

Feminism

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NOTE: See the “Masculinity and Femininity” section for a full discussion on the Biblical perspective of gender.

A Definition of Feminism (From the Columbia Encyclopedia):

Feminism, movement for the political, social, and educational equality of women with men; the movement has occurred mainly in Europe and the United States. It has its roots in the humanism of the 18th cent. and in the Industrial Revolution. Feminist issues range from access to employment, education, child care, contraception, and abortion, to equality in the workplace, changing family roles, redress for sexual harassment in the workplace, and the need for equal political representation.

Feminism

Overview

1. **A biblical view of feminism:** Check the “Marriage and Family” resource for information about the biblical view of the family and marriage. Also, see the “Masculinity and Femininity” section for resources on a biblical view of manhood and womanhood.

2. **Feminism has evolved into something very different from its origins:**

“The New Feminism emphasizes the importance of the “women’s point of view,” the Old Feminism believes in the primary importance of the human being.” qtd. .in Christina Hoff Sommers, *Who Stole Feminism?: How Women Have Betrayed Women*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), p. 90.

3. **Feminist ideas are widespread:**

"Feminists are becoming difficult to identify, not because they do not exist, but because their philosophy has been integrated into mainstream society so thoroughly. The philosophy is almost unidentifiable as *feminist*, for it is virtually indistinguishable from *mainstream*." Mary A. Kassian, *The Feminist Gospel*, (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1922), p. 251.

4. **Feminist scholarship is weak and non-academic:**

"I have taught feminist theory. I have debated gender feminists on college campuses around the country, and on national television and radio. My experience with academic feminism and my immersion in the ever-growing gender feminist literature have served to deepen my conviction that the majority of women's studies classes and other classes that teach a 'reconceptualized' subject matter are unscholarly, intolerant of dissent, and full of gimmicks. In other words, they are a waste of time." Christina Hoff Sommers, *Who Stole Feminism?: How Women Have Betrayed Women*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), p. 90.

5. **Feminism hurts women:**

"Feminism freed men, not women . . . feminism gave men all the financial and personal advantages over women. The truth is, a woman can't live the true feminist life unless she denies her child-bearing biology. . . The reality of feminism is a lot of frenzied and overworked women dropping kids off at day-care centers. . . Women should get educations so they can be brainy in the way they raise their children. . . "Women and men are not equal, they are different. The economy might even improve if women came home, opening up jobs for unemployed men, who could then support a wife and children, the way it was, pre-feminism." Kay Ebeling, "The Failure of Feminism," *Newsweek*, November 19, 1990, 9.

6. **Feminism hurts men:**

“Boys feel continually attacked for who they are. We have created a sense in school that masculinity is something bad. Boys feel blamed for history, and a school culture has grown up which is suspicious and frightened of boys.” Jack O’Sullivan, “A Bad Way to Educate Boys,” *Independent* (London), April 3,

1997, p.E8.

“American boys face genuine problems that cannot be addressed by constructing new versions of manhood. They do not need to be “rescued” from their masculinity. On the other hand, too many of our sons are languishing academically and socially. The widening education gap threatens the futures of millions of American boys. We should be looking not to “gender experts” and activists for guidance but to the example of other countries that are focusing on boy’s problems and dealing with them constructively...So who in the United States is working to improve boys’ achievements? No one. No national organizations alert the public to boy’s academic shortcomings, no politically powerful groups lobby Congress to help boys. The climate for American Boys is unfriendly.” Christina Hoff Sommers, *The War Against Boys*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000, pp.15-16.

Feminism

Sue Bohlin

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The worldview of feminism has permeated just about every aspect of American life, education and culture. We see it in the way men are portrayed as lovable but stupid buffoons on TV sitcoms. We see it in the way boys are punished and marginalized in school for not being enough like girls. We see it in politically correct speech that attempts to change the way people think by harassing them for their choice of words.

The anger and frustration that drove feminism's history is legitimate; women have been devalued and dishonored ever since the fall of man. Very real, harmful inequities needed to be addressed, and it's important to honor some of the success of feminist activists. But at the same time, we need to examine and expose the worldview that fuels much of feminist thought.

Modern-day feminism got its major start when Betty Friedan wrote her landmark book *The Feminine Mystique*, in which she coined the phrase "The Housewife Blahs" to describe millions of unfulfilled women. There are many reasons that women can feel unfulfilled and dishonored, but from a Christian perspective I would suggest that this is what life feels like when we are disconnected from God and disconnected from living out *His* purpose for our lives. As Paschal said, "We are restless, O God, until we find our rest in Thee."

Betty Friedan looked at unhappy, unfulfilled women and diagnosed the problem as *patriarchy*, which means a male-dominated society. If women are unhappy, the reason is that men are in charge.

The early feminists decided that women are oppressed because bearing and raising children is a severe limitation and liability. What makes women *different* from men equals *weakness*. The next step, then, was to overcome that difference so that women could be just like men. The invention of the birth control pill helped fuel that illusion.

Out of the consciousness-raising groups in the '70s came a shift in the view of women's differences. Instead of seeing those differences as weakness, they now saw those differences as a source of pride and confidence. It was now a good thing to be a woman.

The next step in feminist thought was that women were not just *equal* to men, they were *better* than men. This spawned famous quotes like Gloria Steinem's comment that "A woman without a man is like a fish without a bicycle."[\[1\]](#) Male-bashing became the sport of the '90s.

Feminism says, "The problem is patriarchy--male dominated society." The problem is actually the sin of people within a God-ordained hierarchy. In a fallen world, there are going to be problems between men and women, and especially abuses of power. We must not confuse the abuses of the structure with the structure itself.[\[2\]](#)

1. Feminism and the Church

Feminism has so permeated our culture that we should not be surprised that it has impacted the church as well. Religious feminists uncovered the "Church Women Blahs." People became aware that for the most part, women were relegated to service positions like making coffee and rocking babies. If a woman had gifts in teaching, shepherding, administration or evangelism, she was out of luck.

The *Magna Carta* for Christian feminists is Galatians 3:28: "In Christ there is no male or female." However, the context of this verse is not about equal rights, but that all believers have the same position of humility at the foot of the Cross. The issue is not capability, but God-ordained positions within a God-ordained authority structure of male leadership. Other biblical passages that go into detail about gender-dependent roles show that Galatians 3:28 cannot mean the obliteration of those roles.

There are two main areas where religious feminists seek to change gender roles: the role of women in the church, and the role of women in marriage. The discussion has produced two camps: egalitarians and complementarians.

Egalitarians are the feminist camp, with an emphasis on equality of *roles*, not just *value*. They believe that hierarchy produces inequality, and that different means unequal. The solution, therefore, is to get rid of the differences between men's and women's roles. Women should be ordained, allowed to occupy the office of pastor and elder, and exercise authority over others in the church. Instead of differences in the roles of husband and wife, both spouses are called to mutual submission.

Egalitarians are reacting against a very real problem in the church. But the problem of authoritarian men, and women relegated to minor serving positions, is due to an abuse and distortion of the hierarchy God designed. Egalitarians reject the male authority structure along with the abuse of that structure.

Complementarians believe that God has ordained a hierarchy of authority in the church and within the family that reflects the hierarchy of authority within the Trinity. And just as there is equality in the Trinity, there is equality in the church and in marriage because we are all made in the image of God. Women are just as gifted as men, but there are biblical restrictions on the exercise of some of those gifts, such as not teaching men from a position of authority, and not occupying the office of pastor or elder. In marriage, wives are called to submit to their husbands. Mutual submission in marriage is no more appropriate than submission of parents to children.

Christian feminists did not evaluate whether the structures or hierarchies of leadership were there because God designed them that way. They just demanded wholesale change. But some things are worth keeping!

2. Feminism on Campus

As with the family and the church, feminism has had an impact on our college campuses. Abraham Lincoln once warned, "The philosophy of the school room in one generation will become the philosophy of government in the next." What happens on college campuses eventually affects the rest of the culture, and nowhere is feminism's pervasiveness more evident than in our colleges.

