

The Brown Street Beacon

"...Shine out among them like beacon lights,

holding out to them the Word of Life" (Phil 2:15-16)



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The “Gender Equality” Movement in the Church

There is now a website called “*Where the Spirit Leads*” that is not only pushing that women should be in leadership roles in the church, but also equates churches that don’t agree with them as being male chauvinistic in nature and that are full of men who are little better than slave owners. The site should be called “Where the spirit Leads” because the only spirit that is doing any leading is the one that belongs to man. The website includes a directory of churches that believe the same as they do on the issue of “gender equality” in the church. In order to be placed in the directory, at least one of the following questions must be answered with a yes.

- a) Are women welcome to use their gifts in leading public worship (leading prayer, giving communion talks, leading singing, and/or reading scripture)?
- b) Are women welcome to use their gifts in proclamation by preaching from the pulpit?
- c) Are women welcome to use their gifts and knowledge in biblical instruction, to teach all age groups regardless of gender in bible classes?
- d) Are women welcome to serve in leadership positions such as pulpit minister, worship leader, deacon, and elder (*not including positions such as children’s minister or women’s minister)?
- e) Does the church publish a clear statement of purpose to be an egalitarian church or gender inclusive church on their website?

The sad thing is how many churches of Christ have gone down this false path. I counted 70 churches in the directory. The website likes to refer to this so-called egalitarian approach to the church as progressive. However, churches that act on their own authority and attempt to change the God-ordained pattern set forth by inspired apostles, are not going forward, they are going sideways, that is, aside from the doctrine of Christ, and according to John, they have not God (2 John 9). Let me point out a few things.

First, women don’t need to be *made* equal in the church of Christ, for they *are* already equal. Paul said that in Christ there is no male or female. This was written by the same inspired man who wrote, “*I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet*” (1 Timothy 2:12). You see, equality in the church has nothing to do with who serves in the public assemblies. The restrictions that God put on women do not make them one wit inferior to man and to suggest otherwise, is to not only charge men with chauvinism, it is to charge God with it. There is no doubt in my mind that every church in the directory referred to earlier has some re-

strictions with regard to who can serve in a leadership role. Would they disregard all the inspired qualifications for an elder that God gave us (2 Timothy 3:1-7)? We know that we must apply all of those qualifications, but the truth is, if we apply just one of them, we are being restrictive. Would the “gender equality” churches apply any of the qualifications, and if so, aren’t they in some way being exclusive?

Second, while the world changes around us, the Word of God remains the same. The Word will never be outdated and therefore it will never need to be updated. Paul’s teaching concerning women in the church (1 Corinthians 14:34; 1 Timothy 2:11-14), is just applicable today as when it was first written. I am not against individual Christians making progress in their personal walk with God, but the church that Christ built doesn’t need to be progressive because the Word that governs it never changes. The church (not the people but the pattern) is already perfect. A part of that pattern is for men to occupy the leadership roles in the church (serve as elders, to do the public teaching and preaching, etc.). That will never change.

Third, to you good and faithful sisters in Christ who realize that your worth in the body of Christ doesn’t depend on taking a role in public assemblies or exercising authority over men in church, I would call on you to stay alert. The path to apostasy involves a slow stroll, not a sprint. The churches of Christ who are now using women to preach, pray publicly, and even to serve as elders, did not get there overnight; it took decades, but they have arrived. In conservative churches, then, we should learn from their mistake or we could slowly end up where they are. We now have women preaching in pulpits, often in a very forceful and dynamic fashion, in various retreats and special days for ladies, etc. And while right now women in conservative churches are content with preaching to women, the next generation, influenced by what is going on around them in the religious world, may not be so content. We certainly don’t want to end up in a directory that emphasizes gender equality, do we? Let’s exercise caution while we all remain content in the God given roles in which we have been placed.

Don

Immersed in Jesus

Steve Klein

When a person immerses himself in something, he totally surrounds himself with it. He spends time thinking about it and making plans around it. It occupies his mind, utilizes his energy and expends his resources.

People can immerse themselves in many different things. Some are immersed in hobbies, recreation or sports such as hunting, fishing, college football, baseball, golf, racing, collecting, or gardening. Others are immersed in their work or school. Some are immersed in their children or grandchildren. When a person is seriously sick, it is easy to become immersed with health concerns.

As Christians, “we were all baptized into one body” (1 Corinthians 12:13). Most of us understand that the word “baptized” means “immersed.” But what we may not have thought much about is the connection between being immersed in water and being immersed in Jesus. The apostle Paul puts it this way in Galatians 3:27: “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” Those of us who have been “baptized into Christ” are to have put Him on like a garment. We are to be covered up with Him — immersed in Him.

By itself, immersion in water does nothing to change a person’s life. But when that immersion is

the beginning of being overwhelmed with Jesus Christ, lives are truly changed. Baptism into Christ results in a person being raised to “walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4). “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation” (2 Corinthians 5:17). This new life is one that is immersed in Jesus.

Every sinner needs to be immersed in water for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16). But every one who is immersed in water is thus obligated to live a new life immersed in Jesus. Are you immersed in Him? “But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts” (Romans 13:14).