



It is our strongly held belief that God has laid down certain guidelines in His Word that govern the use of gifts and talents and the roles of men and women in the church and home. After all, the Author and Giver of the gifts certainly should know the best way those gifts should be used and be able to order the way in which they are to be used. Many of the boundaries given for exercising gifts are given to both sexes. Others are specifically given to men or specifically to women.

We believe Scripture clearly teaches that God has given men and women equal value but differing roles in which to operate and thereby accomplish His work here on earth. To disregard the pattern He has set forth in Scripture is to disregard the Designer of life Himself and to assume that we somehow know better than he how to accomplish His work here on earth.

Much is at stake when addressing who to ordain to the office of Elder and Deacon in the Church of Jesus Christ. As Courtney Tarter has said, “The ordination of women is not simply a preferential issue, like we decide music styles. Rather it is deeply rooted in a theology of God, a theology of his Triune nature, and theology of His Gospel.”¹ Additionally, The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood states that “[a]s evangelical feminism continues to spread, the evangelical community needs to be aware that this debate reaches ultimately to the heart of the gospel.”²

Created and Redeemed as Male and Female

The Bible is clear that God is the author and creator of our lives as male and female. The Scriptures begin with the account of God the creator's activity in making the universe, our planet, its creatures, and human beings. Human beings are said to be uniquely created in the *imago dei*, the image of God and thereby are the glorious crown of his work. After God creates the man (*adam* is Hebrew for man) he declares that it is not good that he be alone. So God in his wisdom fashions a complement for Adam who is bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. From this point onward all human beings are born from this women Eve – literally the mother of the living. It is very clear that both male and female are created in the image of God. Human beings are created and then given the great responsibility to steward creation as God's vice-regents on the earth.

¹ Tarter, Courtney. "CBMW » C.S. Lewis and Gender." The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. 01 Oct. 2008 <<http://www.cbmw.org/Blog/Posts/CS-Lewis-and-Gender>>.

² "CBMW » Our Mission & Vision." The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. 201 Oct. 2008 <<http://www.cbmw.org/Our-Mission-&-Vision>>.

²⁶ *Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." [Genesis 1:26 – 28 \(ESV\)](#)*

The first premise of God's creation is that men and women are created distinct yet complementary reflections of the person of God. We are made equal before God, each indispensable in his plans to reflect his glory on the earth. We will hit more on this when we discuss the union of men and women in marriage in a moment, but for now the radical equality of the Bible is in full view.

In addition to our creation as male and female, God also makes it clear in Scripture that both men and women have equal access to him through the work of Jesus on the cross. The equality of women in the worship of God was something very unique in the life and teaching of Jesus. Women in the days of Jesus were very much second class citizens which occupied a second seat in the matters of Judaism. Additionally, Greco Roman philosophy saw the male as the completed sex, closer to the gods and the woman as less perfect in her being. Early heretical visions of Christianity represented in the Gnostic gospels also had strange views which mirrored this philosophy. An interesting saying is found in the Gospel of Thomas regarding Mary of Magdala (Mary Magdalene):

(114) Simon Peter said to them, "Make Mary leave us, for females don't deserve life." Jesus said, "Look, I will guide her to make her male, so that she too may become a living spirit resembling you males. For every female who makes herself male will enter the kingdom of Heaven."³

This passage is so shocking that many want to remove it from this false gospel. Yet we have no textual evidence that it is not part of the work and so it remains. In contrast to the ancient views of women, Jesus and the early church actually broke with both religious and social conventions in a shocking number of ways. The following list is illustrative, though not exhaustive.