A new discipline of Women's Studies has arisen in many universities. These courses usually stress women's literature, treating with contempt anything written by "dead white European males." They often incorporate women's religions in the curricula, especially the Goddess worship of Wicca on campus. The main tenet of this pagan religion is that the worshipper is in harmony with Mother Earth and with all life. They worship the Goddess, which is described as "the immanent life force, . . . Mother Nature, the Earth, the Cosmos, the interconnectedness of all life." [\[3\]](#) Many witches (followers of Wicca, not Satanists) and pagans are involved in women's studies programs because, as one Wiccan Web site put it, "Many feminists have turned to Wicca and the role of priestess for healing and strength after the patriarchal oppression and lack of voice for women in the major world religions." [\[4\]](#)

Christianity is often portrayed on college campuses, and especially within Women's Studies, as an abusive religion. There are several reasons. First, because Christianity is hierarchical, teaching differentiation of roles and that some are to submit to and follow others. Second, their skewed view of the Bible is that Christianity teaches that women

are inferior to men. Third, Christ was male, so he is insufficient as a role model for women and can't possibly understand what it means to be a woman. And fourth, since the language of the Bible is male-oriented and patriarchal (both of which are evil), it must be dismissed or changed.

Feminism impacts dating relationships on campus. Heterosexual dating is often colored by an attempt to persuade women that all men are potential rapists and cannot be trusted. Even a remark meant to compliment a woman is taken as sexist and unacceptable. One woman, wearing a short skirt on campus, heard someone whistle appreciatively. She strode into the women's study center complaining, "I've just been raped!"

Angry feminists convey a hatred and fear of men as part of the feminist ideology. When it comes to dating, for a number of feminists, lesbianism is considered the only appropriate option. If men are brutes and idiots, why would anyone want to have an intimate relationship with one? In fact, there's a new acronym on campus, GUG: "Gay until graduation." But the fact is, most women really like men; that's always been a problem for feminists. Let's consider more problems that result from feminism.

3. The Problematic Legacy of Feminism

Feminists started from a reasonable point in recognizing a most unhappy aspect of life in a fallen world: women tend to be dishonored, disrespected, and devalued by many men. This is as true in religious systems as it is in society and political systems. Feminists started out trying to rectify this problem first by trying to prove that women were as good as men. Then they decided that women were better than men. They ended up trying to erase the lines of distinction between men and women altogether. This has resulted in tremendous confusion about what it means to be a woman, as well as what it means to be a man. And naturally, it has produced a lot of confusion in relationships as well. This confusion ranges from men who are afraid to open doors for women for fear of receiving a rude tongue-lashing, to women who are baffled in the workplace because the men they compete against at work won't ask them out on a date.

Radical feminist thought despised much of what it means to be a woman--to be receptive and responsive and relational, to treasure marriage and family. Only masculine traits and behaviors and jobs were deemed valuable. Nonetheless, many young women are confused by the messages they are getting from the culture: that an education and a job are the only worthwhile pursuits, and the social capital of marriage and family is no longer valued. However, these same women feel guilty and confused for finding themselves still longing for marriage and family when they're supposed to be content without them. One college student said, "I've taken all the women's studies courses--I know that marriage and motherhood are traps--but I still want to do both."[\[5\]](#)

The legacy of feminism is the refusal of the God-given role of men to be initiator, protector and provider. And the God-given role of women to be responder, nurturer and helper is equally disdained. The consequence of this rebellion is relational confusion, especially in the home. Dads aren't communicating to their sons why it's a blessing to be male, because frankly, they're not sure that it is. The message of feminism is that being male is a joke or a curse. Moms aren't teaching their daughters the basic skill sets that homemakers need because they're too busy at their jobs and besides, haven't we been taught that being a homemaker is demeaning? As a mentoring Mom to mothers of preschoolers, I see how many young women are totally clueless about how to be a wife and mother because those essential skills just weren't considered important by their mothers. Radical feminism hates family and families, and we all suffer as a result.

4. The Legacy of Feminism (Cont'd)

Feminism says, "The problem is patriarchy--male dominated society." The problem is actually the sin of people within a God-ordained hierarchy. The heart of feminism is a rebellion against the abuses of this God-ordained hierarchy, but it's also a rebellion against God's plan itself. This is a perfect example of throwing the baby out with the bathwater. Feminists believe they have the right to reinvent reality and to change the rules to suit them. This rebellious belief system has had some disastrous effects on our culture and society.

For example, one of feminism's biggest achievements was the legalization of abortion. *Keeping* it legal is one of feminism's biggest goals: see, if women are to be truly free, then they must be free to decide whether or not to carry

a pregnancy to term. A woman's ability to conceive, give birth, and nurture babies is seen as weakness and vulnerability, because women can be forced to be impregnated and to bear unwanted babies. Removing the consequence of sexual activity, and getting rid of unwanted pregnancy to cancel out a woman's so-called "weakness," is important to many feminists. So, since 1973, there have been over 40 million abortions in the U.S. [\[6\]](#). But that only tells part of the story; "while some women report relatively little trauma following abortion, for many, the experience is devastating, causing severe and long-lasting emotional, psychological and spiritual trauma." [\[7\]](#) I have the privilege of helping post-abortive women grieve the loss of their babies and receive God's forgiveness for their sin. They know that feminism's insistence that abortion is every woman's right is a lie.

Another impact of feminism is seen in the feminization of American schools. Feminism's disrespect for men and boys has shaped schools and educational policy around values and methods that favor girls over boys. Competition, a natural state of being for many boys, is considered harmful and evil, to be replaced with girl-friendly cooperative, relational activities. "Schools are denying the very behavior that makes little boys boys. In Southern California, a mother was stunned to find out that her son was disciplined for running and jumping over a bench at recess." [\[8\]](#) My colleague Don Closson wrote, "Gender crusaders believe that if they can influence little boys early enough, they can make them more like little girls." [\[9\]](#)

To despise the glory of masculinity is to reject the very image of God. To despise the treasure of femininity is to reject what the Bible calls the glory of man. [\[10\]](#) That's the problem with feminism: it is a rejection of what God has called good. It has gone too far in addressing the inequities of living in a fallen world. It's a rebellion against God's right to be God and our responsibility to submit joyfully to Him.

Notes

1. Actually, I have discovered, it wasn't original with Ms. Steinem. She had this to say in a letter she wrote to *Time* magazine in autumn 2000: "In your note on my new and happy marital partnership with David Bale, you credit me with the witticism 'A woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle.' In fact, Irina Dunn, a distinguished Australian educator, journalist and politician, coined the phrase back in 1970 when she was a student at the University of Sydney."

Irina Dunn has confirmed this story, in an e-mail of January 28, 2002: "Yes, indeed, I am the one Gloria referred to. I was paraphrasing from a phrase I read in a philosophical text I was reading for my Honours year in English Literature and Language in 1970. It was "A man needs God like a fish needs a bicycle." My inspiration arose from being involved in the nascent women's movement at the time, and from being a bit of a smart-arse. I scribbled the phrase on the backs of two toilet doors, would you believe, one at Sydney University where I was a student, and the other at Soren's Wine Bar at Woolloomooloo, a seedy suburb in south Sydney. The doors, I have to add, were already favoured graffiti sites."

<http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Vista/3255/herstory.htm>

2. I am indebted to the wisdom and insight of Mary Kassian as expressed in her excellent book *The Feminist Gospel* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1992).
3. <http://www.cog.org/general/iabout.html>
4. Ibid.
5. Quoted by Barbara DeFoe Whitehead, *Mars Hill Audio Journal* No. 61, Mar./Apr. 2003.
6. <http://www.nrlc.org/abortion/aboramt.html>
7. <http://www.hopeafterabortion.com/hope.cfm?sel=A31Q>
8. William Pollack, *Real Boys: Rescuing Our Sons from the Myths of Boyhood*, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1998), 94. The entire quote is from Don Closson, "The Feminization of American Schools," [fem-schools.html](#)
9. Ibid.
10. 1 Cor. 11:7

Three Bad Ideas

Frederica Matthews-Green

Permission granted by the author.

