

Kaleo Conference Notes: Gender and the Church

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1 Living the Questions: Historical and Sociological Dimensions of the Debate over Gender and the Church

1.1 Dr. Green - historian

We must be careful not to elevate sociological beliefs to that of Scripture.

Human beings live out their callings in God's world as time and space bound creatures. Neither history or sociology is an adequate substitute for theology, but they provide important insights for our theology.

Mike Kimmel, four American rules for manhood:

1. no sissy stuff,
2. be a big wheel - the size of your paycheck, status, car, etc.,
3. be a sturdy oak - show no emotion of any kind if you can help it,
4. give 'em hell - exude an aura of muscular aggression.

These rules came from a study of modern American conceptions of being a man.

Where do these rules come from? Traditionally, biological essentialism was seen as the root of masculinity or femininity. Certain predetermined characteristics are considered natural or God-given. These rules seem to come from the particular social and historical context in which one grows up. Historians observe that conceptions of masculinity and femininity are socio-historically specific and socio-historically created. Peter Berger and other sociologists began to speak of gender roles as created by social creatures as they make culture.

By affirming the social construction of identity, one doesn't render biological differences as irrelevant. However, biological distinctions are not sufficient to determine masculinity and femininity. There is a distinction between sex and gender. Sex is a category that signifies the biological factors which separate men from women (anatomy, physiology, etc.), and gender is more of an arbitrary social construction. Household roles, colors, personal temperament, occupations may all be gendered roles.

Making mental distinctions between those things imbued by nature and those socially imposed. If we don't make those distinctions, we run the risk

of imposing socially constructed roles as God's design for biblical manhood or womanhood.

Conservative protestant Americans are often taking their concept of gender as much from the culture as their more liberal opponents. Do men have "a battle to fight, a beauty to rescue, a fight to live?" (John Eldridge)

So, where does this leave us in our effort to develop a more faithful response to the issue of gender in the church? We need to be honest about how much cultural baggage we bring with us when we consider issues of gender. Whatever our stance of the role of women in the church, we should be united in our conviction that our answer should be based on the Scriptures.

What are pastors and theologians doing to account for the continued biological essentialism which continues to inform our understanding of gender in the church? Theological reflection ought to be seen as a counter-cultural construction of Christian identity.

1.2 Matt Vos - sociologist

Most of what we are comes from groups: our language, our culture, our family. In sociology we speak of 'social location.' Blacks and whites, men and women, different groups in different social locations. Social location is relative to things like money, property, and status. Sociologists are much better at identifying problems and issuing calls to repentance than they are at coming up with solutions.

1. Tension 1: Reading and Interpreting Scriptural Passages on Gender. We tend to treat Scripture as a source of proof-texts. Some suggest, rather, that we view Scripture as an unfolding narrative. When we try to do things exactly as in Scripture, we run into problems because we live in different societies, families, economic structures.
2. Tension 2: Women in the Family. Where does the traditional family come from? This matter of the biblical family is a rather debatable notion. What we call the traditional family may be a good structure for the family, but it is not modeled on a family pattern we find in the Bible. Our modern family- the father leaving for work, the mother running the household- is a social structure that grew out of the industrial era, with the growth of the public and private spheres. This conception of the family grew out of the changes in the work world. Today the work

world is changing even more, and fundamentalist evangelical women work outside the home almost as much as their liberal counterparts. We might say that modeling our families after structures in the Bible may be impossible in a post-industrial society is impossible. Is the traditional family biblical? Do families exist for comfort?

3. Tension 3: Women in the church. Gendered traits. A survey of gendered traits included the fruits of the Spirit, and many people surveyed identified those fruits as feminine genders. Why is it that women attend church more often and are more willing to serve in churches?

A tentative conclusion. Peter Berger's "Protestantism and the Quest for Certainty." Rationality is one of the chief sociological forces promoting secularism. Rationality means we no longer deal with mysteries; we've solved them all out of our lives. But in Scripture we see faith being exercised, calling us to a life of ambivalence and tension, but a life that is lived by transcending that tension by a life of faith.

Robert Wuthnow's "Living the Question." Christianity leaves people with a set of questions they cannot escape. Wuthnow points out that most of Jesus' parables end with a question, not an answer. E.g., "who is my neighbor?" Christianity makes the questions we struggle with sacred by breathing life into them; the questions become part of the story of the webs of existence through which we live. There is much in Scripture we don't understand, but we live by faith. I'm a little concerned with our Reformed tendency to replace tensions with answers. We can (1) solve the questions, (2) avoid the questions, or (3) live the questions. Uncertainty in the midst of faith has never been the downfall of the Church; we must faithfully live the question. Faith can't be solved.

1.3 Questions

If comfort is not the point of the family, what is? We've accepted our cultures distinction of work and leisure, and family is where we kick back and relax. It becomes hard to get families involved in churches *as families*; where does the church fit into our church.

If women are able to minister on the mission field, and the church here is aware of that, why is it such a big deal over here when women try to minister? His answer said something about how he has roles of professor,

dad, husband, elder, and he runs around his life trying to “fit” those various roles together. Huh.

Is our traditional family structure biblical? In our church the concept of family is that the man goes out and earns a living for the family, and in the Bible we don’t see this sort of economic structure. Did Biblical family structure result from the agrarian society in which they lived? Social structures are not normative for us.

