

Gender and Church Office through God's Covenantal Story

When Gender Roles are Harmful

“He repeatedly quoted Scripture to defend his headship and to enforce my unconditional obligation to submit -- “from the kitchen to the bedroom.” ... His rule was absolute and final -- most notably during his violent moods.”

~Ruth A. Tucker, Black and White Bible, Black and Blue Wife

The shameful fact is that in many churches the Scriptures have been interpreted so as to prevent women from exercising many, if not most, of the gifts of leadership and teaching, exhortation, encouragement, and so on, that the Holy Spirit has given to them. Not only does this disenfranchise half the church; it amputates the body of Christ ... An amputated body is a wounded body, and many women have been crushed by being told that their gifts, gifts given by the Holy Spirit, are not allowed, not wanted, even nonexistent or imaginary. No wonder the discussion is so often opened with the words, 'This is a justice issue!'

Kathy Keller, *Jesus, Justice, and Gender Roles: A Case for Gender Roles in Ministry*

Covenant as Story

Creation

Genesis 1: 26 - 31

Genesis 2: 15-25

Fall

Genesis 3: 16-19

“As a result of their rebellion, those who are crowned with glory and honor will face the painful reality of death and decay. Instead of human beings ruling over the creation, sin and death reign over them.”

-- Carol M. Kaminski, *Casket Empty*

Hope

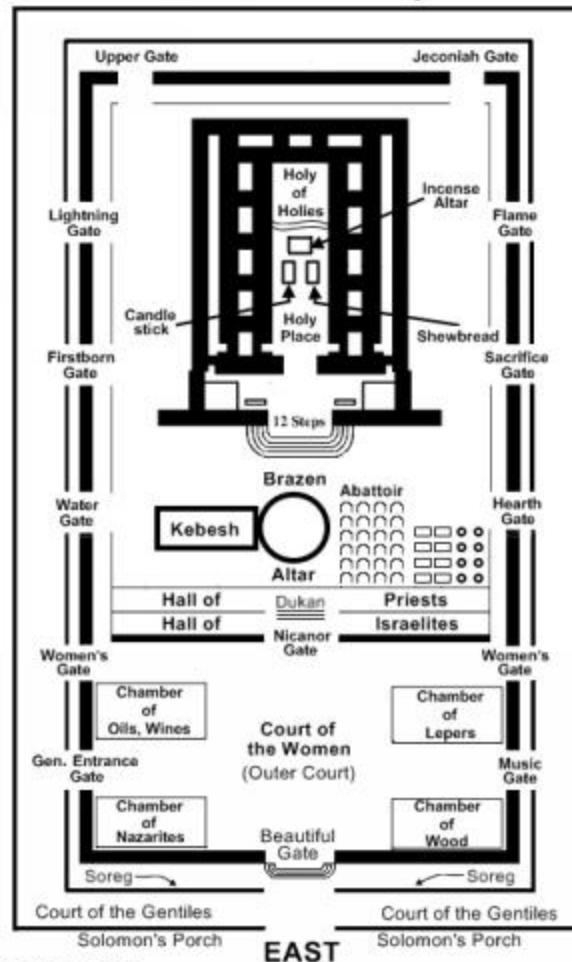
Redemption

Galatians 3: 26-29

Revelation 5

Exodus 19

Interior Design of Jerusalem's Temple



Joel 2: 28

A Picture of the Story

The Church

Unity Restored

Diversity and Relationship

Commission

Authority of God

The picture is about God

No one who holds office in the Church
ought to usurp authority
therein, or receive any official titles of
spiritual preeminence, except such as
are employed in the Scriptures.

-- PCA, BCO 7-3

BUT the picture *is a reminder* for us

The Purpose of Leadership

Mark 10: 42-45

As he has the oversight of the flock of Christ, he is termed bishop or pastor. As it is his duty to be grave and prudent, an example to the flock, and to govern well in the house and Kingdom of Christ, he is termed presbyter or elder. As he expounds the Word, and by sound doctrine both exhorts and convinces the gainsayer, he is termed teacher.

BCO, 8-1

“But when I remember that I am not my own, I offer up my heart, presented as a sacrifice to the Lord.” -- John Calvin

Romans 12: 1-8

What the Story Tells us...

The Church is about God and for us

Imago dei

Submission in the Trinity

Who Submits?