Few book titles have had the sticking power of Richard Weaver's "Ideas Have Consequences." Even people who've never read it find the blunt title instantly compelling. Weaver's thesis was that the ideas that we absorb about the world, about the way things are or should be, inevitably direct our actions. Though the book was published in 1948, before many current bizarre ideas had fully emerged, the thesis is an eternal one. It sets people to wondering which ideas were the seeds that sprouted our present mess, and which new ideas might be helping us out of it -- or further in.

Ideas about the nature of life combine in framework which can go by many names. Perhaps the word "paradigm" has become annoying through overuse, but some equivalents would be worldview, mindset, outlook, ideology, cognitive framework, or reality grid; a New Testament term is phenomena. Whichever you choose, it means that mental assumptions link together and result in actions -- ideas have consequences.

A few decades ago some people got a bad idea. Or perhaps the bad idea got them, and shook and confused them till the right ideas came to look strange. We might trace it to the Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision, in January 1973, but even that document grew out of prior ideas. It didn't stand alone, and it cannot be combated alone. I'd like to explore three interlocking, mutually-supporting bad ideas that sprouted during that era, and then look at some ideas about how to fix things.

It's hard to pin down exactly when these bad ideas sprouted, but I can point to the moment when I first encountered them in bloom. As a college freshman I embraced early-70's feminism with the eagerness of a cult devotee. I use the language of religious conversion intentionally. Just as conversion to Christ confers an entirely new way of looking at life--the "phronema" of the Spirit -- feminism offered me a whole new worldview. I had rejected my childhood Christian faith, but feminism offered membership in a parallel enlightened community, one that had sacred writings and advanced leaders able to instruct neophytes in the vision. Initiates met in ritual gatherings --consciousness-raising groups -- where we used a vocabulary unique to insiders. We had distinctive clothing and grooming styles; in our own way, we had a tonsure and habit.

It wasn't long before I became a leader and teacher myself, a member of the inner circle and a guru of campus feminism. This proto-feminism wasn't identical to the one prevalent today; the earlier version was full of energy but unclear on direction, and shooting off in multiple directions at every imaginable target. Not all the ideas popular then continued to be part of the movement. Of the ideas that lasted, not all were successful. Of the ideas that were successful, not all were bad.

For example, one idea that died quickly was that women should live in community and pool their children in a cooperative care-taking scheme. This didn't happen, because once we started having kids we discovered that we didn't really like how other people wanted to raise them. We wanted our own separate homes, and personal control over child-rearing decisions. Doing it by community vote turned out to be impossible, and the cause of too many arguments.

Here's an idea that had some tenacity, but didn't succeed. One of things that I found most provoking in those early-feminist days, and which became a favorite crusade, was the way women's bodies were used in advertising. I know it sounds crazy, but back in those days ads actually used images of sexy women to sell wholly irrelevant products, like toothpaste or cars. As we said -- as we said *constantly* -- women were being exploited as sex objects.

Those who think feminists were victorious in every battle and now control the world should turn on the TV, or open a magazine, and estimate how much progress this cause has made. This is one battle that most feminists finally abandoned as unwinnable. It turns out that you *can* fight City Hall. What you can't fight is Madison Avenue.

A happier idea was more successful. It was that women should return to more natural standards of physical appearance, and give up arduous fakery. You may not recall how bizarrely artificialized the ideal of female beauty had become by the sixties. Perhaps it had to do with the space race or the fad of modernity, but everywhere women started looking squeezed and plasticized. Rent a film from the era and notice how armored the women's bodies look, how rigid and exaggerated their figures, how vast and immobile their hair, how surreal their makeup. Remember bright green eyeshadow swabbed up to the eyebrows, and shiny white lipstick? Real women don't look like that; even these women themselves didn't look like that stepping out of the shower. Starlets had to be assembled every day by a squadron of assistants, like a portable tank.

These wallpapered Amazons contrasted with more natural beauties of earlier decades, like Katherine Hepburn or Bette Davis. Likewise, compare a fully-fortified Ursula Andress of 1965 with Julia Roberts or Sandra Bullock today, and you see a real victory for women. Only a few women burned bras, but all of us threw away our girdles, and as a result the world is a friendlier place. The idea that women's natural bodies are beautiful enough was a good idea, and the consequences have been good as well.

But some ideas were bad, and the greatest producer of grief, of course, was abortion. I lose track of how many millions have died; when it passes forty million the mind begins to swim. We can cope with such figures only by ignoring them. Once I heard someone observe that a memorial similar to the Vietnam Veterans memorial, listing the names of all these babies, would have to stretch for fifty miles. That was many years ago, and it would be many miles longer today. But such a wall cannot exist, because those babies never had a name.

We think of abortion as the defining, litmus-test issue of feminism, but it was not always so. When the massive anthology "Sisterhood is Powerful," the feminist bible, was published in 1970, only one portion of one essay focused on abortion. (By the way, that essay debunked the phony scare-statistic that 10,000 women died annually from illegal abortion: "it is no longer anywhere near the truth and has no place in any serious discussion.") In 1967, when the National Organization of Women met for the first time, abortion and contraception were mentioned only briefly at the end of its "Bill of Rights;" abortion appears only as the last word in the document.

Abortion was far from the most important feminist issue. But among a number of bubbling ideas abortion rose to the top, I believe, mostly because it was concrete. How could you measure whether something as foggy as "respect for women" was improving? It was impossibly vague. But repealing a law, or passing a new one, was a tangible goal. You could make a plan to achieve it, then implement and correct the plan, and have something to assess at the end of the day. Legalizing abortion was practical, and as a result it became important.

Much the same thing happened in 19th century feminism, as voting rights for women overshadowed the more indefinite goals. Once the vote was won, in 1920, feminism went into suspended animation for fifty years. It was revived only by the reappearance of another practical goal.

There are two other bad ideas from 70's feminism, which combine to create a current situation that makes abortion seem indispensable. Think about it this way: abortion is the solution, so to speak, of the problem of pregnancy. But when, and why, did pregnancy become a problem? Throughout most of human history, pregnancy has been a blessing. New children were welcomed, because they built the strength of a family and became the support of a couple's old age. New children mean new life; they mean both personal delight and growth of the tribe.

But for some reason in the late 20th century pregnancy came to seem an unbearable burden. It became so unbearable that a fourth of the time it occurred women sought abortion to escape it.

Was this because pregnancy had become dangerous to women's health? Was the nation wracked by war or famine? No, America during this period was the wealthiest, healthiest, most secure and comfortable nation in history. Pregnancy became unbearable due to a twofold change in expectations about women's behavior -- two bad ideas. One was the idea that women should be promiscuous. The other was that women should place career above childrearing.

Both ideas were promoted by the feminist movement, yet there is a profound irony: both ideas are stubbornly contrary to the average woman's deepest inclinations. Both ideas, in fact, were adopted unchanged from the worldview of the folks feminists claimed to hate -- male chauvinists.

There is a pop-sociology concept called "imitating the oppressor," which means that when a group struggles for a new identity it tends to adopt the values of whoever it perceives to be holding power. Thus, anything that looked "feminine" made feminists uncomfortable, because in the opinion of men it was weak. Why we should think that men were smarter than our mothers and grandmothers was never clear. Most of the time, we acted as if men were made only a little higher than pond scum. Yet we accepted unquestioningly that a man's life was the ideal life. Everything about men seemed more serious, more important. We felt embarrassed at our soft arms, and betrayed by our soft emotions. Motherhood was a dangerous sidetrack, a self-indulgent hobby that could slow you down. That's the way men saw it, and who were we to argue? Whatever men treated with contempt was contemptuous; whatever men valued was valuable. And what men valued most was success.

Though I use the term "careerism" to identify this value, I don't mean that women shouldn't have careers. I mean rather a half-conscious ideology which holds that the most important thing in life is the rank conferred by a place of employment. It's as bad for men as it is for women.

Careerism is a foolish idea on many levels, not least because only the most fortunate, and elite, people get to have careers. Most people just have jobs. When I was a young feminist mouthing off about how I was going to be out in the workplace and not stuck at home, my dad gave me a few wise words that, improbably, sunk in even then. He pointed out that most of the people in the world don't get their fulfillment from the thing that gives them a paycheck. They get their fulfillment from other facets of life: faith, family, hobbies, literature, music. For most people, a job represents only the hours they must spend each week to earn the free hours in which they can do the things they really care about. Careerism is the misguided notion that work trumps everything else.

