

## The Feminist Movement (1) Women, Creation, The Fall

The controversy over women in church leadership is simply not going away. Since the 1960s many articles and books have been devoted to the subject. And though the burden of proof seems now to rest with those who challenge the opening of all ecclesiastical offices to women, the defenders of the historic position will find their arguments fortified by Mary Kassian, who is a member of the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood.

In writing her book, she has attempted to articulate the biblical ideal for the role of women. The gender roles are rooted in the creation order. Apart from this context the role differentiation cannot be understood. God created Eve for a different purpose than Adam. Kassian rejects the modern notion that Paul's instructions are time-bound. Since Pauline teachings are based on eternal principles, they have specific applications today. This also means that the regulations for family and church are universally applicable. Paul's commands are not bound by historical or cultural relativism, but by the way God created men and women to relate to each other as male and female. That is why the restrictions placed on women in the church are not because of their inferior worth, intellect or ability, but simply because the leadership in the local church is to reflect the role model God instituted at creation. Kassian fully recognizes the capacities, abilities and gifts of women.

Kassian warns that the rejection of the biblical pattern of church leadership is not without cost. She notes, "The cost of accommodating biblical truth in the area of church leadership is the eventual compromise of the entire Word of God." And this is why the controversy about women in ecclesiastical office is not a storm in a teapot.

Opponents of Kassian's view claim that you can find evangelicals who are egalitarian. But says Kassian, "Biblical feminism is not biblical at all, and it should have no place today in any New Testament church." Biblical feminists culturalize all Bible texts that they feel inappropriate in our society. They wrongly dismiss eternal Christian doctrine by labelling it culturally relative. Kassian comments, They consider Scripture *inapplicable* simply because it is not currently *popular*."

Kassian claims that our view of Scripture determines our position. This is true of course. If we humbly submit ourselves to the inerrant Word, we cannot accept female elders and pastors in the church. I realize that the question of inerrancy is even debated within evangelical and reformed circles. But a book review is not the place to discuss this issue. I certainly endorse Kassian's claim, "Those who reject inerrancy are playing god, for *they* determine which part of Scripture is correct and which is not. The biblical feminist's presupposition regarding error in Scripture seriously threatens the authority of the Word of God."

Kassian's readable work is well researched. She has provided a pertinent and thorough analysis of the Bible's teaching on the place and role of women both at home and church.

**Women, Creation and the Fall, by Mary A. Kassian,  
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