

The Relationship of Men and Women in the Church


The Danvers Statement


The 'Danvers Statement' summarises the need for the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW) and serves as an overview of our core beliefs. This statement was prepared by several evangelical leaders at a CBMW meeting in Danvers, Massachusetts, in December of 1987. It was first published in final form by the CBMW in Wheaton, Illinois in November of 1988. The Rational and Purpose are omitted here. The full statement can be found at cbmw.org.

Affirmations

Based on our understanding of Biblical teachings, we affirm the following:


1. Both Adam and Eve were created in God's image, equal before God as persons and distinct in their manhood and womanhood (Genesis 1:26–27, 2:18).
2. Distinctions in masculine and feminine roles are ordained by God as part of the created order, and should find an echo in every human heart (Genesis 2:18, 21–24; 1 Corinthians 11:7–9; 1 Timothy 2:12–14).
3. Adam's headship in marriage was established by God before the Fall, and was not a result of sin (Genesis 2:16–18, 21–24; 3:1–13; 1 Corinthians 11:7–9).
4. The Fall introduced distortions into the relationships between men and women (Genesis 3:1–7, 12, 16).


 In the home, the husband's loving, humble headship tends to be replaced by domination or passivity; the wife's intelligent, willing submission tends to be replaced by usurpation or servility.

 In the church, sin inclines men toward a worldly love of power or an abdication of spiritual responsibility, and inclines women to resist limitations on their roles or to neglect the use of their gifts in appropriate ministries.

5. The Old Testament, as well as the New Testament, manifests the equally high value and dignity which God attached to the roles of both men and women (Genesis 1:26–27, 2:18; Galatians 3:28). Both Old and New Testaments also affirm the principle of male headship in the family and in the covenant community (Genesis 2:18; Ephesians 5:21–33; Colossians 3:18–19; 1 Timothy 2:11–15).

6. Redemption in Christ aims at removing the distortions introduced by the curse.

 In the family, husbands should forsake harsh or selfish leadership and grow in love and care for their wives; wives should forsake resistance to their husbands' authority and grow in willing, joyful submission to their husbands' leadership (Ephesians 5:21–33; Colossians 3:18–19; Titus 2:3–5; 1 Peter 3:1–7).

 In the church, redemption in Christ gives men and women an equal share in the blessings of salvation; nevertheless, some governing and teaching roles within the church are restricted to men (Galatians 3:28; 1 Corinthians 11:2–16; 1 Timothy 2:11–15).

7. In all of life Christ is the supreme authority and guide for men and women, so that no earthly submission—domestic, religious, or civil—ever implies a mandate to follow a human authority into sin (Daniel 3:10–18; Acts 4:19–20, 5:27–29; 1 Peter 3:1–2).

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8. In both men and women, a heartfelt sense of call to ministry should never be used to set aside Biblical criteria for particular ministries (1 Timothy 2:11–15, 3:1–13; Titus 1:5–9). Rather, Biblical teaching should remain the authority for testing our subjective discernment of God's will.

9. With half the world's population outside the reach of indigenous evangelism; with countless other lost people in those societies that have heard the Gospel; with the stresses and miseries of sickness, malnutrition, homelessness, illiteracy, ignorance, ageing, addiction, crime, incarceration, neuroses, and loneliness, no man or woman who feels a passion from God to make his grace known in word and deed need ever live without a fulfilling ministry for the glory of Christ and the good of this fallen world (1 Corinthians 12:7–21).

10. We are convinced that a denial or neglect of these principles will lead to increasingly destructive consequences in our families, our churches, and the culture large.