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overworked judicial system of Israel. People stood all day long, trying to get a hearing from Moses and to obtain justice for their grievances. Once again Jethro became a spiritual guide to his son-in-law. Not only did he devise a system of delegated authority which would not overtax the available resources, but he interpreted to Moses his own role in God's plan.

Hearken now unto my voice, and I shall give thee counsel,
and God shall be with thee: Be thou for the people to God-ward that thou mayest bring the causes unto God; And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt shew them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do.
(Exodus 18:19-20)

There needed to be a leadership development program. Able people were to be set over thousands, others over hundreds, fifties, and tens. These surrogates were to administer justice in all except the most difficult cases. The plan was put into execution, and the father-in-law went on his way.

When next he returned for a visit, the host was encamped before Sinai, and it was time for the pilgrim people to make their way through the wilderness. Moses begged his father-in-law to stay with them and to be their guide through the desert.

For thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness,
and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes.
(Numbers 10:31)

The transformation to a nomadic life-style was far from easy. As they left the flesh-pots of Egypt to follow the pillar of cloud and fire, the people had much to learn. It is here that Zipporah would have much to contribute, for pitching tents was women's work, as was the packing and unpacking of all the family's belongings. To accept this new pattern of existence as sent from God cannot have been easy for the women, and perhaps this is why Miriam and Aaron grew so hostile toward Zipporah. They declared that God had spoken to them too, and they wished to do without both Moses and his wife.

And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married; for he had married an Ethiopian woman.
(Numbers 12:1)

God sent for Miriam and Aaron to come to the tent of meeting. There they learned that Moses was a servant who spoke with God mouth to mouth, and that they were to heed him. Moses could not have gained this acquaintance with the Holy One apart from his wife

and father-in-law. The matter was settled, and the ministry of Zipporah and Jethro continued, and they were remembered with gratitude.

May God give us grace to follow the example of this family who played so large a part in leading a nation of captives and slaves to the Promised Land of their inheritance.

A Report on the Conference with Elaine Storkey

by Phyllis Alsdurf

"The problem of patriarchy in the church is the problem of male as norm," charged British author Elaine Storkey at a recent meeting of Christians for Biblical Equality (CBE) in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Whether in language and liturgy, structure and tradition, stereotypes of men and women, values or definitions about what constitutes knowledge, patriarchy permeates the Christian church, she observed. "Actually, the church takes its cue from the secular world. We're incorporating secular humanism into our churches."

Storkey, author of *What's Right with Feminism?* (Eerdmans), is a spokesperson for Men Women and God, an organization affiliated with John Stott's London Institute of Contemporary Christianity. A sociologist, philosopher, wife and mother, Storkey attempted to put some of the complex facets of the women's movement into perspective for Christians who "remain frightened, yet challenged, by what feminists are saying today."

Noting that 42 percent of all Americans reportedly attend church, she asked, "Where is the transforming work of the Gospel in this culture? We still allow stereotypes of the American male to be absorbed into our churches. We've constructed a model of leadership that depends on the qualities of the stereotyped American male - ruthless, authoritarian, aggressive. We've soaked in the cultural values of secular humanism to such a degree that our churches are unrecognizable."

Storkey sees American Christians as caught up in the contradiction of trying to combine "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" with a Gospel that says whoever follows Christ must take up his cross. "You think you can have it both ways - a comfortable Christianity combined with the good life. You think materialism and healthy Christianity go hand-in-hand."

Exploring the issue of innate differences between male and female, the way in which they *together* image God, Storkey looked at the perspective of the essentialists, those who see man and woman as having different genetic needs and make-ups, and that of the relativists who see no differences between the sexes.

Most Christians are happy with the essentialists,

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she said. "Both men and women are in God's image, but men are *more* in God's image. God is more male than female. Woman is a derivative image. If we want to know what God is like, we look to men." Such a view, Storkey noted, always leads to patriarchy.

Christian relativists, on the other hand, see both male and female as in God's image because both are human. "Sex roles are relative," she said, "and so is sexual preference. Our sexuality is our own affair; we can write our own scripts." Soon, however, such a position leads to self-interest, indulgence and promiscuity.

