

### **It's all about mutual empowerment!**

Gender reconciliation is not about over emphasising our similarities or obliterating sexual distinction as suggested by Malcolm Harris (in CXPRESS of October 29), but rather about mutual empowerment. It is recognising the God-given gifts, strength and potential in one another and encouraging the development of those qualities which can and does improve the lives of people in their homes, churches and society.

Where are all these men that Malcolm fears are emasculated on a grand scale? If men are emasculated it is because they have allowed society to overshadow what the Bible teaches about gender. Jesus washed feet, cooked for the disciples and wept at the death of his friend.

God is not wanting 'macho men' but whole men who are prepared to speak out against a society of injustice, discrimination and abuse. A society where one in four women are experiencing verbal, physical, emotional and economic abuse by men - a woman is raped every 26 seconds and murdered every six days by her intimate partner.

Malcolm states: "The Bible is very clear with regard to the order of accountability and responsibility as defined in 1 Corinthians 11:3." The Bible is very clear, but are we? Please read it again carefully. The sequence is not hierarchical but chronological. Christ gave life to the man, man gave life to the woman and God gave life to the Son. Those who make it a chain of command will have to rearrange Paul's words.

Liddel, Scott, Jones and McKenzie (a comprehensive Greek-English lexicon) provide strong evidence that, in biblical Greek, kephale (head) cannot mean 'superior to' or 'one having authority'. Just because head denotes authority in English does not mean it does so in the language of the New Testament. It does not mean boss, leader or authority but the servant function of provider of life, growth and development.

Paul seems to go out of his way to show this when he says: "For as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God." (1 Corinthians 11:12)

Loren Cunningham, founder of YWAM, says in his highly recommended book *Why Not Women?*: "Mark Twain said it's not what a man doesn't know that's the problem. It's what he thinks he knows that is in fact not true... We can do the same thing when we single out a verse of Scripture, presuppose what the author meant, and then build a superstructure of belief on that foundation. It may sound logical but may not be true." Wise women would do well to encourage men and women to read and research the Bible for themselves.

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