- Jesus taught women and included them as his disciples (See [Matthew 27:55-56](#), [Mark 15:40-41](#), [Luke 23:26-56](#))
- Jesus shared good news with women in public and crossed social and racial boundaries to do so (See [John 4](#))
- The first eyewitnesses of the empty tomb were a group of his women followers. This is a great reassurance of the truth of the resurrection narratives. If someone were making up the story they certainly would not have had women giving the first testimony of the resurrection as the woman's voice was not counted as reliable testimony in that day (See [Matthew 28:1-10](#)).
- The very first evangelist, sharing the good news of the Resurrection was Mary Magdalene (See [Luke 24:1-12](#), [John 20:11-18](#))

³ "Gospel of Thomas (Lambdin Translation) -- The Nag Hammadi Library." [The Gnosis Archive](#). 28 Jan. 2009 <<http://www.gnosis.org/naghamm/gthlamb.html>>.

- The apostle Paul lists many women among his associates in ministry (See [Acts 16](#), [Romans 16](#) and [Philippians 4](#))
- Influential women helped to provide for both the ministry of Jesus and the apostle Paul (See Lydia's hospitality in [Acts 16](#), [Mark 15:41](#))

Perhaps the clearest passage in the New Testament as to the equality of men and women with regard to redemption is found in the epistle to the Galatians. In this great book, the apostle Paul describes the work of salvation by grace through faith, not by works of the law. In the third chapter we find the following statement.

²³ Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. ²⁴ So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, ²⁶ for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. [Galatians 3:23 – 28](#) (ESV)

In the ancient world there were certain distinctions made by people in their culture. There were slaves and there were free people. There were Jews and Greeks. There were males and females. The point Paul is making is not that Jews and Greeks become the same, or all slaves instantly go free by believing in Jesus, or that male and female are no longer distinct. What he is saying is much more wonderful than this. All are accepted in Christ equally, no one is considered left out by the work of the cross due to ethnicity, economic position, or gender. To the cross of Jesus, by faith in him, all have equal access to God. This was revolutionary for the religious and social world of the first century. This is the context and the clear meaning of Galatians 3:28. Rightly understanding this truth is important as this verse is made by some to say that "there is no longer any distinction in roles/responsibilities" between men and women in Christ. This is simply not the authorial intent of the passage, nor can this be used to mute the other clear passages of Scripture that call men and women to different roles and responsibilities in the mission of God in both the home and the church. To those topics of the mutuality of the mission of God we now turn.

3

The Mutuality of the Mission of God

God has created and redeemed both men and women. All who come by faith in the completed work of Jesus on the cross have full access to the Father by his grace. He places his redeemed children in covenant relationships with himself and one another for the express purpose of displaying and manifesting something about Himself to the world in which we live. Within the mutual, interdependent relationships between men and women God is seen in a full and beautiful fashion and the Word of God is honored.

Paul's words to his disciple Titus make this clear

¹ But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine. ² Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. ³ Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, ⁴ and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, ⁵ to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled. ⁶ Likewise, urge the younger

men to be self-controlled. ⁷ Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, ⁸ and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us. [Titus 2:1–8](#) (ESV)

The church is made up of old and young, each connected to the other, teaching and training the next generation in the home and in the community of the church. It is these two realms of relationships that we will observe God's design for men and women.

Design in Our Homes

Marriage is a uniquely ordained and designed covenant relationship whereby a man and woman pledge faithful love to one another for as long as they are alive. Marriage has been given a specific design by God in order to fulfill a specific purpose. When we look at God's purpose for marriage we see his desire to give good gifts to his children and to bring glory to himself. Marriage is a distinct relationship designed to create and rear children, unify man and woman, give them pleasure of marital love, and to display the fashion in which Jesus himself relates to the church.

Ephesians 5 teaches this beautiful reality with clarity:

¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. ¹⁸ Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. ¹⁹ Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, ²⁰ always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²¹ Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. ²² Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ²⁸ In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church— ³⁰ for we are members of his body. ³¹ "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." ³² This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. [Ephesians 5:17–33](#) (ESV)

Several things need to be mentioned here. The design and ordering in marriage is not arbitrary, but analogous to Jesus' relationship to the church. For the analogy to hold true both the role of husband and wife have a design which inherently reflects Jesus' relationship to the church. The following table is helpful to see this fully.

