

Whose Rights?

Five years ago when I worked for Baptist General Convention of Texas, I went to Dallas for a staff meeting.

For fun we were told to find a song that best told who we were.

I tried and tried to think of a song.

For one whole week, I agonized over this. Finally I came up with a song.

At the meeting, we guessed what each other's song was. My supervisor said, "I know what your song is."

There was no way he knew what my song was! I didn't even know until the day before.

They all agreed they knew what it was. I held up my song. "I am Woman".

Immediately some of you will begin to imagine a feminist, and all the things wrong with the feminist movement. You will label me a feminist and it won't be pretty.

You will also be wrong. I was very conservative and content until the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 was adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention, and I officially learned that I could not be a pastor!

I am convinced that God did not create woman to be in the shadow of man. God created women to give birth to the next generation. Not only to provide the womb, but to contribute one half of her DNA to every child. Adam needed a helpmeet all right, but it was to help him populate the earth, because he was created with only one-half of the equipment needed.

Eve's full part in this population of the earth was not known until recent years.

It was 1928 when the first human ovum was seen. Up until that time nobody knew exactly what happened inside a woman's body.

It was a full 8 years after women were given the right to vote that we had visual evidence of what every woman gives to create a baby. From the beginning with Adam, we all knew what men had to give.

That lack of knowledge was the beginning of women's subjugation.

I found a book **gushing** over the complementarian **role women play** at a library book sale, and since it didn't cost but a few pennies, I bought it and looked at it. One chapter

was about Eve. Now I have seen a lot of sins laid at Eve's feet, but this one was new to me. This female author said "Eve is to bring Adam life, invite him to life. Instead, she invited him to his death."

Eve is a murderer? What silliness! Sometimes I think we have lost our minds. We have taken the Word of God, and found all sorts of silly justifications in it.

We are 21st century Christians. We need to get out of Bible world. We live in the real world of today. Men and women **both** suffer at the hands of others. As Christians we should be trying to better the world we live in now, and the world our children will be born in to, instead of parking ourselves 2000 years in the past.

It was not a perfect society in Bible days. Marriages were not perfect even with all the 'submitting' going on.

The Apostle Paul himself cautioned husbands to love their wives as they loved themselves, and to take care of their wives like they would take care of their own bodies. In other words, men, you wouldn't give yourself a black eye, don't give her one either.

Helen Reddy wrote "I am Woman" in 1970, just after the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed. African Americans **and women** got the same rights that white men already had.

Women began doing things that men were already doing. It wasn't all good.

Women had to go to the courts to get the freedom that was given them by the Civil Rights Act. They had to fight for everything they got.

This freedom began to be reflected in the churches.

Some denominations began calling women as pastors and women as deacons.

That was going too far. In 1987 a group of conservative Christians met and came up with an organization called the Council on Biblical Manhood and Biblical Womanhood.

I really wish they had given it a shorter name. It sounds ridiculous and so pompous.

This would put a stop to the feminine heresy that they feared was changing the churches.

Claiming a desire to hold on to family values, they determined to "set forth the teachings of the Bible about the complementary differences between men and women, created equally in the image of God, because these teachings are essential for obedience to Scripture and for the health of the family and the church."

Now that **sounds** worthy. We **all** want to hold on to family values. We **all** want our families and our children to grow up in a Christian home.

Understand, before the Civil Rights Act of 1964, they had never felt a need to call for the men to have better behavior. It was just when the women started claiming their rights that they suddenly felt they needed to get the family back under control.

The problem is - it sets men above women, it gives men almost god-like powers in the home, and in the church, while holding women to certain "roles" which **they** decided she is fit for. The Bible doesn't tell women their role is to bake cookies and clean house. Women have always worked beside the men to bring home food to feed the family.

One pastor proudly told me that his wife doesn't work outside the home. (He was a good Danvers Statement pastor). When I asked him about his church secretary, he changed the subject.

Whenever leadership position is given to anyone, it means someone else has to follow.

Guess who has to follow? Women cannot be a pastor, women cannot be a deacon, we women must submit graciously to our leader – our husband.

We gained our legal rights, but we lost our Christian rights.

EQUAL – BUT, equal – but our husbands have authority over us.

The Danvers Statement on Biblical Manhood and Biblical Womanhood made men divine. How else can a man be the head of a woman? Only a divine God can be over me, and as much as I love my husband, he is not divine!

A man writing on my website asked us why we were dragging out the Danvers Statement on Biblical Manhood and Biblical Womanhood since it is 22 years old. I told him that it was new enough for Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, to adopt it as their statement of belief only 9 months ago.

Dr. Dorothy Patterson, one of the founders of the Council on Biblical Manhood and Biblical Womanhood, says "As a woman standing under the authority of Scripture, even when it comes to submitting to my husband when I know he's wrong, **I just have to do it and then HE stands accountable at the judgment.**" (Christianity Today 1998)

I'll bet she has wished a thousand times that she had never said those words.

I would like to ask Dr. Patterson for the scripture reference where Paige Patterson becomes divine, and where he takes on her sins for her.

Women, I have great news for you. You are free to come before God just as you are. You are free to stand accountable before God for your own sins.

Men, I have great news for you. You are not accountable for your wife's sins. You are free to stand before God and account for your own sins.

To believe any other way - is blasphemy.

We've talked about it, we fussed about it, we have cried over it. Are you ready to quit talking and start doing?

I want to be able to walk into my church and not feel that my church holds it against me that I am a woman.