

# Mutuality

The Voice of Christians for Biblical Equality

Let us then pursue what makes for peace and mutual upbuilding.

— Romans 14:19

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*Mutuality* seeks to provide inspiration, encouragement, and information about equality within the Christian church around the world.

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From the Editor by Chelsea DeArmond

# Start seeing human beings

Who gets to be a human being in our day and age? This may seem like a silly question because the answer is so obvious—everyone! But we don't have to go back too far in history to see that perfectly rational people have considered others less than fully human on the basis of their gender, ethnicity, or social status.

In a 1938 address given to a Woman's Society, Christian apologist and author Dorothy Sayers famously asked, "Are Women Human?" Her question was motivated by the constant tendency in matters of taste, culture, and occupation for women to be regarded as a member of a class rather than as individual human beings. She believed that work should be done by the person who does it best, regardless of what class of human being that person happens to belong to.

Men are not immune to being classified and ranked as something less than human. In the 1960s, black sanitation workers in Memphis, Tenn., were known as "walking buzzards." Their average pay was \$1.80/hour without benefits, vacation leave, or pensions. One rainy afternoon, two black sanitation workers, Echol Cole and Robert Walker, ducked in the back of a garbage truck to stay dry. An electrical short in the poorly maintained truck caused the compressor to start running and the two were crushed to death.

Anyone could tell by looking at these workers that they were male human beings. But the treatment they received revealed the truth that they were not regarded as fully human. In 1968 the workers organized a strike to improve their atrocious wages and working conditions. The striking workers wore placards that read simply, "I AM A MAN."

The articles in this issue of *Mutuality* address the issue of recognizing and honoring others as full human beings on several levels. Bruce Lowe describes his experience of discovering that the equality of all people is more than just his personal conviction—it is a pervasive biblical principle.

As Christians, we know that the Bible describes human beings as bearers of God's own image, as redeemed from our depravity by Christ, and as called and gifted by the Holy Spirit for our work in the Kingdom of God. Any qualification or classification of human worth is against God's will. Familiarity with these biblical truths is not enough. We need to treat every person we encounter as if these truths from God's word are wrapped around them reminding us of their worth at every moment.

Wrestling with the guilt of male violence against women, Jon Trott questions his humanity as a man, and challenges other men to recognize and respect the full humanity of women. Instead of condemning boys for natural feelings of physical attraction toward girls, Hugo Schwyzer challenges boys to affirm girls' essential dignity and worth as human beings rather than reducing them to their physical traits.

Whether we are looking in the mirror or through a window, the articles in this issue of *Mutuality* remind us to recognize the value of each human being we see as creatures God has called "very good."

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