
❖ Other Voices ❖

God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

GENESIS 1:27

Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to Thy word.

LUKE 1:38

Now, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:
 “In the last days it will be, God declares,
 that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,
 and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
 and your young men shall see visions,
 and your old men shall dream dreams.”

ACTS 2:16-17

God has been moving against the bias of gender for all of time, and carefully reading Acts 2:17 in its original context of the book of the prophet Joel is indeed a monumental example of this breaking through....

The greatest news of all human history is the coming of Jesus Christ. What Peter and Joel are saying is awesomely close to this fact, if not equally important to it. It is that the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit is coming also. This coming has not received anywhere near its rightful emphasis. We have a church season called *Pentecost*, but even in the liturgical churches, the true significance of the coming of the Holy Spirit “on all flesh” is far from adequately presented.

ELLA PEARSON MITCHELL (1917-2008), “All Flesh,” in *The African American Pulpit* (Spring 1998)

We are women, and my plea is *Let me be a woman*, holy through and through, asking for nothing but what God wants to give me, receiving with both hands and with all my heart whatever that is. No arguments would ever be needed if we all shared the spirit of the “most blessed among women.”

ELISABETH ELLIOT, “The Essence of Femininity” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* (2006)

“In light of the rich diversity of ministries that can and once did exist within the local church, what are the distinctive gifts conferred by God on women, and in what forms of ministry can these gifts be best expressed?”

The question is not, "Do women have a role of leadership in the Church?" We need rather to ask, "What is the nature of that role?" And, as we formulate our answer, let us always keep in view the Pauline vision of the Church as unity-in-diversity.

KALLISTOS WARE , *The Ordination of Women in the Orthodox Church* (2000)

Why is a woman's work devalued? Why have women's contributions to the world been hidden?... For myself, why is it that many Christian young women seeking role models have no idea what women who have come before them have done as mothers, teachers, nurses, missionaries, writers and artists? Feminist scholars are giving us a history. Personally I am thankful for much of this scholarship. We [evangelicals] need to appropriate feminist scholarship where it is good and useful, and we should open up dialogue in this area....

LILIAN CALLES BARGER , "Women's Culture: The Gospel and the Future" (2000)

Women's history has often been relegated to the shadow world: felt but not seen. Many of our church fathers became prominent because of women. Many of these *fathers* were educated and supported by strong *women*, and some are even credited with founding movements that were actually begun by the women in their lives.

LAURA SWAN , Introduction to *The Forgotten Desert Mothers* (2001)

Among the many things that need to be said about the Gospels is that we gain nothing by ignoring the fact that Jesus chose twelve male apostles. There were no doubt all kinds of reasons for this within both the symbolic world in which he was operating and the practical and cultural world within which they would have to live and work. But every time this point is made – and in my experience it is made quite frequently – we have to comment on how interesting it is that there comes a time in the story when the disciples all forsake Jesus and run away; and at that point, long before the rehabilitation of Peter and the others, it is the women who come first to the tomb, who are the first to see the risen Jesus, and are the first to be entrusted with the news that he has been raised from the dead. This is of incalculable significance. Mary Magdalene and the others are the apostles to the apostles. We should not be surprised that Paul calls a woman named Junia an apostle in Romans 16.7. If an apostle is a witness to the resurrection, there were women who deserved that title before any of the men.

N . T . WRIGHT , *Women's Service in the Church: The Biblical Basis* (2004)

Women of New Testament times found that opening their homes as places of meetings where apostle and prophet could address the faithful was another step on the *Together Way*. In many cases this service led to the establishment of permanent churches....

In Acts 12:12 one reads of the disciples meeting at the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, when Peter was delivered from prison and returned to them. No doubt that was a regular meeting place, for Peter not only knew where to go to find the disciples, but the maid, Rhoda, knew him and recognized his voice as he asked to be admitted.

KATHLEEN MALLORY (1879-1954), *Manual of Woman's Missionary Union* (1949)

Whenever, or wherever [Salome Lincoln] found the image of Christ, soul mingled with soul, and to such a one, she felt that she was bound by a chord stronger than earthly, and by ties dearer than those which unite parties, sects and denominations; and with such a one, though she might differ on some minor points, she could heartily join, in carrying forward all the benevolent enterprises of the day. Her's [sic] was a Divine mission; her *credentials* she received from the Prince of princes, and to his tribunal alone she stood accountable.

ALMOND H. DAVIS, *The Female Preacher, or Memoir of Salome Lincoln* (1843)

In your nature, eternal Godhead, I shall come to know my nature. And what is my nature, boundless Love? It is fire, because you are nothing but a fire of love. And you have given humankind a share in this nature for by the fire of love you created us.

CATHERINE OF SIENA (1347-1380), *Prayer 12*

God has created each one of us, every human being, for greater things—to love and to be loved. But why did God make some of us men and others women? Because a woman's love is one image of the love of God, and a man's love is another image of God's love. Both are created to love, but each in a different way. Woman and man complete each other, and together show forth God's love more fully than either can do it alone....

God told us, "Love your neighbor as yourself." So first I am to love myself rightly, and then to love my neighbor like that. But how can I love myself unless I accept myself as God has made me? Those who deny the beautiful differences between men and women are not accepting themselves as God has made them, and so cannot love the neighbor. They will only bring division, unhappiness, and destruction of peace to the world.

MOTHER TERESA (1910-1997), *A Message For The World Conference On Women, Beijing, China* (1995)

I saw that God rejoiceth that He is our Father, and God rejoiceth that He is our Mother, and God rejoiceth that He is our Very Spouse and our soul is His loved Wife. And Christ rejoiceth that He is our Brother, and Jesus rejoiceth that He is our Saviour. These are five high joys, as I understand, in which He willeth that we enjoy; Him praising, Him thanking, Him loving, Him endlessly blessing.

JULIAN OF NORWICH (c. 1342-c. 1416), *Revelations*