Christ	His Church	Husband	His Wife
Loves the Church	Is the Bride of Christ	Loves his wife	Is the bride of her husband
Adorns the Church	Submits to Christ	Adorns his wife	Submits to her husband
Dies for the Church	Respects Christ	Dies for his wife	Respects her husband

George W. Knox noted that, "...marriage was designed by God from the beginning to be a picture or parable of the relationship between Christ and the church. Back when God was planning what marriage would be like, He planned it for this great purpose: it would give a beautiful earthly picture of the relationship that would someday come about between Christ and His church."⁴

If we do not see that our marriages are designed to reflect Jesus and his church we will not embrace God's design for us in marriage. This is the ideal for marriage – men should love, adorn, and take care of their wives. In short he is responsible before God for his family. He should lead as a servant, be there for his family, esteem his wife, and accept responsibility to teach his family the gospel of Jesus Christ. A wife should respect, honor, support and give herself to her husband and connect her family to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Oh, if it were only this easy to live. Our sin has introduced distortions into the relationships between men and women ([Genesis 3:1-7](#), [12](#), [16](#)), which then distorts our relationships as husbands and wives. Husbands can become tyrannical and domineering or they can abdicate responsibility being passive mushes who frustrate their wives. Wives can desire to fight their husbands over responsibility or they can become disengaged not seeing the active nature of her role as unique helper to her husband. Much more could and should be said about our roles and responses to one another in marriage, but we will refer the reader to other sources for this purpose.⁵

5

Reflecting the Trinity in the Church Family

As we seek to reflect the glory of the triune god we do so through our faithful interdependent relationships as men and women, as husbands and wives. As such, we do not pursue self-glorification, independence or autonomy. This is true whether married or single. All of us are part of the broader family of God, known as the church and we live our lives together as men and women in this family. Our creation as male and female go beyond being married for marriage is not ordained for all of the people of God ([1 Corinthians 7](#) does indicate that many will marry but all will not). Men and women reflect God uniquely in the way we relate to one another whether single or married. Writing to the Corinthians the apostle Paul says the following:⁶

Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God...⁸ For man did not come from woman, but

⁴ Grudem, Wayne and John Piper. [Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood](#). Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1991, 2006. p. 175.

⁵ See Ken Sande, *Love and Respect in Marriage* (Council for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, accessed September 2, 2008); available from <http://www.cbmw.org/article.php?id=83>.

⁶ We have intentionally trimmed down the passage here as to not comment on the "head coverings" and authority issues. We want to say that **is the context** for these verses and the issues it raises are very important. However, to cover what is meant by a "covering" for women in the church, and how that manifests in ancient and contemporary cultures is a longer discussion. For those who are interested, please see [The Council of Biblical Manhood and Womanhood](#) for a brief treatment of head coverings or for a fuller treatment see - Thomas R. Schreiner, "Head Coverings, Prophecies and the Trinity - 1 Corinthians 11:2-16," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, ed. Wayne Grudem John Piper (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1991, 2006).

woman from man; ⁹ neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. ¹¹ In the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. ¹² For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God. [1 Corinthians 11:3, 8-9, 11-12](#) (NIV)

The design of men and women is a reflection of the relationships that exist between the three distinct persons of the triune God. This is very important to understand. Jesus the Son of God willfully submits to His Father, and this serves as no insult to him, but honors his Father. Thus the Father exercises authority over the Son, but does so in love and ultimately to the glory of His name⁷. Wayne Grudem in his book Systematic Theology says,

“... the human family is not the only way in which God has ordained that there would be both diversity and unity in the world that reflect something of his own excellence. In the church we have “many members” yet “one body” ([1 Cor. 12:12](#)). Paul reflects on the great diversity among members of the human body ([1 Cor. 12:14-26](#)) and says that the church is like that: We have many different members in our churches with different gifts and interest, and we depend on and help one another, thereby demonstrating great diversity and great unity at the same time. When we see different people doing many different things in the life of a church we ought to thank God that this allows us to glorify him by reflecting something of the unity and diversity of the Trinity.”⁸

Single men and women along with those who are married should see their lives together as a unique expression of the Triune God. We should seek unique ways to serve the mission of the gospel together as a community under the shepherding, teaching, and authority of godly male elders and the care and ministry of men and women serving as deacons.

