical equality encompasses all of life, not just equal "ministry" privilege and responsibility. Living and enjoying biblical equality requires a change in thinking, believing, and acting. It is often counter-cultural, both in church and society.

I'm the first to admit to the difficulty of changing thoughts, habit patterns, feelings, and actions. For me, changes in thinking began over 20 years ago. I attended a conference presented by a well-known female evangelist. She proclaimed the truth that women were not

subservient to men. Throughout the years, I've continued to learn, grow, and live out my beliefs of equality. It has been a journey with many dangers, toils, and snares. The journey has brought me joy and tears; peace and turmoil, and finally a sense of freedom within my own soul and spirit as I endeavor to live from a different paradigm.

He whom the Son sets free is free indeed (John 8:36). Yes, when we come to Christ and wholeheartedly give our life to Him we are free from the bondage of sin and death (Romans 6:23). Our spirit is re-born and our life is now lived on three dimensions (spirit, soul, body) instead of only two (soul, body) (John 3:5-8). But, our mind is now in need of renewing (Romans 12:1-2). We are new creations, but our mind is not programmed to think like God thinks, which in turn causes us to

miss the true freedom Christ purchased for us (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Females in many religious cultures, including the USA, are set free through a life changing salvation experience, but then, often, inaccurate biblical teaching attempts to limit our lives in one way or another. A combination of inaccurate teachings, along with experiences lived within our family of origin, community, and national cultures often cause us to think and feel we are "lesser" than males. I was not aware of my faulty thinking and believing until I heard the message of equality.

In this article I've chosen to highlight a faulty teaching that had a negative effect on my life, my husband, and our family. We became Christians in 1975 during the powerful Charismatic Renewal which swept through mainline denominations. My husband was

instantly healed of pre-mature arthritis and bursitis, delivered from tobacco and alcohol, and set on fire for God. I also had a powerful encounter with the Lord in which I cried out of my innermost being, "Lord, make me whole!" I was unaware of not being whole before those words sprung from my mouth. I freely surrendered my all to the Lord, and experienced *joy unspeakable and full of glory!* (1 Peter 1:8-9). It was only later in our walk with the Lord, that in ignorance we read and believed that I as a woman was to *submit* if we were in a *deadlock* over a decision.

As we understood it then, to *submit* meant I surrendered to the *wiser* authority of my husband. The idea to submit or surrender my ideas to his only applied in certain situations. Actually, for us, it was when we didn't give the decision making process enough time, or we didn't investigate the issue enough to make an informed, healthy decision together. In other words, in a sense, it became a cop out for me. By relinquishing my equal share in the decision, I could then assume little responsibility for the decision my husband made. This in turn put him in a catch 22 position-*he was damned if he did, and damned if he didn't.*

During this period of our lives we served the Lord and our community through our crisis pregnancy center. But, our desire to return to our home state continued to pull on us strongly. Our four teenage children were in crucial ages of development. We prepared to return to our home

state even as our sixteen year old son threatened to stay behind. As much as we tried to talk together from our limited understanding of his needs, we failed to come to any kind of agreement as parents and son. He remained adamant that he would not leave with us. I was frantic. We were in a stalemate. A more mature understanding of personal dynamics and emotional upheaval was clouded by a belief that the father was the authority in the home.

As the evening before our departure drew to a close, we still did not have our son home. I was distraught. The following day we were ready to leave after packing up our large U-Haul truck and saying good-bye to friends. I demanded we not leave without our son. My husband, weary from the emotional and physical strain that comes with a major move, only saw a packed truck, our house rented out, and the financial burden of it all. I finally acquiesced and fell under the spell of surrendering the decision to my husband. Early the next morning we left without our son. He called to tell us he was safe and would contact us after we arrived in our new location. In shock, I cried many tears during our trip.

As it turned out, to our surprise, our son's girlfriend was pregnant and he planned to marry her. As you read this, you may be aware that we did not have the open and respectful communication which is common in healthier family dynamics. Yes, we were more authoritarian back then, to our regret. Because I relinquished my decision making, both my

husband and I suffered the consequence of *his* decision. I blamed him for being cold-hearted and leaving our son behind. It took a number of years to mend the damage done in our relationship. I cannot place blame only on faulty biblical teaching. Faulty teaching, combined with my upbringing, caused me to be passive in emotionally charged situations that required a solid decision.