In another odd twist of history, in the late fifties and early sixties there had been a groundswell of concern that careerism was a poison, and too much obsession with the corporate ladder was deadening to the soul. Brows were knit over "the rat race" and "conformity," "the man in the gray flannel suit" and "lives of quiet desperation." Early hippies recognized this anxiety and urged instead that we "drop out," get back to the land, make pottery and eat acorns. The early feminism I knew had a mother-earth flavor which meshed with that, but within a few years the movement was swept with longing for worldly success, banging on the glass ceiling demanding to be let in.

So feminism concluded that men, despite being idiots, were on-target about how we should live our lives. If men thought that housewives were dumb, that staying home and raising kids was mindless drudgery, it was so. It didn't matter that our foremothers for generations had found homemaking noble and fulfilling. What did they know -- they were stupid housewives! We were embarrassed by our female ancestors and envied the males. They had power, and we wanted power. We couldn't imagine any success except success in men's terms.

Thus, feminism unconsciously adopted the very values of the people they claimed to be opposing, because it's so easy to get confused about what you really want. We ignored the evidence of our own eyes. We saw men losing their identities in their careers, exhausted in the "rat race," nourishing ulcers at three-martini lunches, and dying early of heart attacks. Yet we clawed to gain the same privilege. Even the painful absence of our own daddies from our childhoods didn't cause us to question this goal. It was the sour grapes principle in reverse: the grapes may look sour, but as long as men wanted them we'd choke them down.

Abortion is the first bad idea, and careerism is a second; it forms a supporting layer, because competing in a man's world required that women be as child-free as men are. A third bad idea contributes to the picture, that of what we called "free sex." It occurred to people that it would be fun if everybody had as much sex as possible with as many people as they could. This is a theory that has not proved true in practice, but it maintains a tenacious hold.

This notion, of course, has been a favorite with men for quite awhile--the last few million years, perhaps. But its formal expression goes back to Playboy magazine, when the thesis was dignified with the audacious label "the Playboy philosophy." (The busts line up in a dusty old library: Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Hefner.) In the early 70's

Playboy was a clearly-identified enemy of feminism, due to its "exploitative images." That changed; Playboy is now an ally of feminism because Playboy is such an enthusiastic defender of abortion. You can put two and two together on that yourself.

There isn't a venerable history of women celebrating promiscuity; if anything, women's wisdom over the ages taught that emotional security was the precondition for sex being fun, and a wedding ring was the best aphrodisiac. But, again, what did stupid old housewives know? Men called them prudish, so that's what they were. Thirty years later women are still going morosely out into the night in dutiful pursuit of fun. And if it's not fun, she presumes, it must be because something is wrong with her.

This is another way that women adopted unhealthy male values: they began thinking of sex as a contest or powerplay rather than an act of vulnerability and intimacy. Young women were encouraged to be sexual aggressors, and to think of themselves as free agents who could take up and discard men at will. They quickly noticed that men were amusingly helpless when lust was provoked, much more than women are, and their ability to elicit this helplessness made them feel powerful. An extreme example of this is the topless dancer, who commands the attention of a roomful of men, all of who seem to be at her mercy. But as an ex-dancer once told me, "I had to ask myself, if I have all the power, how come I'm the only one in the room who's naked?"

When sex is linked to a sense of thrilling power, man and woman are enemies, not allies. They use each other to prove their prowess, to make a conquest, to score. These locker-room terms reveal how tense and combative this view of sex is. But women's traditional view of sexuality -- indeed, the healthier view -- is that it is inherently an act of risk, a willingness to be naked, vulnerable, perhaps even foolish, to expose what is unlovely as well as what is treasured and dear. This risk is only possible when both man and woman are pledged to love and honor each other. Then sex is indeed a coming-together, a union of whole persons and not just isolated parts. But the idea of sex as love-making has been replaced by sex as contest, and even young girls are invited to dress provocatively and test how powerful they can be. Power-based sex may be exciting, but its essential foundation is mistrust; its theme song is "My Heart Belongs to Me." No wonder the sexual revolution has been accompanied by so much divorce.

Earlier we asked, how did pregnancy become unbearable? These two bad ideas, careerism and promiscuity, come together like two sides of a vise. If the modern woman is dutifully promiscuous, a high proportion of her sexual experiences are going to be in a context where the male partner feels no responsibility for a resulting child. Indeed, a pregnancy is likely to seem to him a failure on her part, if not an injustice. Contraception has fostered the ignorant expectation that sex has nothing to do with reproduction, but sometimes raw biology still wins out. This woman may have far fewer pregnancies than her great-grandmother, but any one of them is more likely to be disastrous.

Likewise, if she has adopted the idea that professional work is more important than child-rearing, pregnancy can dynamite her life plans. The trick of juggling motherhood and career is so difficult that it's still material for magazine cover stories thirty years later. We're no closer to solving the problem, and I doubt thirty years more will help. For her great-grandmother, however, it's likely that one more baby would not create a significant burden in a life already arranged to accommodate home and children.

Thus these two bad ideas come together, pressing in inexorably, and making a woman feel she has no escape but abortion. Feminism sought, first, increased access to public life and, second, increased sexual freedom. But that participation in public life is greatly complicated by responsibility for children, and uncommitted sexual activity is the most effective means of producing unwanted pregnancies. This dilemma -- simultaneous pursuit of behaviors that cause children and that are hampered by children -- finds its inevitable resolution on an abortion table.

Feminists defend abortion with desperate passion because the whole shaky structure of their lives depends upon it. Indeed, Justice Blackmun in the Webster decision wrote that women had "ordered their lives around" abortion, and the Casey decision was based on the assumption that abortion had become a necessary part of the social machine. There's a sad accuracy in that. When something like abortion becomes available, surrounding expectations regarding reproduction and child care subtly shift to accommodate it, and eventually it appears to be indispensable.

This is why the fight against legal abortion cannot stand alone. If we could padlock all the abortion clinics tomorrow, we'd see the next morning a line 3200 women long pounding on the doors. We wouldn't have solved the problems that make their pregnancies seem unbearable. We wouldn't have changed the context that normalizes promiscuity and undermines a woman's authority to say no. We wouldn't have restored respect for the profession of mothering, or respect for fathering for that matter, so that men would be proud to love the moms and support the children whose lives they begin.

These three interlocking bad ideas present a complicated picture, and initially a depressing one. If you've ever played the game of pick-up sticks you know how impossible the task looks at the beginning, when you must gradually and carefully dislodge the first sticks one at a time.

Yet pregnancy care centers across the country have been working on these problems for many years now, ever since the first Birthright was founded in 1965. There are estimated to be 3000 pregnancy care centers across the nation, in comparison with only a few hundred abortion clinics. Over the years these centers have shifted and enlarged their focus, so the early years' emphasis on the baby grew to encompass the pregnant woman as well, and then both the woman who had already experienced abortion, and young people who can be encouraged to make better choices.

These, then, are three good ideas, and these ideas also have consequences. The first is to support the pregnant woman. Pregnancy care centers offer pregnancy tests, maternity clothes, medical referrals, practical advice, spiritual counsel, and many other kinds of aid; recently, many centers have become freestanding medical clinics and provide full prenatal care.

Yet the most important thing pregnancy centers provide will always remain the individual friendship support that a pregnant woman needs. When I began research for my book, "Real Choices: Listening to Women, Looking for Alternatives to Abortion," I had the goal of discovering the main reasons women had abortions. I thought that if we could rank-order the problems women faced, material, practical, and financial, we'd be able to address them more effectively.

To my great surprise, I found that these practical forms of support were only secondarily important. Over and over, women told me that the reason she'd had an abortion was that someone she cared about told her she should. The people she needed to lean on for support in a crisis pregnancy, like her boyfriend or mother, didn't supply that support, but instead encouraged her -- and sometimes, sadly, coerced her -- to have an abortion instead.