Equally untenable is the view that we image God through our complementarity," she continued. "We share human attributes of a divine person who is both male and female." This emphasis upon God's androgyny leads to a "deification of sex," Storkey claimed.

She proposes that God is neither male nor female, nor yet a combination of the two. "Yahweh is distinct, above and beyond gender. The polarity of sex belongs to the created order, not the Creator. Sexuality is rooted in the creation, as the way in which we grow, procreate, express our unity. But God transcends his creation; He is not absorbed in it."

That truth does not then give license for "writing our own sexual scripts," Storkey warns. "We suffer the consequences of not living up to the standards God has laid down for us."

So how do we image God? Not in our sexuality, she says, but in our humanness - in our capacity to think, love, feel, enact justice. "All the things God has put in our hearts. People are the only image of God. We can be marred or distorted, but not destroyed. To be human is to image God."

Women, therefore, are no less in the image of God than are men. "We are both full images of God," Storkey concludes. And it is in Christ that we see the image of God mirrored most fully. "We need a restored image of God, and Jesus has come to show us what it can look like."

Christ, then is the model that must be followed in the quest for equality within the church. "He kept silent in front of his persecutors, not because they weren't wrong, but because his silence called out for justice. His silence made a very strong point," Storkey observed. But, she noted, Jesus also wept. "He wasn't afraid of being unmanly."

And Jesus rebuked. "Jesus provides a sobering example for both men and women. Most often it was the male religious leaders he was rebuking, and the women he was loving, supporting, drawing out."

The challenge facing those committed to biblical equality is to work for both peace and justice within the church, she said. "Peace without justice is not peace, nor is it biblical. We must be patient, not passive. Women must repent of the tendency to please, to take their cues from men. It means being prepared to hear God's voice speaking, not that of men. We must not let men define our walk with Christ."

In the fight for biblical equality, witch hunts, caricatures, cheap jokes, and sitting in judgment on fellow Christians are "not for us," she said. "We are to notice the sin in our own lives and call that to account. We must not go forward in pride and self-assurance, but with the humility and compassion that holds really firm to what Jesus says."

Storkey concluded that "no woman can serve two mistresses. We dare not work for peace and justice in the patriarchal church until we ourselves have honored the name of Jesus Christ by offering ourselves up. We must combine the love of Jesus with the unflinching standards that He holds up for us as our example."

A lecturer in sociology and philosophy at Oak Hill College and Open University, London, Storkey has been a visiting professor at Covenant College, Lookout Mountain, TN, and at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, MI. She is a staff member of the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity.

The Aftermath of the Convening Assembly

The convening assembly which was held March 7, 1987, after the Christians for Biblical Equality conference, voted to form an affiliation with the British organization known as Men, Women, and God. There was a lively exchange of ideas and viewpoints, and many suggestions were offered.

To implement the new organization, a temporary steering committee was formed and tasks assigned. These include drawing up a faith statement and constitution, a survey of needs, studying strategies for the dissemination of information, evangelism and spiritual growth, developing resources and a speakers' bureau, and establishing an international liaison. The temporary steering committee and co-opted members include Diane Chynoweth, Pat Assimakoplos, Deborah Lunde, Alvera Mickelsen, Sherrie Aeschliman, Carol Pass, Gretchen Gaebelein Hull, Deborah Menken, Alice Matthews, Betty Kroeger Elliott, Faith Martin and Patricia Mollo. Catherine Kroeger is the temporary convener.

The purpose of the new group will be to alleviate oppression and discrimination based upon a misunderstanding of the Gospel. A major objective is the proclamation of God's redeeming love, grace, and justice within a commitment to the Bible as the inspired Word of God. Christ's call to faith, obedience and discipleship for women and men alike will be emphasized. Part of the group's witness will be a defense of the Christian faith against the attacks of those who denounce the Scriptures as being oppressive of women.

Men, Women, and God has also received overtures for affiliation from concerned Christians in Holland and Australia, so that there is considerable

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