6

Design in the Church

One of the great blessings of the church of Jesus Christ is being in mission together. Jesus has sent us into the world to be His ambassadors of His kingdom ([John 20:21](#), [2 Corinthians 5:17-20](#)), to share the gospel with those in darkness, and to serve the poor and the oppressed. One of the great joys of this mission is that men and women do the work of the ministry together. Married and single, men and women, adults and children serve under the authority of the Lord Jesus to advance His Kingdom in the earth.

In this mission His people are given gifts to do the work of the ministry ([Ephesians 4](#), [1 Corinthians 12-14](#), [Romans 12](#)) and accomplish every work set before us. This work is done under the authority of Jesus Christ, the chief shepherd of the church, as He vests His authority to elders who shepherd or pastor the people of God ([1 Peter 5:1-4](#)). These elders are to be qualified men who oversee the doctrine and health of the church to the glory of God. The elders also guide the ministry of the church and call upon gifted women and men to serve as deacons/servants/ministers for the building up of the body of Christ.

⁷ For more on the topic of the relationship between God the Father and God the Son, listen to Bruce Ware’s talk called [Jesus and the Father](#) which was given at the [2005 Desiring God Pastors’ Conference](#).

⁸ Grudem, Wayne A. Systematic theology an introduction to biblical doctrine. Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity P, Zondervan Pub. House, 1994, p. 257.

Though a full treatment of elders and deacons is beyond the scope of this paper, we do want to briefly touch upon church leadership as it is important to the full affirmation of women in ministry. It is our position that church ministries are open to qualified men and women with the singular exception of elder/pastor, which is only for qualified men.⁹ Women can be deacons, teach, lead worship, serve communion, and be in full-time ministry under the authority of God vested in a plurality of male elders serving under the Lordship of Jesus and His Word. Let us now look briefly at each of these roles in turn.

Elders/Overseers

Biblically qualified men are called in Scripture to serve the church as elders. The Old Testament, the person of Jesus in choosing his apostles, the Roman Catholic Church, Eastern Orthodox Church, and Protestant Churches until very recently have all been univocal about this issue. God calls men to these roles in the church.

It must be noted, however, that some men go too far in limiting the role of women in ministry, and this impoverishes the mission of God in our midst. Clearly in the Bible women are active in serving the mission in a myriad of ways. The Old Testament provides many examples of faithful women who received God's approval and blessing. Women are seen throughout biblical history as prophets and judges. While many will point to women in the Old Testament (Deborah, Hulda, Miriam, etc.) as precedents for women in leadership roles (elder/pastor) today, the Old Testament views the absence of male headship as a matter of shame and an indication of God's judgment on a society ([Isaiah 3:1 – 12](#)).

We believe that throughout the length and breadth of Scripture, God called and continues to call men to be the primary spiritual leaders in the church. There are two main passages in the New Testament which directly address who and what type of person an elder ought to be: [Titus 1:5-9](#) and [1Timothy 3:1-7](#). Regarding who should be an elder/pastor, we hold that men should be elders precisely because of these passages of Scripture. There is simply no way to apply these texts to women for numerous reasons. First, in the original language (Greek) all references to elders/overseers are found in the masculine form. Secondly,

“Paul bases his reasoning on general principles, going back ultimately to the Biblical account in Genesis 2 and 3. Paul has an understanding of God's plans and purposes in creating marriage and the family. Paul teaches that in the church, God's household, women are not to exercise authority over men, just as in a human family they are not to exercise authority over their husbands. Paul understands the position of overseer as involving the exercise of fatherly care over God's household. Hence women are excluded from being overseers on the basis of general Biblical principles concerning the family, not on the basis of some temporary circumstances.”¹⁰

As mentioned above some attempt to use [Galatians 3:28](#) to teach all roles in the church are open to everyone regardless of gender. However, this passage says nothing of the calling of an elder in the church.