While pro-choice advocates present abortion as an act of autonomy, pregnant women experience it rather as a response to abandonment. Pregnancy is the icon of human connectedness, binding a woman to her child and the father of the child. Abortion shatters those connections and leaves her desolate.

Thus, when I asked women, "What would you have needed in order to finish the pregnancy?" over and over they told me, "I needed just one person to stand by me." While there are many useful ways centers can support pregnant women, the most important thing they can give is friendship, simple moral support. Across the nation pro-lifers are doing many important things to protect unborn life: making TV commercials, proposing bills in Congress, writing books. But the one thing that can prevent an abortion tomorrow is what women told me they needed: a friend. Individual, personal care for pregnant women is a very, very good idea.

A second good idea is that of offering grief counseling for post-abortion women. You might think that once a woman has had an abortion it is too late for a pregnancy center to be of any help. The opposite is true. Nearly half of the abortions done each year are done on women who have already had an abortion. In a single year in California, almost 1700 women had two or three abortions.

Psychologists say the mechanism works like this: a woman has an abortion, but in her heart grieves for her baby, and unconsciously feels obligated to have another to "make up for" the one that was lost. This is called an "atonement baby." But when she "slips up" and becomes pregnant again, she finds she's still in the same bad situation. Circumstances are no more welcoming to a new life than they were before. She has a second abortion, and

then has *two* atonement pregnancies to make up. It is vital that trained counselors help women work through their grief and come to a healthy resolution, so this cycle can come to an end.

A third good idea is preventative: to reach young people before they have become sexually active and give them resources and incentive to remain chaste. The best programs address young men as well as young women, and go beyond "just say no" to present the positive aspects of marriage. Some secular programs target girls alone, and counsel abstinence only till high school graduation; they may even drill girls to be suspicious of boys and believe they can't be trusted. This, I think, is exactly the wrong approach. If we want strong marriages and healthy two-parent families, we shouldn't be intentionally teaching mistrust. We need rather to raise young men who are trustworthy, and inspire them with a vision of the nobility of fatherhood. We need to enable boys and girls behave in admirable ways, deserving of trust, rather than plant further suspicion between the sexes.

The best character education programs build boys into young men who will see in marriage the opportunity to take on a challenging and time-honored role. In our culture men are almost continually insulted, and conservatives and pro-lifers are not immune to this infection. Pregnancy care workers can find it easier to send a woman to the welfare office than to explore whether the father of the child might be called on instead. We expect these men to be "bums," and they live down to our expectations.

Pro-lifers easily speak of God creating new life, ordaining that the woman and unborn child be knit together, and they should recognize that God has appointed a third person in that situation as well. I wince when I hear pro-lifers say "she found herself pregnant;" it sounds like Victorian euphemism. It's as if the woman just discovered the baby in a parking lot. No, she had help with that project. For every "unwanted" pregnancy there is a dad who needs to be challenged to do the right thing, for his own sake as much as his new family's.

Restoring young men to the role of husband and provider is the most important long-term strategy for reducing the need for abortion. If he is there, problems look much less dire. If he is there, she can do it. If she is alone, the struggle is much more steep.

Three bad ideas have intertwined their roots and created an array of bad consequences, with the loss of tens of millions of unborn children only the most bloody result. Destruction of trust between men and women, decline of marriage, rise of sexually transmitted diseases, and other ill effects will remain uncounted until the passage of centuries gives some historian perspective to comprehend the full sweep.

From that perspective, I hope, he will also see the counterforces of health at the moment of their emergence. These forces are there because, like the human body, a human community has an impulse to health. There are already encouraging signs that younger people, in their teens and twenties, are more pro-life and more pro-chastity than older folks. They remember having both mom and dad at work all day, and want to make more time to raise their own kids. At this moment we can see only the beginnings of hope, and not how it will all come about. But someday we will have that eternal perspective, and be able to see how our few and feeble efforts might have prevented some evil from advancing, or even turned it back a few feet. May God give us courage; may he give us encouragement; and may we be brave enough to respond.

Frederica Mathewes-Green's Web site, www.frederica.com, offers more of her writing, including "[Twice Liberated | A Personal Journey Through Feminism](#)." Mathewes-Green is also a [columnist](#) for *Christianity Today*.

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Feminist Reconstruction of Language

Michael Bauman

Dr. Michael Bauman, Verbal Plunder: Combating the Feminist Encroachment on the Language of Theology and Ethics. Used by permission. Copyright © 2000, Michael Bauman. All rights reserved. Previously published in Pilgrim Theology: Taking the Path of Theological Discovery (Zondervan, 1992).

I don't like being ripped off.

The more valuable something is to me, the more I hate to lose it. As a historian of theology and a literary critic, I value words and their meaning, and I value tradition. I won't give them up without a fight. If someone wants to steal something from me and I can stop them, I will. This essay is my way of saying that I've had enough, and I'm not going to take it anymore.

Not long ago, a small and vocal band of feminist thugs tried to pull off one of the greatest acts of verbal plunder in the history of the Western world. By means of a linguistic subterfuge that prohibited any term that happened to strike them as sexist, they tried to abscond not only with one-third of all our generic personal and possessive pronouns (no more he and his, for example), they also tried to swipe any and every descriptive term beginning with the letters m-a-n. And because crime breeds crime, they fell quickly from larceny into slander by identifying as sexual bigots and chauvinists anyone, past or present, who failed to pay homage to their idiosyncratic rules of usage. As much as I hate to endorse anything to do with Freudianism, it seems to me that some feminists suffer from acute pronoun envy.

But I will not be bullied out of my words or my heritage by the verbal, philosophical, or cultural heresies of those who are dedicated to undermining the great tradition that brought us the good, the true, and the beautiful on one hand, and redemption and hope on the other. I know what that mob of word Pirates is up to and I want to tell them to keep their hands off my legacy and to stop spreading lies about my friends. Anyone who thinks that Jesus, Dante, Petrarch, Michelangelo, or Milton were sexist because they did not speak, write, or paint according to rules propounded in the latest feminist manifesto had better think again. Some people not only have no respect for their own language and tradition, they have none for anyone else's. They smear those who, in ages past "spake full well in language quaint and olden," people whose verbal art and commitment to truth I am unwilling to abandon, condemn, or reshape in some generic mold of feminist design. I do not trust the minds and methods of feminist teachers who, by means of their anachronistic slurs, bear false witness against the past and its towering figures. Nor do I want them teaching my children. I will not entrust my descendants to those who abuse my ancestors. Wisdom, beauty, and truth are hard-won things, the gaining of which took generations. To overthrow them or to undervalue them simply because those who discovered them do not worship at the altar of one's own linguistic special interest group is both insupportably arrogant and reckless.

More than fifteen hundred years ago, in his monumental City of God, Saint Augustine understood the principles by which modern propagandists operate: if you want to undercut an opponent's argument, simply compromise his language. This is done best by stealing your opponents words and making them your own. When you do so, your opponent is forced either to stop and explain what he means every time he uses the words you co-opted, or else to find a whole new set of unfamiliar terms with which to advance his case. Either option is doomed to failure. Neither audience attention span nor media sound bites are sufficiently long to accommodate his necessarily lengthy and labyrinthine efforts at reeducating the populace to his newly acquired taxonomy. By stealing his language, you have stolen the verbal flags and banners around which he can rally people to his cause. Without those flags and banners he is speechless. By pilfering his verbal arsenal, you have left him without weapons and without defense.

That is precisely what the feminist word thieves are trying to do. They have taken traditionally generic terms of representation like he, his, and mankind and redefined them so that they can be understood only as sexist or gender specific. In much the same way that weasels suck the contents out of eggs, the feminists suck the content out of words. Then they go the weasels one better. Rather than leaving the empty shell of a word behind them, they

proceed to refill that mangled word with a definition of their own choosing. For example, according to one prominent feminist handbook, the "only acceptable nonsexist usage" of the word man is in reference to an adult male. But that is a feminist weasel word, one from which the feminists have sucked out its prior meaning and replaced it with one of their own. According to my Webster's Dictionary, the word man is not fundamentally a male word. In fact, the concept of maleness does not enter until the third definition. Contrary to the self-serving assertions of the feminist verbal revolutionaries, traditional usage is ideologically patriarchal in neither definition or usage. For my money, Noah Webster is a far better guide to language than Gloria Steinem, Betty Friedan, or Starhawk. My point (if it is not obvious) is this: rather than having a command of language, the feminists want to command language.