1 Timothy 2: 8-15

Creation order
Allusion

The elders of the synagogue were tasked with reviewing the remarks of the guest preacher of the day and judging them as true and to be received, or false and to be rejected. They sat at the front of the congregation, and if a true word was spoken, they were the ones meant to pronounce “Amen, Amen” at the end of it. ... The early church adopted this same practice as the Jewish synagogue...

~ Kathy Keller, *Jesus, Justice, & Gender Roles*

Report on Women Serving in the Church

The Problem

As one example, some on social media have asserted that women's ministries can be seen as a relegation of women to a secondary place, rather than a healthy functioning as part of the whole. The local church's women's ministry can therefore be marginalized, causing their efforts to be trivialized. The vision and mission of women's ministries should "reflect the total philosophy, purpose, and goals"¹¹³ of the local church. But, instead of being "intentional and strategic" in this mission, women's meetings often become social clubs which neither "teach women to think biblically" nor "build community with other members, age groups and ministries of the church."¹¹⁴

Further, women are increasingly turning to para-church ministries, both for instruction (which is often theologically suspect) and to exercise their gifts (with no oversight from elders.) In fact, it is the rare pastor who knows the names of the women who loom large in para-church "women's ministries," much less the conferences, websites, blogs, and curriculum that women are turning to in the absence of intentional oversight and nourishment from their sessions. This lack of shepherding and oversight can also be the result of failed women's

Adopted

Rationale: Within a complementarian framework, there is substantial, non-controversial opportunity for non-ordained men and women to participate in the leadership of a worship service, in the spirit of 1 Corinthians 14:26.

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25 6. *BCO* 9-7 says: "It is often expedient that the Session of a church should select and
26 appoint godly men and women of the congregation to assist the deacons in caring for the
27 sick, the widows, the orphans, the prisoners, and others who may be in any distress or
28 need. These assistants to the deacons are not officers of the church (*BCO* 7-2) and, as
29 such, are not subjects for ordination (*BCO* 17)." Thus, for the well-being of the church,
30 the committee recommends **that sessions and presbyteries select and appoint godly**
31 **women and men of the congregation to assist the ordained diaconate.**

Adopted As Amended

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Rationale: *BCO* 9-7 presently provides for sessions to recognize the unordained women laboring in diaconal work alongside ordained deacons. These women have been given a variety of names, job descriptions, and roles (within the parameters of Scripture and the confession), and thus, it is appropriate for sessions to establish the role of unordained deaconess to assist the deacons in their labors.

7. That presbyteries and the General Assembly consider an overture that would establish formally the right of sessions, presbyteries, and the General Assembly to establish the position of commissioned church worker within the PCA for qualified and gifted unordained men and women. Adopted

Adopted

Rationale: Presbyterianism in America has, in the past, recognized the need to set apart qualified women and men for service in the church outside of licensure and ordination. This was accomplished by establishing the category of commissioned church worker. For example, the 1938 PCUSA *Digest* describes the qualifications and requirements for people desiring to serve as a commissioned church worker in similar manner to licensure and ordination candidates. However, it clearly states, “the status of Commissioned Church Worker is never to be considered as having any relationship to or association with licensure, or ordination...nor does this status, when received, confer any ministerial rights and privileges.”

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13 **8. That sessions, presbyteries and the General Assembly consider how they can affirm**
14 **and include underprivileged and underrepresented women in the PCA.** Adopted

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16 Rationale: After Jesus rose from the dead, He commanded His apostles: “Therefore, go
17 make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:18). Jesus, our great King, prescribes the
18 mission of His church, which, in part, is to ensure the nations become His disciples (cf.
19 *WCF* 7.6). The overflow of the Great Commission is revealed in Acts. The names in
20 Acts 13:1 demonstrate that Jesus’ disciples took His commission seriously. Indeed, people
21 from different ethnic backgrounds were coming to faith in Christ. Unfortunately, the
22 PCA, though it upholds the mandate to make disciples of the nations, has yet to see the
23 demographics in diverse communities reflected in local churches. Therefore, as the PCA
24 considers the Great Commission afresh, local churches should affirm that intentionally
25 reaching the nations in their communities is not an addition to the church’s ministry. It is
26 a demand, even command, by Jesus as a principle part of their church’s ministry.

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