⁹ For those who are interested in further researching this topic, please see the **Recommended Reading** list at the end of this paper.

¹⁰ Grudem, Wayne and John Piper. [Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood](#). Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1991, 2006. p. 239

Only biblically qualified men are to be considered for the office of elder. The prerequisites are as follows: Above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, gentle, uncontentious, free from the love of money, a man who manages his household well, not a new convert, and a man with a good reputation among nonbelievers ([1 Timothy 3:1 – 7](#)).

So, what does an elder or a gathering of elders do? When using the word “elder”, the term we are most familiar within our current culture is "Pastor." This can be misleading because "pastor" this is not a common New Testament title for church leaders. Pastoring/shepherding (the word *poimnen*) is used mostly as a verb, the action of shepherding. This calling is usually given to men who are called "Elders/Overseers." In fact, we know that the same people are called elders and overseers in the same context in both [Acts 20](#) and [1 Peter 5](#). The New Bible Commentary on Philippians has an insightful summary of who elders/overseers were and their function: *Eldership was their place in the community, oversight their responsibility.*¹¹

One of the key roles or responsibilities of an elder is to teach sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict it. Our elders do much of this kind of teaching from our pulpit, but their work in this matter is not limited to it. It has nothing to do with how gifted someone is, how well they speak, but rather the ordering of the church according to the Word of God. Men are called in Scripture to serve the church in this fashion.

Deacons

The role and calling of the deacon should be populated by gifted women and men who honor the Gospel and the Word of God. Many are confused today as to what "deacons" are and what they are to do in the church. The word deacon is a general term. The Bible uses *diakeno* (serve), *diakonia* (service) and *diakonos* (servant) to describe the ministry of all believers ([Ephesians 4:12](#)). The term "deacon" also has a specialized meaning as a recognized position or office in church ministry ([Philippians 1:1](#); [1 Timothy 3:8-13](#)). Deacons may have originated with the seven who were chosen by the apostles and the church to care for the widows ([Acts 6:1-6](#)). The name implies that they do specially designated service which is necessary for the church's effectiveness, though Scripture gives no job description.

The spiritual and character qualifications for deacons are almost identical with elders. The requirements of teaching ability ([1 Timothy 3:2](#); [Titus 1:9](#)) and "not a recent convert" ([1 Timothy 3:6](#)) are not included for deacons. They must be first tested in ministry and show themselves faithful and effective ([1 Timothy 3:10](#)). Like the elders, deacons must be the "husband of one wife" ([1 Timothy 3:2](#); [3:12](#)). We understand that this qualification does not exclude an unmarried person, those remarried after the death of a spouse, nor necessarily those who have divorced and remarried. The phrase describes someone with a reputation as a "faithful" spouse or a "one-wife kind of man."

To give a fuller context for this discussion, we need to look at what was going on in 1 Timothy. With fatherly concern for the health of young Timothy's struggling church, Paul offered wisdom and painted a portrait of the servants of this infant congregation, adding flesh and features to the would be deacons of this church. Teaching, preaching, visiting the sick and caring for the widows began to overwhelm this

¹¹ D. A. Carson, ed., *New Bible Commentary, 21st Century Edition, Rev. Ed. of: The New Bible Commentary. 3rd Ed. / Edited by D. Guthrie, J.A. Motyer. 1970., 4th ed. ed. (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994).*

young pastor, and, for his sake and for the sake of his church, something had to be done; Timothy needed guidance from his apostolic mentor. Paul responds and established what would be for centuries to come the profile and qualifications of a deacon for any holistic missional Christian community.