2 Keynote Address 1: Frank and Carolyn Curtis James, RTS Orlando and Whitby Forum

Didn’t have a clear vision of her role as a woman in seminary, but had a clear vision of her role as a wife and mother. However, upon finishing school, she was shocked to not find a husband for almost ten years. She asked questions about who she was as a woman and if she was following a second class plan- these questions gave her a deep appreciation of theology. She started marriage with a long battle with infertility which she lost, and she found a man who wanted more of her, and involved her in his struggles, decisions, and joys. God gave her gifts, and her husband encouraged her to find and use those gifts; in churches they always were eager to find out what her husband’s gifts were, but almost never asked about her gifts. Women today feel lost: at home, in the culture, in the church; lost between the blueprint the church gives and the gifts God gives. Take these questions back to the Scriptures: does God value his sons more than his daughters, does he do his best/most important work through men, is the blueprint for women too small? Her work has been examined and endorsed by Jerry Bridges, R.C. Sproul, Joni Erickson Tada, J.I. Packer, etc.¹

Eve. She is the paradigm, the lenses though which we view women. Some view Eve as the temptress, as a problem. “If men and women are together, won’t they be tempted.” That is the world’s view of women, it is not the Bible’s view of women, nor is it a redemptive view of women. On the positive side, we see the woman as wife and mother. We have grossly understood the significance of wife and mother. It is a difficult calling to raise up the next

¹Its important that our thinking is done in community, not in a vacuum.

generation of wife and mother, and we have underestimated this. The fact of the matter is that not every woman gets to be a wife or mother, and many fall out when they become empty nesters, or widows.

The Bible presents a rich, expansive view of women. (1) Women are image bearers. (2) *Ezer*. (3) the blest alliance.

1. Image bearers. We've heard this so much and are so familiar with the expression that the shock of it has worn off. We have hear a conversation in the Godhead as they plan the creation of man and woman. Reason, morality, love, wisdom, capacity for relationship - the list the theologians give of what makes us human fails to capture what God makes us as God's image bearers. Before God created man or woman, he opened the door to relationship with Him: you cannot imitate and reflect the image of one you do not know. This is an amazing, high vision of male and female. The Bible gives us a view of men and women that is the highest that we can imagine, and yet we are often defensive about this—feminism is the low view of women.
2. *'Ezer* This is the word for “helper” used to describe what woman was to be in relation to man. Used 21 times in the OT. Twice for women, three times for nations (to which Israel looked in time of crisis), and sixteen times for God (also military references to God). Why, then, do we domesticate our conception of women? *'Ezer* is “warrior.” However, the count of 21 is off, for the word is used as the name for men; even in the *Ebenezer* raised by Samuel. Earth has always been a battleground. Man was to keep the garden; men and women were called to “subdue” (conquer, defeat) the earth. When man was alone and God said it was not good, God created a warrior to stand by him, to be with him in the battle of faith. The man's need was not trivial or something he could do for himself, and the woman has a vital calling: to be a warrior for Jesus.²
3. The blest alliance. Increasingly we are seeing more and more tension in relationships between men and women; our divorce rate in the church is the same as the world; we have the battle of the sexes.

However, the Bible has a different view. God created man and woman in his image, and then he blessed them, saying that this is *very good*.

²Perhaps this explains why women play a more central role on the front-lines of the missionfield.

There is some way that God's image shines more brightly when men and women work together. It shows something of the trinity; the remedy for man's aloneness was not a group of men, it was a woman.

Second, we share a global mission: the cultural mandate, to be fruitful and multiply, to rule and subdue. There is no corner of the earth that this task does not take us to. We are called as male and female to explore, develop, analyze and utilize the earth's resources. Look at all the things that we have done, in the things made, technology, the arts, knowledge. We have been on this mission since the dawn of creation. These are not just physical callings, they are theological and spiritual. We are called to represent God in the world, to multiply worshipers of the living God, to multiply true image-bearers. We are to bring the earth under the gracious reign of God, and Jesus' Great Commission was the expansion of this mission which God gave to us.

Male and female working together is God's "A" plan for the earth. This blest alliance was lost in the Fall, and is restored in the Gospel. The blest alliance is one of the worst-hit casualties of the rebellion against God. Look at all the good things God made, and yet Adam and Eve turn their backs on him; Noah preaching his heart out and not one more person joined him on the ark; Moses led the people and then the people rebelled time and time again, even loosing God's law. You don't expect to turn to the New Testament and read, "the word became flesh and dwelt among us."

The gospel brings us not only salvation from our sins, but also transformation in our relationships. Even in the church we stress our differences from each other. We are immediately classified by race, sex, class, socio-economic status, marital status when we walk into a church. The restoration of male-female relationship was advanced by Jesus. If you study middle-eastern culture it will help you understand Jesus' interactions with women. He was profound in his interaction with them in a culture where spouses did not even interact in public. He converted entire towns through their testimony, entrusted Mary Magdelene with the news of his resurrection. Mary was the one who taught Jesus to pray and the Scriptures. When Mary anointed Jesus, she did so to prepare him for his burial and she did a beautiful thing to him.

Fourth, the blest alliance is modeled by Paul. Paul received a vision

to come to Macedonia, and he found a group of women praying. He sat down and began to teach them, and when he wrote to them in Phillipians he mentions their partnership from the first day, which refers to the women he met there in that Bible study. He refers to them as *'Ezers*, and he depended on their support; he addressed them as image bearers and told them to have the same attitude as was in Christ Jesus. He appeals to Euodia and Synteche, and he uses battle language in his appeal. When you look at Paul, he was a former pharisee, a religious zealot, a terrorist of sorts, and here he is in partnership with Gentile women. Paul valued the ministry of women with him and to him. Read Romans 16.

Fifth, the blest alliance is the essence of the church, the body of Christ. There is no such thing as a healthy body if half of it is not functioning.

Women are warriors whose cause is Christ.³ What is our vision for women within our church?

2.1 Questions

How does the NT equivalent of *'Ezer*, “submission” apply? How does it get misused? To what extent should “submission” be applied only in the family, or in the church as well? Its actually something Jesus modeled [in his submission to the Father]. The word “submission” is an enormously important word in Scripture and it carries with it the responsibility for unity. It is not done blindly, for first priority is always submission to God. Think of Abigail—her husband was wicked, and she was “subversive” when she goes to David, but she was preventing a blood-bath. *'Ezer* is the definitive word for women, not submission. As an *'Ezer* she wants to walk with her husband, not play tug-of-war against him. Men need to look for a good warrior to stand beside them; he’s called to sacrifice and she’s called to submit.

