



Men Need Liberation, Too!

THIS ARTICLE IS AN INVITATION to my fellow men ... to first look to our own attitudes and behavior so we can be freed to join women in mutual celebration and service in the kingdom of God. Can we help each other be liberated:

- From society's stereotypes of what we should be?
- From a need to control others?
- From patterns of thought, attitude, language, and behavior that demean, patronize, or do not take women seriously?

... Men have usually defined the shape and dynamics of power between men and women. For the emerging redefinition we will need to listen and to learn.... Servanthood has too often been a way for men to talk piously about the nature of our service, while retaining most of the positions of power. The fact that we deny that we are using "power" when doing the work of the Lord is only another indication of how blind we are to the realities experienced by many women.

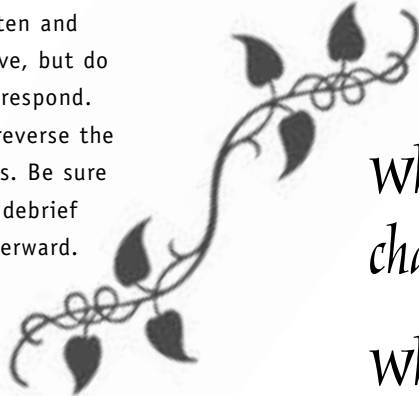
Can we learn that giving up and letting go can also be liberating? That we can discover a new kind of energizing power as we empower each other as women and men? —Edgar Metzler

FROM *GOSPEL HERALD*, OCTOBER 15, 1985, VOL. 78, NO. 420. USED BY PERMISSION.

Circle Time

Try this experiment:

Invite women to sit in an inside circle and share about their experiences in the church. Meanwhile, the men sit in an outer circle and listen and observe, but do not respond. Then reverse the circles. Be sure to debrief afterward.



*What we choose
changes us.*

*Who we love
transforms us.*

*How we create
remakes us.*

*Where we live
reshapes us.*

*So in all our choosing,
O God, make us wise;*

*in all our loving,
O Christ, make us bold;*

*in all our creating,
O Spirit, give us courage;*

*in all our living
may we become whole.*

—Jan L. Richardson

FROM *IN WISDOM'S PATH: DISCOVERING THE SACRED IN EVERY SEASON* (CLEVELAND: THE PILGRIM PRESS, 2000), 24. COPYRIGHT © BY JAN L. RICHARDSON. USED BY PERMISSION.

R E S O U R C E S

EQUAL TO SERVE: WOMEN AND MEN WORKING TOGETHER REVEALING THE GOSPEL, BY GRETCHEN GAEBELEIN HULL. BAKER HOUSE, 1998.

PAUL, WOMEN AND WIVES, BY CRAIG S. KEENER. HENDRIKSON PUBLISHERS, 1992.

"WOMEN IN THE NEW TESTAMENT: A MIDDLE EASTERN CULTURAL VIEW" BY KENNETH E. BAILEY, *THEOLOGY MATTERS*, VOL. 6, NO. 1, JAN/FEB 2000. AVAILABLE AT WWW.THEOLOGYMATTERS.COM

Partners in God's Family

Paul and Women

GROWING UP I heard many stories about Paul's missionary journeys and knew that he traveled with Barnabas and Silas, Timothy and Mark. But I never heard that Priscilla and Aquila also accompanied Paul and were stationed in Ephesus to encourage and instruct the church there. Yet, as Acts 18 makes clear, this couple played a central role in Paul's ministry. They led the church that met in their home (1 Corinthians 16:19) and were able to correct the charismatic teacher, Apollos. Biblical scholars note that placing Priscilla's name first is unusual and may indicate that she had a higher social status than her husband. Certainly, they functioned as a team, with both playing vital ministry roles.

Unfortunately, this aspect of Paul's ministry is often overlooked. It is true that he wrote several passages urging restrictions on women's participation in public worship. Yet, he also worked with women and included them in his evangelistic efforts. He trusted Phoebe with his letter to the believers in Rome and urged them to welcome her as a fellow saint and co-worker. He also included nine other women in those greetings, and expressed warm appreciation for their work. In Philippi, he and Silas witnessed to a group of women and then stayed with Lydia, who convinced her whole household to be baptized.

So why did Paul write such negative passages about women in leadership? While this

*Greet Prisca and Aquila, who
work with me
in Christ Jesus,
and who risked their necks for my
life, to whom not only I give
thanks, but also all the
churches of the Gentiles.*

(ROMANS 16:3-4)

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TOPIC FOUR
IN THE IMAGE OF GOD:
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Remember and thank

Think about women in your life who have guided and influenced your faith. Thank God for their work and if possible, send them a note of appreciation.

cannot be adequately addressed here, many scholars believe that Paul was addressing specific situations in those congregations. In Corinth, the problem was disorderly worship and in Ephesus where Timothy was ministering, there was likely false teaching related to that city's worship of the female goddess, Artemis. However we interpret these texts, it is important to remember the many positive ways in which the early church included and affirmed women, and indeed how remarkable this was in that time and culture. —Linda Gehman Peachey

How do you understand Paul's actions and words in relation to women?