The prerequisites that Paul authored are as follows:

1. Worthy of respect
2. Sincere
3. Not indulging in much wine
4. Not pursuing dishonest gain
5. Keepers of the deep truths with a clear conscience
6. With a spouse worthy of respect
7. Not a malicious talker
8. Temperate
9. Trustworthy in everything
10. Monogamous
11. Faithful and diligent parent

The Work of a Deacon

Along with other few New Testament writers, Paul was wise in withholding specifics regarding the duties of a deacon. He knew that the deacons were called and worked as the servants of the body, the hands and feet of the apostles and elders. The deacons clean when something is dirty, visit when someone is lonely, feed when someone is hungry, pray when someone is sick, help when someone cannot do it alone. The boundaries are not set; the role of a deacon was left unwritten to provide much freedom for the global church and its ministers.

To put it very simply, deacons are those who have been called upon by the pastor/elders to serve all sorts of needs which arise in the church. The word *διακονος*/deacon simply means "servant" or "minister." Both men and women are called deacons in the New Testament ([Romans 16:1-16](#); [1 Timothy 3:8-11](#)). A church can call out deacons to serve in many areas of need. There can be deacons of administration, serving needs within the congregation, or serving the poor. There can be deacons who assist in worship, deacons of technology, communication, graphic design and just about anything that serves a need for the people of God. Deacons are set aside for gospel ministry and function at the discretion of the elders of the church.

It is our hope that in the future of Missio Dei Church, many ministry team leaders and Missional Community leaders will effectively function as deacons.

Women Deacons

[1 Timothy 3:11](#) mentions "women/wives" in it. The term may refer to the wives of deacons, but the adjective "their" (wives) is missing. There was no Greek word for deaconess and so a term like "woman" or the masculine "deacon" ([Romans 16:1](#)) had to be used. It seems unlikely that there were qualifications for the wife of a deacon when there were none for an elder's wife.

Additionally, the service nature of the office of deacon does not require the authoritative teaching of the church or the leading of the whole church, which are restricted to elder/overseers. Thus, deacons may be either women or men who meet the Scriptural qualifications.

Women do have the spiritual gift of teaching and men should be open to receiving biblical instruction from women, just as Apollos was ([Acts 18:24–28](#)). However, neither the office of deacon nor the act of instruction should be confused with the office of elder or functioning as the teacher of a gathering of men and women.

So, whether it's preparing elements for communion or meeting a hurting church member over a cup of coffee, we believe that one of the most elemental, most important positions in the life of Missio Dei is that of the deacon. Men and women are asked to take part in this office because they are already clearly acting as deacon. They are men and women who are (will be) covenant members at Missio Dei Church, who have chosen to be on the lookout for ways to serve others within and outside of the community of Missio Dei. These individuals have rejected the notion that church is about consuming religious goods and services. They are far from perfect, but persistent and hopeful that in giving of themselves they will begin to understand more fully the backwards hierarchy of the Kingdom of God: "The first will be last."

The Missio Dei community values both men and women equally. Our community has women and men leading in all capacities (except that of elder/pastor). This biblical practice will send a strong signal to women who are sent mixed messages in our culture. It's not that they can't or shouldn't minister here; women minister everywhere – and quite competently. But we believe that it is healthy for women to look to men as the primary leaders and responsibility takers in this church, because that is how God has designed us, and following His design will cause both men and women to flourish.

Conclusion

It is crucial that we say that the aim of this position paper not be misunderstood. It is our hope that we echo the ninth affirmation of the Danvers Statement which states:

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

¹² "CBMW » The Danvers Statement." [The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood](http://www.cbmw.org/Resources/Articles/The-Danvers-Statement). 03 Feb. 2009 <<http://www.cbmw.org/Resources/Articles/The-Danvers-Statement>>.

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