Read my lips: I'm not buying it.

I will defy all who insist on taking the language and literature of Western tradition to the verbal veterinarian in order to have them neutered. Not all changes are progress, and neutered language is one change that is not. Neutered language is no improvement. It is not more accurate, more picturesque, more powerful, or more communicative. Neutered language is not preferable. None of us is better off because standard word usage has been castrated.

Feminists insist on rejecting traditional verbal usage because they think it is exclusivistic and that it leaves out half of humanity--namely women. Their response to this imaginary impropriety is to represent the human race in neutered language--which merely succeeds in eliminating all of us because human beings are not androgynous, and they are not neuter.

If you look carefully, you will discover that much feminist language is not inclusive. You also will notice that a great deal of feminist language (and the ideology that accompanies it) is not neutral, it is overt feminist sexism. I don't know about you, but I've had enough of books like *Jesus as Mother*. If any change is needed now, it is to have feminist language and literature spayed. I intend to be a recruiter for, and a frontline warrior in, the resistance movement determined to stave off the feminist encroachment upon legitimate verbal conventions, and I intend to be an environmental activist in the fight against semantic pollution. I will stridently oppose all those whose verbal fetish is exposing the supposed genitals of standard English. I, for one, will not be party to the humorless, even unhuman, triumph of feminist androgyny. I will not sanction the willful blindness of those who insist upon seeing only the imaginary sameness of all things, because things that are all the same, whatever else they might be, are not human beings.

Have the feminist word bandits never learned that grammatical gender is not the same as sex? One does not make a sex statement when one calls the race man any more than when one calls a ship or a nation or liberty she. Genitalia are not in question. Sex and grammatical gender must not be equated. If you insist on equating them when the author you read or the speaker you hear has not, you will misread or mishear. In that sense, some feminists can misunderstand in seven languages. Their verbal fetishes make it inevitable. In their monomaniacal quest to expose the verbal genitals of every great writer, they miss the beauty, truth, and power of the world's finest works of verbal art and, in the process, make themselves beggars and complainers at the great feast of language and literature. Their ill-conceived sexist jingoism does little else than make them whistlers, hecklers, and foot stompers in the rhapsody of words played out for us by the finest verbal performers of all time. I am scandalized by their audacious efforts to teach the old Muses new words and by the manner in which they pretend to stand in ideological and artistic judgment over them. Great words and great works judge us, not vice versa.

As a grammatical category, the concept of gender first reached maturity in Ancient Greece, where it seems not to have developed as a reference to sex, but rather as a classification of kind. Must I remind feminists that while there are only two sexes, Greek has three genders (a distinction of which the Greeks were well aware and heartily endorsed)?

Furthermore, the same nonsexual character of grammatical gender is repeated in modern language. In German, for example, the word for girl is grammatically neuter while the word for turnip is feminine. This does not mean that the Germans confuse their women with their vegetables. Such ideas are laughable to us because when feminist propaganda is not blaring in our ears we easily understand that grammatical gender is a semantic classification and

that a semantic classification is not the same as biological sex. You must not impose a sexual orientation upon words where one does not exist.

If the words man and mankind were really male words, then it should be the men, not the women, who ought to be offended by the use of allegedly male terms to refer to the race indiscriminately. By employing a masculine word for a generic meaning, our culture would be demonstrating that it thinks nothing at all of defacing or erasing maleness. If generic words really were male words, then masculinity is being defaced every day by everybody-and no one seems to object, least of all the feminists. The feminist word fetish sometimes reaches ridiculous extremes, as even the feminists themselves have had occasion to acknowledge. The Nonsexist Wordfinder actually feels compelled to stop and remind its feminist readers that the words "amen," "boycott," "Manhattan," and "menopause" are not sexist words! I never thought they were; but apparently enough feminists did to require such a warning.

The feminist verbal agenda is the academic equivalent of an urban-renewal project: it is intended to clean things up and to modernize them, but all it does is to serve as the seedbed for future rows of antiseptic, off-white, cloned cubicles of androgynous language. They want to replace the hallowed halls of ivy with the long, gray, dimly lit corridors of an ill-conceived, allegedly gender-neutral taxonomy. And they serenade these inhospitable corridors, pervasively and perpetually, with a politicized, propagandized, amorphous Muzak that permits us to hear all the notes, but never the music. The feminists intend to level the great books, the great authors, and standard English just as thoroughly as the Allies did Dresden. The great tragedy is that the feminists have met so much success and so little resistance, especially in political affairs and in the affairs of academia.

We are the victims of a feminist "Newspeak" that is designed not to portray or to depict reality more accurately, more graphically, or more comprehensively, but simply to meet the ideological needs of feminism and to further its own radicalized political agenda. The unabashed purpose of feminist Newspeak is, to paraphrase George Orwell, not merely to denigrate standard English, but to make the worldview of standard English impossible and, literally, unthinkable. This is done partly by coining new words, but primarily by junking old ones, or by stripping them of their old meanings. Feminist Newspeak is designed, to paraphrase Orwell again, to diminish the range of human thought and to make it impossible to formulate in one's mind what feminists misrepresent as the moral heresies and injustices of Western tradition.

You see, because thoughts and words are so intimately interconnected, when someone steals some of your words, they also steal some of your ability to formulate, or to conceive, certain thoughts. The fewer the words from which you have to choose, the fewer the thoughts it is possible for you to think and express coherently or compellingly. In the aftermath of the feminist plunder of the English language, antifeminist arguments and reasons become impossible because the words and thoughts necessary to conceive and to sustain those arguments have all been stolen. Language control is thought control. The feminist Newspeakers are trying to induce a culture-wide case of selective amnesia; they want you to forget major portions of the accumulated wisdom of many centuries of Western tradition and of the language in which it was conceived and preserved so that you will more willingly drink deep from the boiling cauldrons of cultural and theological heresy, and of feminist social revolution.

Make no mistake about it, the feminist word warriors are thought police. They will confiscate your words-and your thoughts-and they will deface those words and thoughts they leave behind. Feminist Newspeak is not merely a form of ideological censorship, it is verbal plunder and mental vandalism.

That is my first point--the feminist word warriors have damaged English language and literature. My second point is that they have done the same thing to theology and ethics.

They've even kidnapped God himself and had him neutered. The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost have been exchanged for God, Jesus, and the Spirit, as if the Son were not God, as if the revelation in Scripture could be altered at will, and as if heresy were a trifle. They had better reread Saint John and the creeds of Nicaea and Chalcedon. When Christ taught his disciples to pray using the words "Our Father who art in heaven" (Matt. 6:9), he was not being an unreconstructed chauvinist simply because he wisely refrained from employing the neutered language of the New Lectionary. My point here is not merely that Jesus spoke of God as Father, but that he apparently never spoke of him as anything else and that matters.

Jesus did not merely continue the patriarchal theology of the Old Testament, he widely and deeply intensified it. In the whole of the Hebrew Scriptures, God is almost never actually addressed as 'Father.' He is described as "Father" only occasionally. But Jesus himself alone calls God "Father" more than 160 times, and except for the cry of dereliction on the cross, which is a quotation from the Old Testament, Jesus seems never to call him anything else. The feminists, in other words, are fighting with Christ, and they must be made to realize this. We not only have Christ's explicit instruction to call God "Father," we have his constant example. I remind you that no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son reveals him, and the Son has revealed him to us as Father. If you reject that revelation, then, in some profound fashion you cannot know God. If you reject that revelation, the God you know is somehow other than, and different from, the heavenly Father of Jesus. As Adolf Harnack observed, Jesus did not make God our Father, he showed us that God is Father.

