

Sarah Palin and the Hypocrisy of Secular Feminism

When **Sarah Palin** was vilely and viciously attacked by MSNBC host Martin Bashir, the secular feminists were eerily silent, affirming once again their political and social agendas trump any concern they may have for women.

If they were really “for women,” per se, they would have been the first to come to the defense of Palin, who has achieved the sort of success organizations like NOW (National Organization for Women) claim to advocate for women. She has served successfully as mayor of a city and governor of a state. She and her husband partner together in running a successful business, and she was chosen as the Republican vice presidential candidate for the 2008 presidential elections.

This being the case, shouldn't the feminists be celebrating **Sarah Palin**? Why are they so glum about Palin? The obvious answer is that Palin does not fit into their secular, socialist, non-Christian worldview. She marches to the beat of a different drummer. She is a committed follower of **Jesus Christ**, and she is pro-life. She believes marriage is between one woman and one man, and she advocates for personal responsibility and smaller government. All these things are anathema to secular feminists, and they have gone out of their way not only to be silent when Palin is attacked but to verbally attack Palin themselves.

The well-known feminist **Gloria Steinem**, for example, accused Palin and women like her of “selling out” the women's movement. This statement, however, shows the smallness of Steinem's thinking, in that she would narrowly define the women's movement in terms of her own organization and others like it. Much to her chagrin, there is a women's movement taking place outside of NOW that Steinem and those like her

would prefer to ignore.

In the political arena, it is happening with devout Christian women like Palin, Congresswoman **Michele Bachmann**, Gov. Mary Fallin of Oklahoma, Gov. Nikki Haley of South Carolina and a host of others. That these women are either ignored or opposed by secular feminists is why NOW should change its name to reflect who it really is. A more honest name and reflective of reality would be something like "National Organization for Socialist, Secularist Women."

This new women's movement the secular feminists so disdain is centered in **Jesus Christ** and His redemptive work. The women of this new movement are discovering Jesus Christ is, in fact, the great emancipator of women through His life, death and resurrection. They are discovering Jesus treated women with dignity and respect and welcomed them as His disciples.

I recall speaking to a group of sad, depressed women in Bulgaria near the Macedonian border. They had been excommunicated from their church and physically beaten by their husbands because of their passionate commitment to follow Jesus. As they told us their story through an interpreter, there was much weeping.

When it came time for me to speak, I turned in my Bible to Luke 8 and read about the women who had left everything to follow Jesus. I showed how these women traveled with Him from village to village and followed Him all the way to Jerusalem. I pointed out that Jesus did not tell them—even the married ones—to go home but allowed them to set their own priorities and make their own decisions to follow Him. "The most important thing anyone can do is follow Jesus," I told them. As I spoke, those Bulgarian women saw Jesus' acceptance and affirmation of them in a way they had never seen before, and they proceeded to drown out my voice with their shouts of joy and praises to God.

Indeed, there was a large company of women who followed Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem and were there observing His crucifixion and burial (Luke 23:49, 55). It was one of these women, Mary Magdalene, whom He honored by appearing to her first after His resurrection and commissioning her to be the first preacher of the Good News of His resurrection (Mark 16:9; John 20:11-18). In other words, Jesus required that His male disciples hear the initial news of His resurrection from the mouth of a woman. He was obviously making a very important statement by that purposeful act.

The women of this new movement are also discovering that Paul, when understood in the historical context of his day, did not confine or restrict women but showed great respect and deference for their gifts and callings. In the same way, John Wesley, when challenged as to why he commissioned ignorant laypeople, including women, to preach and teach, replied, "Because God owns them in the saving of souls, and who am I to withstand God?"

If the church had taught what the Bible actually says about women, there probably would never have been a "feminist" movement. In her book *In the Spirit We're Equal*, Susan Hyatt has documented how the roots of the modern feminist movement can be traced to devout **Christian women** and men in the 19th century who began a push for equal rights for women, including the right to vote. This came at a time when it was controversial for women to even pray in public. These early "feminists" took the Bible as their guide and covered their activities with prayer. Over time, however, this movement lost its way and moved away from its Christian beginnings into secularism and materialism, and it morphed into the modern feminist movement as we know it today.

It is time for the church at large to rethink its theology about women and their role in the church and society. But first, many will have to rid themselves of the fear of being accused of being influenced by feminism. "The church is too

feminine,” some will complain. This is the boogey bear that traditionalists use to try and intimidate churches and pastors from fully embracing the gifts and callings of their female members. This fear must be cast aside, and the work of the Holy Spirit in both men and women must be fully embraced so that the entire body of Christ can be mobilized. This is of utmost importance, for this new women’s movement could well be the key for true revival in the churches of our land and the key to reaching the Muslim world with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

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