Called by the Spirit

URSULA JOST AND BARBARA REBSTOCK were two influential leaders in the Anabaptist congregations in Strasbourg. Both were prophets and had a deep impact on Melchior Hoffman, the catalyst for Anabaptism in the Netherlands and Friesland.

Like others in these congregations, Hoffman quoted Joel 2:28-29 (Acts 2:17-18): "Such a time is now at hand as was in the time of the apostles, when God is pouring out his Holy Spirit on all flesh, and the sons and daughters prophesy." Hoffman saw women's prophesying as connected with the new thing that God was beginning to do in history. He wrote in his foreword to Ursula Jost's prophetic visions that, just as God had given revelations in the past through the prophets, and also through Jesus Christ, and through the Apostle John and, indeed, to all God's servants, so now the divine counsel is being revealed through this woman who is a lover of God.... When a new thing was coming to pass, it should be no surprise that God gave prophetic visions to a woman, who through these prophecies, was authorized to teach others about the power of God.

*Where do you see the Holy Spirit at work among women and men today?
What "new things" are coming to pass?*

FROM C. ARNOLD SNYDER AND LINDA A. HUEBERT HECHT. *PROFILES OF ANABAPTIST WOMEN*, WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1996, PP. 273-280. USED BY PERMISSION.

TWO WOMEN who illustrate Jesus' respect and appreciation for the worth of women are the woman at the Samaritan well and Mary Magdalene. These two women wipe out everyone of the "Yes but" put-downs aimed at women ministers. Look at what took place between them and our Lord. Jesus gave these two women two of the most important messages he had to give, and he sent them off to tell, to repeat the message of Christ, to preach the gospel of Christ.

The woman at the Samaritan well was the first person Jesus told he was the Messiah. He had been traveling for three years with the disciples, but he hadn't told them. After he told her, this woman who was rejected by her community had the courage to go back into that commu-

Noteworthy Disciples

nity to round up the people, to convince them to come and meet Jesus. Her preaching was effective. She got results. Jesus stayed several days in that village. Many believed.

Mary Magdalene was the first person Jesus appeared to as the risen Christ. Peter and John had both been to the empty tomb, but Jesus did not appear to them. It was to Mary he came, giving her the message that, indeed, he had risen. He gave her the message and sent her off to tell others. He sent her off to preach the good news.

—Wanda L. Callahan

FROM *STRAIGHT TALK FROM A BROTHER'S SISTER*. HERALD PRESS, SCOTTDALE, PA 15683, 2000, P. 57. USED BY PERMISSION.

Working Together at Home

Felipe: One of the major discussions that I, a Chicano, and my Mexican wife have revolves around the beautiful and dangerous topic of the gender roles that define us.

Maribel: I always knew that I wanted a traditional Mexican home; one where marriage is a partnership in which we both contribute to the household. I grew up seeing women taking care of the inside of the home while men took care of the outside chores. Now that both Felipe and I work, we are attempting to create a contemporary/traditional Mexican home. The latter is very important to me because it is part of my identity, of who I am. A traditional home is one in which specific Mexican values are adhered to, holidays are celebrated, foods are eaten and *tes* (herbal teas) are drunk. A home in which the Spanish language is spoken and the family gathers to celebrate and dance to Mexican music. A contemporary home is one in which we both contribute to the fulfillment of a traditional home. My husband and I both cook, clean, work and study.

Felipe: With all this in mind, my wife and I debate over what our specific gender roles are. Sometimes ... my wife cries to me about her struggle with the *María Complex* (apparently this is the struggle with how to be a professional Mexican woman while still being true to traditional culture). I sometimes wonder if I struggle with the *José Complex* because my wife makes more money than I do, I do most of the cooking, and for some strange reason I am very particular about how one does laundry. I am also very particular about the aroma in the home, how much cereal we have in the house, and how long left over *arroz* (rice) and *frijoles* (beans) have been in the fridge.

My wife and I are part of a larger movement within our Chicano/Mexican community that is redefining gender roles, while maintaining all that is good about our tradition.

EXCERPTED FROM "CHICANO SOUL Y LA MUJER MEXICANA" BY MARIBEL RAMIREZ HINOJOSA AND FELIPE HINOJOSA IN *WOMENS' CONCERNS REPORT*, "MEN'S CHANGING ROLES," MAY-JUNE 2004, PP. 4-6.

How have gender roles changed in your family over the years?

What values and traditions have you kept and what have you adapted?

Buckstopping or Collaborating?

I HAVE HEARD MEN declare that having congregational co-pastors does not work because it isn't clear "where the buck stops." After eight years of experience as a co-pastor, I don't know what they are talking about. Certainly co-pastors may have problems working together, but I'm not convinced it has anything to do with where the "buck" does or does not stop.

I, personally, do not enjoy being in a buck-stopping position, but I'd argue that this preference has not hindered my ability to lead: gathering opinions from the congregation, negotiating, making connections, setting direction, and moving forward with confidence, sometimes prophetically.

—Jane Hooper Peifer

FROM "CAN WANTING OTHERS' APPROVAL BE A PROBLEM?"
TIMBREL, JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2002. USED BY PERMISSION.



Pay attention

Over the next week, notice how you work with others. When do you work as an equal partner with another person and when do you work under or over someone? How are these experiences similar or different?