Put differently, in their mad efforts to rid orthodox Trinitarianism of what they mistakenly identify as sexism, feminist theologians have junked the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and replaced them with the Creator, the Redeemer, and the Sustainer. That is, they have replaced divine ontology with function, which is a heresy. After all, it is not only the Father who creates; it is not only the Son who redeems; and it is not only the Spirit who sustains. Each of the three divine Persons is intimately involved in each of the three functions arbitrarily singled out here by the feminists as the means of distinguishing and identifying the Persons of the Godhead. This feminist subterfuge is no more helpful than distinguishing the right fielder, the left fielder, and the center fielder as the one who runs, the one who throws, and the one who catches, respectively. But all outfielders do all things. To jettison the three Persons of the Trinity in favor of three arbitrarily selected functions of the Trinity is simply to fall into a new variation of the old Sabellian heresy of modalism, which denied that God is authoritatively revealed to us as three Persons, but which affirmed instead that God merely fulfills three functions and plays three roles. It seems to me that to be baptized into the name of the Creator, the Redeemer, and the Sustainer is to be baptized into another religion, and not into biblical or historical Christianity.

But the feminists are not only Sabellians, they are also Marcionites. That is, like Marcion, they too have utterly rejected the authoritative witness of the Hebrew Scriptures. Like Marcion, the feminists denigrate Yahweh and despise the picture he gave of himself to pious ancient Jews in the Old Testament. Furthermore, they despise the picture those pious ancient Jews have left of God for us. The feminists accuse the ancient Jews of doing--indeed, they severely criticize them for doing--precisely what they themselves unashamedly do: remake God in their own image. The feminists reject the God of the Jews because they think he is merely the culture-bound product of a political and sexist agenda. I reject the God of the feminists for precisely the same reason.

Winston Churchill is reported to have said that whatever name the Iranians choose to call their country, in English it ought to remain "Persia." Likewise, whatever tortured pronouns the feminists invent to refer to God, the good theologian will continue to call him "he."

Feminist theology, I am convinced, is a flight from biblical reality. God has made us male and female, not androgynous. God has made the male of the species not better, but head. God has revealed himself to us as he. When God became incarnated, he became a man, that is, a male. That Man is the source and model of the Christian priesthood. The sexuality of Christ is neither accidental nor incidental. It is the result of divine choice. If you don't like it, argue with God.

In his excellent *The Closing of the American Mind*, Allan Bloom pointed out that Western scholars properly criticize the loss of academic integrity among their Soviet counterparts, who seem to revise their textbooks every time a new regime comes to power. Whenever the academy capitulates to the whims of government or modern culture, Bloom says, it is the death of learning. Because theological feminism has merely baptized the gender fixation and egalitarian political agenda of the feminist left, theological feminism is the death of genuinely biblical learning. Even though it sometimes means not to be, feminist revisionism is anti-Scripture. Too many feminist theologians believe that when the church listens to the Bible the church becomes deformed, not reformed. They are wrong. The feminist theologians have yet to learn that it is far better to listen to the Heilige Geist than to the Zeitgeist, that is, to the Holy Spirit of God than to the spirit of the age.

But it is not revelation that the feminist theologians crave; it is relevance. They have not understood that all that is revelation is inescapably relevant, but that being relevant is no guarantee of being revelation. The feminist

theologians have never learned that to go with the spirit of the age is to go where all ages go and have gone: out of vogue and into a well-deserved obscurity in the irretrievable past. They have never learned that to go with the God of revelation is to go where God himself goes; and God himself never goes out of date. As Vance Havner once said, God is the Eternal Contemporary. Whenever our tomorrows arrive we will always discover that God himself has been there before us.

Theological feminism is simply an accommodation to the spirit of the age, not to the core, not to the kernel, of revelation. It finds its authority in something called "feminist experience" and not in Scripture.

The feminists' linguistic lobby, however, has exercised some discretion. Although they have stormed the Bastille Of Language and literature, and although they have laid siege to the gates of heaven and kidnapped its Chief Occupant, they have not yet had the nerve to bombard the walls of hell in order to claim its king as their own. It's funny how calling the Devil "he" doesn't bother the feminists. It doesn't strike them as chauvinistic or sexually bigoted to personify evil in precisely the same language they elsewhere label sexist when used to personify goodness. Nor do they complain on behalf of all little boys everywhere about how psychologically devastating it must be for males to think of evil itself as one of their own kind. Apparently, pronouns are sexist only if they can be construed as anti-feminist.

But make no mistake about it, the feminist encroachment on the language of religion and morality is no mere tempest in an academic teacup. It is far more than the harmless verbal jousting between grammarians and theologians on the one side and women's libbers on the other. It is, and I do mean this literally, a matter of life and death.

That is because language is a deadly weapon.

In the hands of a skilled wordsmith, language can sensitize people's consciences to injustice and motivate them to heroic virtue and reform. In the hands of a propagandist, however, it can be the verbal camouflage that hides some wildly horrific crime behind apparent respectability. When the Nazis, for example, resorted to genocidal barbarism in their quest for a "purer" race and nation, they called on their word warriors to help them cloak their wickedness in the language of decency in order to make the unspeakable speakable. Dachau and Buchenwald were painted with the brush of inoffensive clinical jargon. "We have merely implemented," the Nazis said, "the final solution."

Their word ploy was largely and tragically effective, rather than stating the facts plainly and thereby forcing the German people to face the unimaginable horror around them and to risk life and liberty to eradicate it, the Nazi's verbal subterfuge provided a respectable wall of words behind which to hide their grotesque villainy. Who, after all, can be opposed to a "purer" nation or to a "solution"?

I can.

Whereas great evils are often disguised by clinical language, accurate words call the ghosts out of the closet. That is why we must learn to call things by their real names. That is why we must beware of every feminist euphemism.

But even now, decades after Hitler, we fail to speak plainly. We have succumbed to the feminist word ploy, and as a result, millions of people are dead.

We let the feminist word warriors hide the fetal holocaust that surrounds us every day just as effectively as the Nazis hid their extermination of the Jews. And they do it the same way. They do not permit themselves to utter the M-word, even though they commit the M-act. That is, they do not murder unborn children, they "abort fetuses." That terminology, they wrongly believe, helps to remove their heinous deeds from the realm of the morally reprehensible. It allows them to view themselves and their neighbors with more self-respect and ethical complacency. "After all," they ask themselves, "what nice young woman would ever pay her doctor a handsome sum to murder her unborn baby? That is unthinkable. We merely abort our fetuses because we are unmarried and do not want to sentence our unfortunate, inconvenient, and unwanted offspring to a life of poverty."

Never mind that such a woman is an adulteress. Never mind that she sentenced her child to the garbage can. Described in her less graphic and less accurate language, the murder of her child seems not only not evil, it seems downright virtuous. As someone else has said, if you brush away the sentimental slush of a thousand sobsters, the cold fact remains that this woman wants to kill the child now living within her.

Beware of every feminist euphemism.

Some of the more squeamish among the feminists are unable even to say the A-word. Though by aborting fetuses rather than murdering babies the feminists' linguistic sleight of hand has hidden the real nature (murder) of their action and the real identity (baby) of their victim, some women require a still heavier dose of verbal opium. For them the feminist word warriors have had to make the accursed deed even more palatable by making it even more impersonal. They have convinced such people that they are merely "terminating a pregnancy," a phrase that eliminates overt reference to any living thing. Unlike fetuses and children, which are undeniably alive, and unlike abortion and murder, which seem to imply nasty things like blood and death, "terminating a pregnancy" sounds as innocuous as ending a radio transmission or pulling into the station after a pleasant railroad journey.

If "terminating pregnancies" is still too shocking a verbal description because the word pregnant tends to evoke unfortunate images of happy women large with child, feminist ideologues hide the crime behind an even more impersonal wall of words. They can say that murdering unborn children is nothing more than the voluntary extraction of the "product of conception." If that does not work, then they simply talk the way nearly all abortion clinics actually do talk: they resort to an acrostic and say they are merely "removing the P.O.C." What could be more innocent?

Nearly everything.

Beware of every feminist euphemism.