I have learned through my journey that as an equal in decision making, I must own the consequences of my decisions. I endeavor to look at all aspects of an issue that may have us in a stalemate, and then make an informed decision. If, as husband and wife, we cannot come to a decision together, then, I look at who is more affected, and importantly, what are the consequences, and what is the right thing in light of biblical truth, trust, integrity, and recent past behavior. At times, a decision has to be put on hold, giving more time for prayer and fact finding. Other times, I've discovered I must go ahead with my decision even if we are not in agreement. After prayer, soul searching, gaining biblical wisdom, listening to the Holy Spirit, and possibly receiving godly counsel about a decision, I proceed to carry it out. As long as I know I am abiding in Jesus and His word as a lifestyle, I have God's peace as I take the course of action I believe is right.

True Christ-like living goes beyond biblical equality in ministry. It permeates all of life. To be fully free, we must stand

complete in Christ. Our completeness encompasses the whole person. Freedom in Christ is spiritual, mental, emotional, social, and economic. It requires we continue to learn and grow into women and men who represent Jesus in His love, respect, truthfulness, and integrity. It takes shifting our thinking, feeling, and behaving. It doesn't happen overnight-it is a journey, but a journey worth taking. It leads to greater freedom in all life's endeavors. In equality we value respect for our self and others, regardless of age, race,

culture, or gender. I haven't arrived to where I want to be, but I embrace my journey into greater freedom. Bit by bit, mile by mile, I move more and more into the freedom which was wrought for me on Calvary.

About the Author: Linda Miller is a licensed minister. She serves as a Distance Learning Adjunct Professor in the Undergraduate and Bible Institute Program at Oral Roberts University, and she offers Discover Your God-Given Gifts and Pastoral Care seminars. Linda earned both Master of Divinity and Master of Administration of Christian Education from Oral Roberts Graduate School of Theology and Missions, with post-graduate training in

Clinical Pastoral Education. She also has a degree in nursing and graduated from Rhema Bible Training Center. Linda's ministry experience includes Bible teacher, children's education director, pastoral care counselor, chaplain, and short-term missionary. She founded a pro-life crisis pregnancy and an accredited Bible institute on Long Island, NY. She also served as hospital chaplain. Linda encourages believers to fulfill God's purpose and plans. She aims to bring healing to the whole person by allowing the Holy Spirit freedom to transform lives. Linda enjoys people from cultures different from her own, and she has enjoyed ministry in Bulgaria, Jamaica, and Haiti. She and her husband, Conrad, live in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma. They enjoy their four grown children and 10 grandchildren. Contact Linda at conlinmiller@cox.net.

From Around the World

Maybe you can call it that [*i.e.*, hunger for truth] but really, I just want to know I'm loved equally by the God who created me. I have struggled with this deeply over the last year and I'm just at the point where I need to know the truth. I'm not even willing to walk with a God who would create me inferior and condone the treatment of women I have seen, read about and experienced. I have already been encouraged by the little I have read and I can't wait to get the material you're sending. I'm praying for freedom. Thank you again. *NL - Pennsylvania*

Last night I had a revelation, that the ***FULL*** Gospel is not being preached! It exploded on the inside of me, powerfully! I am righteously angry, this ***FULL GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST MUST BE PREACHED*** The equality of Women is the full Gospel of Jesus Christ! We have been hoodwinked for too long & brainwashed! It is time for renewed minds of the truth of God's word, & to ARISE & PREACH & TEACH!! *SDC - England*

I am devouring your book [*In the Spirit We're Equal*]! What a relief it is to hear the wonderful work of the Holy Spirit...I can't wait to launch out with Jesus in a new journey ... Your book has been like fresh water to a thirsty soul. *JS - Canada*

My married son said today that it blesses a man to know the truth of equality. the pressure on a man to be like Jesus, provider , spiritual leader (whatever that means in a marriage) etc., is hard for men to live up to, they become indifferent and use the submit verses so they have a scape goat for making mistakes. Men have said these things to me. when I tell them the truth , it's like a weight lifts that you can visibly see. Praise God!!! The truth is freeing for all!!!! *KBM - California*