So what kind of positive meaning do you take from this in relationship with your husband? Its not an event, with gritting teeth, but a lifestyle like the submission Jesus gave to his Father, pouring his resources into what his Father was doing. Submission is embracing something, not a word for giving up.

³When Jesus calls his mom “Woman” in John 2 and at the cross, in reference to his own identity as the seed of the woman, he is doing that to remind us that its only through the woman’s see that He conquers.

How do you balance *'Ezer* with a quiet and gentle spirit? How does the warrior exercise a gentle and quite spirit? I don't think there's a conflict with those things. We're not necessarily called to be abrasive, but to be warriors in God's way. Invest yourself for the cause of Christ—this sometimes requires taking very strong, bold stands. We're called to be like Jesus, and he overthrew the tables in the temple when something deeply wrong was going on.

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3 Women & the Bible: a range of views

3.1 Dan MacDougall - biblical studies

This is a difficult topic, striking at the very heart of our being, since we're each either male or female. How do we approach passages that have to do with this topic? This is an exercise in hermeneutics.

Five views concerning the ordination of women to office in the church.

1. **Culturally relative** This view holds that there is an inconsistent pattern of women's roles in the NT. Rom. 16:1-3, 7; 1 Cor. 11:5 & 14:34-35; Acts 18:26, 21:8,9; 1 Tim. 5:11-15; 2 Tim. 3:6-9. This group simply says that NT practice was inconsistent and that its not valid for some to enforce a strict position.

Evaluation This view emphasizes the importance of recognizing the breadth of the Scriptures, and the cultural differences between biblical times and today. This view challenges us to a level of consistency. The NT emphatically says to greet one another with a holy kiss, and yet none of us think that literal command is binding on us. Keep in mind the issue of women's ordination is not a gospel issues. Its not even addressed in the Westminster standards.

This view doesn't spend enough time in 1 Timothy 2. It also focuses more often on narrative passages than on didactic passages. We must be careful in finding all our theology from narratives. This view often isn't careful in defining terms; prophecy is not always equivalent to teaching in the NT. Also, just because an issue isn't a gospel issues, that doesn't mean that its not clear.

2. **Eschatological in Christ** This view says that since we're in the last days, this age should reflect the absolute equality of the eschaton, an equality with no distinctions of any kind. This view stresses the universality of the gifts of the Spirit. This view often holds that the pastoral epistles were not written by Paul. Emphasizes Gal 3:28, Mark 12:18-27 (if we are of the eschaton, how dare we not live like that right now?), Acts 2:17-21

Evaluation We are all equal in Christ, we all do have gifts—its not one who is gifted, but it is *all* of the church; these are strengths of this view. The danger here is that they ignore specific passages of Scripture, applying the broad instead of the specific.⁴ This view tends to forget the eschatological *Not Yet*.

In Gal 3:28, Paul isn't arguing irrelevance of categories, but the unity of the body as a whole: "not... not... not... but..." This viewpoint says that if we are making distinctions we are making people unequal. This is often true, but are they of necessity true? Are officers not equals with the non-officers of the church? Function and equality are not identical. This doesn't prove or disprove this issue.

We shouldn't view the pastoral epistles as optional in this discussion, as this view often does.

3. **Wrong Translation** 1 Tim 2:11-14 (12) "I do not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man; she must be silent." Some say that the word ought to be husband, not man in this verse. The Greek terms for man and woman are the same as those for husband and wife. The phrase, "to teach or to have authority" is seen as tightly bound together: they are not to teach to have authority, but they may teach.

Evaluation This view does not deny the value and truth of these passages. The understanding of "in order to have authority" may be a grammatical possibility. This passage doesn't have a hint of husband and wife; usually in Greek a possessive is used to refer to a wife; also there is no article, and the husband/wife usually has the article. Also, the immediate surrounding context and the overall context of the book seem to be aimed at the ordering of the church and conduct within the

⁴We must also guard against the converse of emphasizing specific passages to the exclusion of the broad principles

church. This position is a really small position; very few people hold it.

4. **Complementarian** Men and women are created to complement one another. This view stresses that the idea of submission and silence is consistent with family patterns, and there are families in the church. Also, that role or work is not the same as equality. The persons of the trinity have differing roles, yet are equal in the very essence. If submission is equivalent to non-equality, then by the language of Scripture Jesus is less-than equal to the Father.

Evaluation Strengths include focusing on passages that are in church and worship contexts. When properly presented there are no implications of mental or spiritual inequality. Paul doesn't ask half of the church to leave when he deals with doctrinal and theological context. Roles and equality are not the same categories: that is important for all officers to hear.

Weaknesses. There is a tendency to not consider some possible cultural differences. It often tends to be traditional, not exegetical. Having stated this position, they often think they've stated everything about the church. In terms of gifts of the Spirit, that would be a dangerous position to hold to.

5. **Apostolic succession** All apostles were men (Luke 6:12-16). All authority was built on them, OT priestly ministries were male. Therefore, they argue that because office is part of this succession, we have to follow the pattern we see in Scripture.

Evaluation Strengths include recognizing that we follow the pattern of Scripture, and that the Scriptures are authoritative.

Weaknesses. There is no evidence of apostolic succession. The apostles were unique in the [redemptive] history of the church: they had to be eye-witnesses. This view also focuses on narrative passages, not didactic passages, drawing norms where the writers may not have drawn norms.

Conclusion. There are principles to consider. Paul roots his theology in creation, and in 1 Cor. 14 says that this is the practice in *all* the churches. We must also be careful not to bind scripture by a few narrow passages. This

is not a slippery slope, its a slippery pinnacle from which you can fall in all different directions.

In this whole discussion we must remember the focus of the gospel. It is not the be all and end all; it is not the final word. We must keep the gospel of Jesus Christ and what is explicitly taught throughout the whole of the NT as your priority.

3.2 Questions

Question about *diakonos* in Romans 16. The word diakonos is used to call all people to be “servants” and its used in longer phrases such as “ministers of the word.” Is the usage in Romans 16 referring to an office, or in the general sense? The difficulty is that by its very nature this passage doesn’t tell you much. A lot depends on how you define the office of deacon. That being, said, MacDougall doesn’t know of anybody being called “the such-and-such” of church X.

How would you change the church tomorrow morning to improve it? We are in a time of historical transition, and the church is slow to respond to change. If you were talking about gifts 100 years ago, you’d ask what you are doing for your next-door neighbor; you won’t ask about serving on a committee. We are in situation where we can use multiple people in multiple ways, because we do have more free time. The main part of the problem is that we think about going to church. The conception of the church is much broader than where we go; perhaps the greatest need of the church today is be a community and actually be part of each other’s lives. Most of us live somewhere where our grandparents never lived; we need relationship and to share with each other and be honest and open with each other, praying for each other and spending time with each other.

4 Keynote Address II: Frank James

In his heart of hearts, though he’s called a seminary president, he is a historian. What is the historical context of this discussion? The more serious the discussion and debate, the more important to have a sense of historical context. Context determines meaning.

4.1 Historical quotes on women

Historians also love primary sources. Here are some quotes:

Early Church - these three guys are “big guns” who were shapers of the church

Origin, “Women are worse than animals because they are continuously full of lust.”

Tertullian, “You [women] are the devil’s gateway, you are the first deserter of the divine law, you destroyed so easily God’s image: man, and on account of this ... the son of God had to die.” “Mankind, not woman, is made in the image of God.”

Augustine, “I don’t see what sort of help woman was created to provide man, if one excludes procreation. If she was not give for bearing children, what help could she be for tilling the earth? How much more pleasure is it for life and pleasure when two men are together.... For woman is not the image of God, man alone is the image of God.”

585 A.D. 43 bishops and 20 laymen gathered at a regional conference in southern France to decide this question: are women human? The votes were tallied 32 to 31 in favor of women being human.

Middle Ages Albert the Great, “A woman can’t be trusted.... A woman is a botched male, and by comparison with him she possesses a defective nature; in short, one should be on guard against any one as if against a poisonous snake.”

Otto (some monk), “To embrace a woman is to embrace a sack of manure.”

Women were routinely viewed as seductresses in the Middle Ages. They were seen as inferior by nature, and as not being made in the image of God. [Did the Vulgate mistranslate Genesis 1:26,27?]

Reformation

Luther (a mixed bag in some cases with a great respect for women as mothers but not so much respect for women as women. “Although Eve was an extraordinary creation, similar to Adam as far as the image of God is concerned; for as the sun is similar to the moon,... so she is inferior to the male.”

Calvin, “The woman was created in the image of God, but in the second degree.” (commenting on Genesis 2). “All women are born to submit to the preeminence of the male sex.” (commenting on 1 Corinthians 3)

4.2 Lessons from the history of the church

1. History reminds us that all our heroes are flawed. Except Christ, they are all fallen, with feet of clay. The Bible is profoundly honest about the frailties of the heroes of the faith. Luther wrote terrible things against the Jews, and said that they should be slaves of the German people... wow.
2. History reminds us that we have come a long way on the question of gender. The church has in fact made some progress: we no longer question whether or not women are human, we almost never question women being made in the image of God. Whether women are made in the image of God was an open question for about seventeen hundred years. This doesn't mean we should stop striving for more [faithfulness to the Scriptures.]
3. History reminds us that Christian practice is often better than the principles we espouse throughout the history of the church.

Look at what Augustine said about women, and then the deep love his mother Monica had for him. She was a mother who was after the soul of her son—she was the hound of heaven in his life. When Augustine had just found Christ, he'd decided to give up his public career, and was traveling with his mom. They stopped in the seaport of Ostia, and while they were praying they had some kind of spiritual experience together, and he always cherished that.

Luther was a man who never stopped talking about how much he loved his wife. Luther's whole conception about what marriage was changed the world. The reformation Luther wrought in marriage is perhaps greater than the reformation in theology. Prior to Luther, marriage was often only an economic transaction. Luther established a new criteria for getting married: he was an apostate from the church, she was a run-away nun, and he got married for love, and then talked about that love all the time. A Harvard sociologist argued that Luther's love for Katie von Bora established a new paradigm for marriage in the western world. In Luther's last will and testament⁵, he made Katie his executor, going against the grain of his culture.

⁵In Germany at the time, the rule was that the closest male relative would be the executor of the estate

4. History reminds us that debate and controversy is not always bad. *Post tenebras lux* was the motto in Calvin's Geneva. God makes a practice of bringing light out of the darkness of controversy and debate. During the first four centuries of the church, there were terrible struggles and bloodshed over the deity of Christ. These controversies sometimes produce doctrines like the trinity and the deity of Christ; the Pelagian controversy brought us the doctrine of original sin.

As he looked at the PCA blog his heart has been heavy when he saw people saying mean, hard things against their brothers and sisters in Christ. This hurts not only [Frank James] but the brothers and sisters themselves. This blog has forced us to stop and think about these questions, it allows us to have conversations like we're having this weekend. It troubles me that there are people who will be upset at Covenant College having a conference on this question, not to find an answer, but to discuss the question.

One more thing about how God brings light out of debate is that it affects your piety. The controversy drives you back to the Scriptures, you look at the context of the passage and wrestle deeply with God's word. It also drives us to our knees in prayer. We are often so busy we forget to pray, and these debates come up and we are driven down to our knees, praying hard for resolution or even because we've been hurt.

5. Historically it seems that the questions that are asked affect subsequent questions. In the Dread Scott case the question was, "Are African-Americans property." In the 1960s, the question was not, can they be owned by another human being, but "do they have the same civil rights as a white person?" and today the question being asked is, "Can we blend our worship services, and have blacks and whites worshipping side by side in the same worship service."

In the PCA the more prevalent question used to be "What can a woman not do in the church?" but now the more prevalent question is "What can a woman do in the church." The question is beginning to change, and change takes time, but we're beginning to see change.

6. The debates in history sometimes have a way of who the real enemy is. One of the major life and death issues in the sixteenth century was the Lord's Supper, and people were killing each other over it. 1549 John

Calvin said, “We’ve got to get beyond the impasse on this doctrine.” So he rode from Geneva to Zurich, sat down with Bullinger, came to an agreement and wrote a consensus document. This was the beginning of the Reformed branch of Protestantism. Calvin was reminded of how much he and Bullinger had in common, and he weighed that against their differences and against their common enemy.

In the discussion of gender in the church, we have a common enemy and it is not the complementarians or egalitarians, our enemy is ultimately the devil himself. Spiritual war is raging, the devil prowls about seeking whom he may devour. When you find yourself in a life or death battle with the enemy, you find ways to come together. We don’t give up the debate because these are serious issues, but we find ways to come together in the debate. We have a cruel enemy and we must be armed to the teeth theologically and biblically.

4.3 Questions

Who was the first theologian to declare that women are in the image of God? Not sure, but perhaps Martin Bucer, an unsung hero.

Shouldn’t our question be not what *can* women do, but what *should* women do? It depends how you ask that question; if its asked graciously we will be safe. As an elder dealing with important difficult questions, his rule of thumb is to err on the side of grace.

5 Gender and the Arts Faculty Panel

Morton, Wildemann, Rawlston, Carpenter, Macallister, Foreman

5.1 Jeff Morton

Introduction. 1971 essay, “Why have there been no great woman artists?” Some pictures.

“Your body is a battleground”. This was used in a march on Washington commemorating Roe v. Wade.

“Schema” 1967, Eva Hess Shows 100 resin or plastic coated breasts of her body. This was groundbreaking in the debate between formalism and minimalism.

Enna Mindida. Context is earth-artwork, like “Spiral Jetty”. Many of the first-generation feminist artists did performances, calling attention to the body.

“Blind leading the blind.” Louise Bourgeois, mid-70s. First generation feminist art brought narrative back into art.

Barger points to the fact that the word became flesh. There is a Christian perspective to be offered in understanding artworks about the body. In Morton’s mind, this idea affirms the body: there is something important about being [embodied] human.

5.2 Jeff Wildeman

“Imagine a life that you could live.”

5.3 Pat Rawlston

She taught a class in medieval and renaissance women writers, and the students (for the most part) were surprised to learn of these writers. Why were they hidden, the students asked. Opening the canon of women authors increases knowledge, justice, and delight.

Lady Mary Sydney. Most of her work was translation into English. She and her brother translated the psalms, and he died at Psalm 44, so she finished the work. Translation was accepted as a woman’s realm, because she was translating works by men, but its interesting that translators often put their own spin on a text, sometimes subverting the original meaning.

Elizabeth Carrie. She was the first woman to write an original play and publish it in England. She wrote an historical play centered on the problem of women’s public speech. In order to be considered chaste, a woman was to ask questions only of her husband. This became a problem for the woman in the play, whose husband was planning her death; once she talked to another man she was condemned as unchaste and sentenced to death. In her last speech in the play, “Its not really enough to be beautiful and chaste, but women must also be wise and politic in making their views heart.”

Its been said (in a book by Susan Gallagher) that we read in order to join the human race. If we want to join the wholeness of the race, we must hear the voices of both men and women from the past. not only do we join the human race, but we can join the church when we hear the writings of our sister from other ages.

5.4 Kayb Carpenter

Our imagination is what we perceive as possible in life. We need women to speak in the arts, because it gives us a fuller picture of life. Images in art affect your perception of who you are and your gender. Movies and magazines tell you what's beautiful, acceptable, and desirable. How do arts affect our view of our gender and identity?

5.5 Gwen MacAlister

[Didn't get any notes on her comments.]

5.6 Cliff Foreman

Why have there been so many great male writers? Especially if women are more gifted in communicating. We men have engineered it so that we got better educations than women could, and we've done that for centuries. We had an "affirmative action" program. However, a number of women have snuck through.

Anne Bradstreet was the first American puritan poet published. Her book was a ragamuffin child running around town, who she warned to watch out for critics. Her brother published her poetry without her knowledge.

First African American woman writer: Phyllis Wheatly. She had a novel that was the largest selling novel in the 18th century.

Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was a 19th century best seller.

Emily Dickinson was perhaps the greatest American poet of the 19th century.

Men have defined literature to exclude sentimentality, which effectively excluded the women poets, until recently. One peculiarity of the American tradition is that the men have written mostly about men. Consider "Rip van Winkle", who is a man fleeing from his wife to the saloon, only to be chased out by his wife, so he heads to the hills for 20 years. Cooper's novels are about men. Moby Dick is about men together, hunting a whale. Huckleberry Finn tells a tale about males; Huck didn't want to be civilized by the widow Douglas.

The one exception to writing about men is Nathaniel Hawthorne, who wrote about women. However, even his greatest characters are limited by

the roles that he gives the women. Its not until Edith Wharton that we begin to get women in our literature.

It seems to Foreman that our American literature is now fuller because we have the voice of women in the writings.

5.7 Questions

Can Dr. Wildeman elaborate on his comment? Yes, Jane Eyre allows young women to imagine a life that they can live. When she meets the missionary guy she recognizes that he will never love her like she needs. Jane's struggle is an orthodox Christian struggle.

How would you advise young women who are hoping to make a dent in the art, to engage that and make an effect in the arts? (Kayb) I'll tell you some advice I received which didn't make sense at the time. She asked him why there weren't more great women in the arts, and he said, because as a woman you have to give up too much; with marriage and children they have divided loyalties. You have to define what success is for you [does God define this for and to us?]. The great women artists mostly did not have children, because they had to enter into a man's world and produce as men do. (Morton) Its not women's art, or men's art, its just all art. Kayb has hit the mark, it is about choices. the women who make it into the Whitney Bi-annuals either didn't marry or didn't have children. (Kapics) What about the men? How are their families? For any profession, can you reach the pinnacle of your profession and still have a healthy church and family life? (Foreman) This is assuming that women are responsible for family and men are not. Give me a verse and chapter that says men aren't responsible for their families.

It seems that many who achieve great accomplishments in their fields are childless.

(In response to Kayb) It seems like in this conference we are talking about women in light of Scripture, history, sociology, literature, arts, and that women have so much potential that has not been recognized historically. I don't see in Scripture where it says that women are to be the sole nurturers; on the other hand perhaps this conference is not addressing men's responses to women in light of today's culture. We've talked about women as the warrior, submission and what that means. Can't men be nurturer's of their children as well? Can't they support their wives? Dr. Carpenter, your answer seemed to be in the context that women will marry, and can't do that and achieve much in their profession.

We are in a different generation with longer life-spans. You can have children and still have years left for other things for the kingdom. (Foreman) I think its because of that (the lady's comment) that there are so many great woman writers. Pencils and paper are cheap, and women can pick them up and write. When George Elliot published Adam Bede, her first novel, Dickens read it and perceived that the novel was written by a woman. He saw she had insight into a half of life that he couldn't understand.

What of the relationship of the church to female writers and artists? (Rawlston) Many nuns copied manuscripts. In the 19th century it was almost women's territory for women to write devotional works—their voices were ok as long as they were talking about religious stuff [this is after the Enlightenment divide of public and private spheres].

Can we imagine the life we can live? Can women do anything? (Rawlston) That's a good question. You said, "The world has a plan for us: at 26 get married." But often the church has a plan for you: at 22 get married. Can we imagine young women understanding that life has seasons, and that we may head in a number of directions, but God changes the channels. Unfortunately for many Christian women, there is life after marriage, whether by divorce or death. (K. Kopic) Women have been heart through hymns all the time. Even in our most conservative churches they affirm that in its glory. That took imagination back then, and it will take imagination now, but its not like it hasn't happened.

Could the panel speak to the church's conception of beauty and how female artists have a role in that. (Foreman) J. Edwards theology included seeing God's beauty in salvation, election was giving the ability to see that beauty to people. His sense of beauty is very 18th century; beauty is a very complex thing—it doesn't always mean pretty. (Carpenter) Don't have a list of female Christian artists in mind, but there is one woman who has a book. Women brought incarnation back into the arts. (Morton) We've been expounding definitions. We often tie beauty to aesthetic definitions, but it can be tied to justice and community. Beauty doesn't just deal with artifacts. Generally we don't know the name of the artists because craftspeople are usually anonymous. Art is not just high art like painting, but all of these pieces.

6 Gender in a cross-cultural world: Haddad

A fallen world: injustice, violence, and poverty. We must look beyond behaviors to the institutions and values that shape them. Nine tenths of a culture, like an iceberg, are under the surface. Our lives are to be directed by our Christianness, not our Americanness. We must acknowledge that American cultural norms may be defective. Asian Christians view our nursing homes as unbiblical; African Christians view our emphasis on orthodoxy wrong without orthopraxy. We learn that the gospel is good news for women in oppressive cultures.

Birth. Women's lives are at risk before birth in countries where sons are valued more than daughters. In India and China, female infants are often killed. In China, 100,000 women have been freed from forced marriages that resulted from kidnaping the women (since not enough were allowed to live as infants). "Bringing up a girl is like watering a neighbor's plant." (Indian proverb.) World Vision and other christian groups have been trying to work to provide dowry money for girls.

In many societies, boys receive preferential treatment. Boys are breast-fed longer, receive more medical care, receive better food, have fewer chores, and eat more protein rich foods. Girls are denied educational opportunities, and taken out of the schools at puberty. 90% of Pakistani women are illiterate. 28 Muslim countries sent no female athletes to the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta.

Why do the most restrictive restrictions become normative against women? Not only just the fall, but the ongoing spiritual warfare in the heavenly places. This is personal evil, attack against men and women.

Many cultures restrict girls' freedom of expression.

28 African nations practice female circumcision (FGM). This practice has come to Europe and North America through immigration. People in cultures practicing FGM believe that uncircumcised women will be promiscuous. Many Muslims believe that this is part of Islam, but it pre-dates Islam, and some Christian groups in Africa practice FGM.

Working Lives. Wage-earning women all around the world earn less than men. In developed countries, women receive 77 cents on the dollar men earn. Globally, women cultivate over half of all the food that is grown. In sub-Saharan Africa they produce 80%, in Asia around 50%. This is why its hard to get men to be farmers.

Forced Prostitution. The FBI estimates that human trafficking generates 9.5 billion USD. 30,000 Burmese girls work in brothels in Thailand. 50,000

Nepalese girls in India. Japan and the United States provide the largest number of customers in this trade. Buddhism can be formulated to oppose sex slavery, but it encourages stoic resignation. A girl's sense of karma will lead her to become emotionally resigned to her fate. Many prostitutes think their fate is just punishment to deeds from a previous light. Many prostitutes donate some of their earning to the local temple, to earn more karma. She can hope for eventual rebirth against a man.

Rape. This has always been a tactical weapon in war: Bosnia, Rwanda, Sudan. In honor-based cultures, raped women are unacceptable for marriage, so this becomes an effective weapon to demoralize a culture. "Honor killings" are when a woman is killed for bringing shame on her family by being raped. One woman's story: Mukhtar Mai, an illiterate Pakistani woman gang raped at the encouragement of the village elders, but rather than committing suicide as was expected, she filed charges and the men were convicted, although some are still in trial. Shari'ah law requires four adult male witnesses present at the rape to convict a man of rape, and if there aren't that many witnesses, then the woman is charged with slander. A woman's testimony only counts for one half, and a non-Muslim's witness doesn't count at all. South African women are statistically more likely to be raped than to learn to read.

Early marriage. In Bangladesh, 25% of 14-year-old girls are married. In Pakistan, a 17-year old Christian woman refused to convert to Islam to marry a Muslim man, so he threw acid on her face. She told her father not to cry, because the Lord raises the dead and she hadn't brought any shame on their family.

Wife Beating. This is a global problem, and women often do not report it. The Koran says, "Men have authority over women because God has made the one superior to the other, and because they spend their wealth to maintain them. Good women are obedient. They guard their unseen parts because God has guarded them. As for those from whom you fear disobedience, admonish them and send them to beds apart and beat them..." Dawood's (a Muslim) translation of the Quran 4:32

Childbearing. In India, one in 18 women die of pregnancy-related causes. Many Indian women spend 80% of their childbearing years pregnant.

Widowhood. The Hindu Scriptures, Manu Smrti V. 154 "a husband must be constantly worshipped as a god by a dutiful wife."

Conclusion. Overall, there's a social and cultural attitude where women are inferior, and discrimination tends to start at birth. Some say that lack of education is the root of the problem. However, education is necessary but

not sufficient. Lurking behind these problems is the evil one, the enemy of God and the people he has created. Tertullian, “On the Apparel of Women”, ch. 1. This quote is often on Muslim websites to show their superiority over Christianity. In the Koran, Abraham and the other patriarchs are perfect, not flawed as in the Scriptures. Herein lies the profound difference between Islam and Christianity: the flawed nature of our heroes, compared with the perfect heroes in the Koran. This should make us thankful for the grace that we find in the gospel of Jesus. How can this message be represented in a world that views Christianity’s view of women as that of Tertullian, and in churches that keep women hidden at best or even viewed with hostility.

6.1 Questions

What conceptual resources do we have (in conversation) to say that this is evil? There are many areas where Christians and Muslims can work together. Our categories of evil and sin are different from how Muslims would conceptualize them. A big problem in Muslim/Christian discourse is that the terminology overlaps but the meanings are different. We have to talk about particular practices being evil, not entire cultures. Reformation will have to come from within those cultures. We must go to Genesis and being made in the image of God, and critique Christianly rather than Americanly, to destroy these evil practices. We need to be guided by Christians in those cultures, who understand those “iceberg” cultures much better than we do. Its like walking through a minefield being shot at from all directions. (Rawlston) Its important to see these practice not just as things that *they* do it, for we have these same practices in our past. (Kapic) Someone on the PCA blog said we can learn from the Muslims, the Muslims got it right. I mention this only to say that this is contemporary, that this is us.

(Nielson) What is your perception of Christian groups in these countries, and do you see transformation in the cultures? Transformation comes unevenly, not by westerners imposing it from the outside but as the leaven of the gospel spreads through society.

How can we, especially those interested in missions, help these women without hurting them? You do it by sharing the gospel, which will then indirectly impact practices like that. Its much the way wise missionaries addressed polygamy. They let the ethos of the gospel permeate the lives of Christians, so that they began to see the inconsistency between their lives and the gospel. Change doesn’t come by passing laws, although laws help.

What do you say to Muslim accusation of Western society that the freedoms have led to moral looseness that destroys women and leaves them in far worse situations than women in Muslim countries? I'd say they are right, to a large extent, but the dangers and risks you take with freedom are still better than the rigid legalism of much of the Muslim world.

I feel some conflict and analogy between women in the church and the oppression in these cultures, and it seems to come back to the image of God in men and women. When I think about what Heather said about women in seminary studying theology rather than just women's and children's ministries- how do you think about the similarities and differences? I don't know the answer. I have more questions, and this is a task for the whole church to address. We do have to recognize that we are part of the same world, and the values that inform those practices are present in our own tradition as well. We must come back to the image of God in men and women. How it works out in the church I do not know, but I do know that we can't go around saying that the Muslims got it right.

(Tuggy) We've been taught in churches that sex is evil and many of her girlfriends were trained to fear it- is this not a kind of mutilation?

7 Biblical and Theological Studies Panel

Prof. Ward, Dr. Lambert, Dr. MacDougall, and Dr. Stewart

7.1 Prof. Ward

When he practiced law in Michigan, 50 to 60 percent of the women he represented were from evangelical backgrounds where their pastors had told them to submit to their husbands.

What he really wanted to talk about has to do with missions. The modern missionary movement would not have played out without the role of women on the mission field. Tupper said, "I estimate a single woman in China is worth two married men." Ami Charmichael, Betty Elliot, and the PCA women who have served in many contexts. Griet Rietkirk and Lois Ooms, Debbie Dortzbach. Approximately 60% of the PCA missionary force, single and married, are women. Look at how the PCA functions on the mission field. There is a remarkable way in which women partner in ministry on the foreign mission field which is not available in the States.

7.2 Lambert

He's found that women are better students of Greek and Hebrew, and some men ask why we still study these languages. There are opportunities for women; think of Elizabeth Elliot, who teaches that women shouldn't teach.

7.3 Stewart

Reference handout "Additional 'Orders' of Ministry are Needed in the PCA and other Like-Minded Churches". Ministry in the NT was not organized along the conventional lines of pastor, elder, and deacon. By an odd twist of history, a first century Christian woman might find more opportunities for ministry in the early church than in the church today. Women were present in the upper room, and they participated with the gospel proclamation at Pentecost. They coached evangelists alongside their husbands (Acts 18). Paul had women assisting in church-planting, and he authorized older widows to organize the training of younger women. Pastor and elder are plainly understood to be males from the pastoral epistles.

The problem is not the continued insistence that the office of pastor and elder be reserved for males. The problem is that the young church recognized and utilized women in their ministries during the rapid expansion of the church. Today the PCA utilizes women as DCEs, RUF interns, music directors, youth leaders, and yet the church does not give them broader recognition or training: at best, they are employees. We should multiply ministry opportunities for women and men.

Objections which could be raised.

1. That this argument is based on narrative examples rather than the didactic teaching of the NT. He is not arguing that women were apostles or that pastor and elder are open offices for women. Why is it not possible to say, along with Paul speaking of Euodia and Syntyche, that they are to be numbered among the workers.
2. Have not the 'credentialed' offices been closed with the close of the new testament. That we have pastors and elders was guided by the apostles, to devise, or better yet, to improvise. The church created the office of deacon, and Paul instructed an order of widows to be created to minister to younger women. Some say that the church can't propose new orders of ministry; Calvin disagreed.

3. Some say opening the offices of ministry is like opening Pandora's box. But the burden of proof is on those who would restrict women where the NT does not restrict them. Credential people in Intercultural Ministry. Credential them for CE, RUF, youth ministry.
4. Some say its foolish for one branch of the church (the PCA) to make innovations about ordination. We shouldn't do this alone; we should go to NAPARC.

7.4 Questions

What are the dangers of credentialling to those already in ministry? We need people to be recognized for their ministry in more than just their local church.

Why can't we at home get right what is done in the field? I saw the travesty of an indigenous man receiving a position where a woman would have been much better for the ministry. (Stewart) Two principles are in play: that of preferring indigenous people ministering and that of giftings, and in the case you mentioned it sounds like gifting took a back seat. (Ward) Stewart did mention the problem when women are treated as mere employees rather than members of a ministry team within churches.

What is the danger of basing theology on examples and narrative in Scripture? (Stewart) There are evidently examples for things in Scripture which are simply recorded as fact. In Acts 2, Peter interprets the public proclamation of the gospel by men and women by reference to the prophet Joel. (MacDougall) The problem with appeals to the narratives in Scripture is that they often do not comment on the narrative. If you can prove by the author that the narrative is a positive example, then that is what the author intended to teach. Yes, this is interpretation, but we have to interpret to understand the Scriptures. The NT writers weren't writing a textbook of rules, but were concerned that God's people would like peacefully.

In your second objection, you mentioned the church improvising in its ministry. Can you give examples of improvisations now? (Stewart) The modern missionary movement was an improvising. We now have youth directors, DCE, the improvising has already happened and we need to recognize it.

When you presented the five views of ordination of women, were you saying that these were mutually exclusive views? (MacDougall) The five

views are a spectrum, and many people do hold bits and pieces of these views.

Don't we need to develop an exegetical consensus before credentialing new ministries? (Stewart) Its sort of an old wineskins / new wine problem. The exegetical consensus question is sort of the wrong question to ask, because we are trying to see which of the existing offices fit with the new ones. That won't happen because they're new. And I would emphasize that the improvised offices we have today were formed under apostolic authority. (MacDougall) Part of the problem with the PCA is we are youngsters in terms of the history of the church. Scripture is a non-negotiable, but are we sure of what it says? We need a mature enough denomination to not question the Scripture, and to ask the difficult questions of whether we understand the Scriptures.

Do you know how other denominations, in and out of NAPARC, have acted on the gender in the church issue? (Ward) I don't think I know the answer to that. RPCNA have admitted women to the office of deacon for about 150 years. (Lambert) The Methodist tradition, back to Wesley, allowed men and women to exhort and preach in public. (Stewart) There are lots of things to be learned from the wider evangelical world. I grew up in the Evangelical Free churches, and today its now possible to be credentialed as a Christian Ed. worker and as a Chaplain. That denomination is an inerrantist as the PCA, and gives them status as ministers (i.e. IRS tax exemption.)

8 Q & A with Frank and Carolyn James

(Steph) I'm in seminary. Is there fear involved in this [gender] issue, what's it based on and what does it live off of? (Carolyn) There is a lot of fear. Men are afraid that their going to loose something. Women are afraid of doing the wrong thing—being bad. Its encouraging when you see this blest alliance, when a man and woman work together, that it doesn't diminish the man at all—he walks taller. Think of Esther and Mordechai: he didn't loose out. Think of Ruth and Boaz: the letter says don't harvest all the crop, the spirit of the law says to feed the poor. Boaz got it, he understood, and responded in extraordinary sacrifice. I think we've got it wrong when we're so afraid. If God has placed authority on men, there's no way it will be taken away; they have to answer for it. If women exercise their gifts, it will only help the church. (Frank) I hate to admit it, but fear is a factor in how we deal with women in the church. There is a sense in which everyone is territorial.

There is a right fear: we must be careful to not misunderstand and misuse the Bible. There is also a wrong kind of fear, and I fear that we lean too far towards the wrong fear in dealing with women in the church. We need to keep our eyes on the prize: the kingdom of God. For you to be trained in seminary is not just good for you, its good for the church, its good for the kingdom. I wish you were at my seminary.

How do we interact with non-Christians regarding these gender issues and why we don't ordain women as pastors? (Frank) Tell the truth, explain where we're coming from. Its not wrong to be vulnerable and to let people know that we don't have all the answers. Its the Holy Spirit that saves people, not us. (Carolyn) I also think that's why conferences like this one are so important. Women have told her that they were invigorated in college and when they enter the church they are not appreciated and their gifts are ignored.

9 Closing Comments: Nielsons

Yesterday in chapel Dr. James called us to the deep foundational truths of the fruits in Galatians 5.

Jay Green called our attention to our cultural context. We must recognize the impact of the culture from all directions as we seek to follow the gospel. In our broader culture, people today discuss multiple genders, and 30 years ago those people were discussing gender as we are today. We must be relentlessly biblical. What unnatural acts must this generation of Christians perform?

Matthew Vos reminded us of where at least some of our notions of the family come from: industrialization and the private and public spheres. Covenant holds that God's word speaks graciously and convincingly into culture: it is not culture-bound. He mentioned the developing narrative of Scripture, but we recognize that the development is progressive and organic, that its later parts do not contradict its earlier parts, and that the canon is closed. What a joy to stand on the firm ground of Scripture. The periscuity of Scripture doesn't mean that we have right understanding of the divine or human authors, but we do have clear teachings. Truth is not measured as moderns or post-moderns have measured it.

Carolyn James reminded us of the *'ezer* warrior that woman are for [Christ] and with the man. She reminded us of the blessed alliance. This involved faith in God, who gave us his word. This is a mystery along with

that of the trinity, but we must live the questions and be prepared to accept God's answers when He gives them [John 14 - the Spirit is still leading us into all truth].

At this point my laptop battery ran out of power.

Chameleon

Like an impromptu
actor, queued by surroundings,
I imbibe gestures,
manners, and expressions. Am
I still myself, in changing?

a tanka by Larissa Swanson