Pleasant words can be a fraud. A sterile idiom can be a defense mechanism behind which we conceal the grossest reality. But defense mechanisms do not change that reality. They merely disguise it. The evil facts themselves remain the same. Never forget that the disease you hide you cannot heal. For jargon wizards like the feminists, therefore, and for all who have been morally subverted by the feminists' verbal deception, there remains no therapy. Rather than facing the facts and identifying this slaughter for what it is; rather than calling an unconditional halt to the war they wage on the unborn; rather than confessing their guilt and casting themselves on the immense mercy of God; the feminist ideologues have persuaded millions of women to mask their shame behind a veil of words and to sell their souls to the verbal charlatans and quacks who tell them what they want to hear, not what they need to hear. They hide the crime with a lie.

Because words are inescapably connected to ideas, the feminist abuse of language has given rise to a feminist abuse of moral reason as well. Let me illustrate. My mother once asked me to clean up the back room in our basement. Not knowing the magnitude of the task, I consented. When I finally got myself downstairs, I opened the wooden door to the back room, flipped on the light, and saw an unimaginable mess of almost legendary proportion: paper, beetles, dirt, bowling pins, cardboard boxes, toys, broken tools, rags, and sawdust. I did what "rational" fifteen-year-old would do. I shut off the light and closed the door. I'm not the only one who ever did that. Most of us, I dare say, respond to the sometimes ugly face of reality the same way, though after years of practice we have learned to do so with a good deal more dexterity and finesse, so that our indulgent and immoral evasions seem less obvious and less culpable. Sometimes we try to rationalize our indolence and our guilt by telling ourselves (apparently) rational lies. That is, rather than looking at the shocking facts and not wincing, rather than seeing the ugly and disturbing facts for what they are, we rationalize. Though this ploy seems to assuage our consciences momentarily, it does not help. In fact, it does great harm, especially the way the feminist defenders of infanticide employ it.

Feminists not only hide the hideous face of abortion behind a verbal veil of inoffensive language and pretty words, they rationalize their wickedness. They have as many excuses for this barbaric atrocity as they have linguistic feignings to hide it. For example, one often hears the right-to-deathers say horrendous things like "Surely we may terminate a pregnancy caused by rape or by incest, may we not?"

No, we may not.

A child does not lose its right to life simply because its father or mother was a sexual criminal or a deviate. Of course, rape and incest are vicious crimes. Those who perpetrate them must be strictly and decisively punished. Nevertheless, a civilized nation does not permit the victim of a crime to pass a death sentence on the criminal's offspring. To empower the victim of a sex offense to kill the offender's child is an even more deplorable act than the rape that conceived it. The child conceived by rape or incest is a victim, too. In America, we do not execute victims. The right-to-deathers think that my argument here is insensitive to the plight of the rape victim and that I would sing another tune were I myself the victim of such a crime. They are wrong.

Because ours is a government of laws and not of men, we must not consign justice or morality to the pain-beguiled choices of victims. They, of all people, might be the least able to render a just verdict or to identify the path of highest virtue. I am convinced that the more monstrously one is mistreated, the more likely it is that revenge and personal expedience will look to that person like goodness. While rape victims most certainly know best the horror and indignity of the crime in question, being its victims does not confer upon them either ethical or jurisprudential expertise. Nor does it enable them to balance the scales of justice or to satisfy the demands of the moral imperative with care, knowledge, finesse, or precision. If one was an uninformed or inept ethicist or penologist before the crime, as most of us undoubtedly are, being a victim does not alter that fact at all. Justice is traditionally portrayed as blind, not because she was victimized and had her eyes criminally removed, but because she is impartial. Rape victims, like all other crime victims, rarely can be trusted to be sufficiently impartial or dependably ethical, especially seeing that they so often decide that the best alternative open to them is to kill the criminal's child. Suffering an evil at the hands of another does not excuse you from the responsibility to acquire knowledge and skill before rendering judgments. Victimization never has any power, on its own, to inculcate expertise. It is no substitute for courage, competence, or virtue.

"But does a woman not have the right to her own body?" the right-to-deathes ask.

Of course she does. But that is not at issue here. It is not her body, after all, that is being murdered; it is someone else's. Like hers, the body being murdered is not canine, not feline, not equine, and not bovine. Like hers, it is human. Like hers, it has a unique combination of twenty-three sets of paired chromosomes. (If, indeed, the body in question were truly hers, its genetic code would be the same as that of her body. It is not. It never is.) Like hers, the body being killed is the human product of human conception. It is not something she may do with as she pleases. Morality dictates that we do not kill human bodies, including our own, for personal convenience. As John Locke taught us, one of the most fundamental rights of all is the right to one's own property; and among the most sacred portions of our property is our own body. To it we have an exclusive right of function and disposal, a right that no one else can usurp, not even our mothers.

"But don't you believe in abortion rights?" the feminist right-deathes ask me. "Yes," I reply, "I do believe in abortion rights. I believe it is the right of every human being not to be murdered by abortion."

John Donne was correct because no man is an island, each man's death diminishes me. That means, among other things, that you cannot diminish the liberty or dignity of one without endangering or diminishing the liberty and dignity of us all. Abortionists, therefore, attack more than the unborn. Abortionists, and the feminist word warriors who defend them, must be resisted. Much depends upon their defeat. The life you save may be your child's. The freedom and dignity you save may be your own. As Confucius observed long ago and far away, when words lose their meaning, people lose their liberty.

To remain free, we must beware of every feminist euphemism, and we must unmask every feminist rationalization built upon an abuse of language.

The feminists want to dress themselves up with the lexicon of respectability, but it just won't do. The denigration of Western tradition, the ideological mutilation of standard English, the slaughter of millions of unborn and still defenseless human beings, and the neutering of God himself are not respectable. Those things are supremely wicked

and they must be stopped. Feminist Newspeak is simply the diabolical dictionary of the anti-God, antitradition, antihuman feminist left.

Again, I know what they're up to, and I won't have it. Theft and murder are despicable. To throw words away or to mangle them unnaturally and grotesquely so that you can do the same to inconvenient human beings is a monstrous wickedness. Even if I have to stand guard alone, the feminist culture felons are in for a fight.

So go ahead, murderers, word thieves, and slanderers, make my day.

Resources:

Books:

- *Blotnick, Srully. *Otherwise Engaged: The Private Lives of Successful Career Women*. New York: Facts on File Publications, 1985. (Reports results of a 25 year study of the professional and private lives of over 2,000 women.)
- *Douglas, Ann. *The Feminization of American Culture*. New York: The Noonday Press Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1997.
- Kassian, Mary. *The Feminist Gospel*. Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1992.
- *Farrell, Warren. *The Myth of Male Power*. Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.
- Gilder, George. *Men and Marriage*. Gretna, LA: Pelican, 1986.
- Impson, Beth. *Called to Womanhood: The Biblical View for Today's World*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2001.
- *Levin, Michael. *Feminism and Freedom*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1988.
- Mitchell, Brian. *Weak Link: The Feminization of the American Military*. Washington, DC: Regnery-Gateway, 1989.
- *Sommers, Cristina Hoff. *Who Stole Feminism? How Women Have Betrayed Women*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994.
- *Sommers, Christina Hoff. *The War Against Boys: How Misguided Feminism is Harming Our Young Men*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000.
- Strauch, Alexander, *Men and Women Equal Yet Different*. Colorado springs: Lewis & Roth Publishers, 1999.
- Piper, John, and Wayne Grudem, eds. *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991.

*These books are not written from a Christian perspective, (and may contain false premises) but will provide some good sources for refuting the ideas of feminism

Articles:

“Neopaganism, Feminism, and the New Polythesim” by Norman L. Geisler, *Christian Research Journal*, www.equip.org/free/DO025.pdf

“The Debate Over Feminist Theology: Which View is Biblical?” by Ron Rhodes, www.summit.org/resource/essay/

“Verbal Plunder: Combating the Feminist Encroachment on the Language of Theology and Ethics” by Michael Bauman, www.summit.org/resource/essay/

Websites:

www.fiveaspects.org (The International Council for Gender Studies is formed of evangelical Christians in America and Europe who are committed to speaking the historic Christian faith to this generation.)

www.cbmw.org (The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood)