

No More Macho Religion

Real men are not threatened by anointed women of God.

I thought I had heard it all until I read about a new Tennessee-based organization called GodMen, a group of tough guys who are calling for a return to what they describe as “masculine Christianity.” Their theory is that men are staying away from church today because too many women are there.

These guys are tired of seeing flowers and ferns at the altar. They don’t like women preachers or worship choruses that sound like love songs. They want a church with some testosterone.

They don’t appreciate sermons about “tender Jesus, meek and mild.” They want a bold, buzz-cut Savior whose confrontation in the temple looks more like Friday Night SmackDown. (Imagine a chiseled, 310-pound Jesus lifting the smashed tables over His head and yelling, “Yeeeaauurrraaagghhh!” after tossing a few moneychangers headfirst into the crowd.)

Brad Stine, GodMen’s founder, is right when he says that many men are boycotting church. Guys certainly are bored with religion-as-usual. But Stine seems to suggest that the way to lure them back to God is to reupholster the pews with rawhide, hang deer heads near the pulpit and offer 10-minute locker room pep talks for sermons. We’re talking Promise Keepers on steroids!

Stine says men want church to be “real and raw.” But I think he veered off-track when he ignored some key biblical truths:

1. God’s nature is reflected through both genders. Genesis 1 tells us that both male and female were created in His image

(see v. 27). So if we want His full nature to be revealed in the church we need both males and females to reflect it. Of course we can see God's character in the wildness of rawhide and antlers, but He is also evident in the beauty of flowers and ferns.

We don't need churches that are dominated by macho men or controlled by rabid feminazis. Instead, we must pursue a radical, New Testament faith that melts gender prejudice in the same way that it demolishes racial and class divisions.

2. God has always intended men and women to work in partnership. Everything God created in the Garden of Eden was good, but when He made Adam He said: "It is not good for the man to be alone" (Gen. 2:18, NASB). God did not create the woman as some kind of trivial afterthought—or as an extra appendage to help with the laundry. His divine purpose for the world was not complete until the woman took her equal place beside (not under) her husband.

3. Jesus spent a lot of His time with women. No other Jewish rabbi in Israel broke the gender rules as Jesus did. He had women disciples and allowed them to sit and learn at His feet.

He cared for widows, divorcees and those who had been abused and falsely accused by a cruel patriarchal culture. Jesus was no sissy, yet He defended and empowered women—and allowed His female followers to be the first to announce His resurrection.

4. The Holy Spirit releases women to be leaders. Many traditionally minded Christians love to quote the apostle Paul's words to the Corinthians, "The women are to keep silent in the churches" (1 Cor. 14:34), as if that statement

summarizes Paul's view of women. It doesn't. Paul was not a chauvinist.

The same Paul who sounds as though he limited the women of Corinth actually released those same women to pray and prophesy in church meetings (see 1 Cor. 11:5). He also had at least 12 women on his team, including a humble deacon named Phoebe; a skilled Bible teacher named Priscilla; and two rival church leaders named Euodia and Syntyche, powerful women whom Paul pledged to support (see Rom. 16:1-2; Acts 18:24-26; Phil. 4:2-3).

God did more than zap the church with heaven's power on the day of Pentecost. He placed those divine flames on the heads of men and women alike—ushering in a new day of gender equality and crushing old religious mind-sets about who is and who isn't qualified to preach and lead. The Holy Spirit made it clear that His gifting has nothing to do with hormones.

Come on, guys. Let's get off the macho bandwagon. Real men are not threatened by anointed women of God.

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