

A PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY

The stated purpose of the PCA's Women In the Church, which was approved by the first General Assembly, is:

"The purpose of the Women In the Church is that every woman know Christ personally and be committed to extending His kingdom in her life, home, church, community, and throughout the world." (From the WIC Resource Manual)

A philosophy is simply an overview of the reason we do what we do. It is a longer version of the purpose statement.

The WIC philosophy of ministry is grounded on woman's helper design. "The Lord said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him'" (Gen. 2:18).

The Hebrew word for helper is ezer. Throughout the Old Testament this word is used to refer to God. In discussing this word, The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament says:

The Lord is seen as the helper of the underprivileged: the poor (Psalm 72:12) and the fatherless (Psalm 10:14) . . . He (the Psalmist) is conscious of divine assistance at a time of illness (Psalm 28:7), at a time of oppression by enemies (Psalm 54:4), and at a time of great personal distress (Psalm 86:17).

This explanation of how God is our ezer gives insight into the helper design. Community and compassion are two of the ways God is our Helper. God enters into a covenant relationship with His people (community). He comes to our aid, comforts us, and is merciful toward us (compassion). This touches our souls because entering into nurturing relationships, and extending compassion to those in need, is part of our creation design. Our nurturing, relational strengths grow out of our helper design. Our design equips us to demonstrate community and to be channels of compassion in our marriages, families, churches, communities, and throughout the world. This does not mean that all women will express their design in the same way; it frees us to practice community and extend compassion creatively according to our gifts, abilities and circumstances. This concept has application to women as individuals, and it also gives definition to the purpose statement of Women In the Church. The WIC ministry should have the effect of bringing a deeper sense of community and compassion into the home, church, community, and world. The WIC task at the Assembly level is to help churches encourage and equip women for this mission. A covenantal understanding of the church demands this.

The Westminster Confession of Faith says:

All saints, that are united to Jesus Christ their Head, by His Spirit, and by faith, have fellowship with Him in His grace, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory; and, being united to one another in love, they have communion in each other's gifts and graces, and are obliged to the performance of such duties, public and private, as do conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward man.

Saints by profession are bound to maintain an holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification; as also in relieving each other in outward things, according to their several abilities and necessities. Which communion, as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended unto all those who, in every place, call upon the name of the Lord Jesus (WCF XXVI Of the Communion of Saints, 1, 2. Italics added.).

"An holy fellowship" is the launching pad for ministries of compassion, and compassion is the grace-reality that draws unbelievers into the community of faith.

A biblical strategy for encouraging and equipping women to share their gifts and graces for the mutual good, and to maintain an holy fellowship, is found in Titus 2:1-5. The Titus mandate for women to nurture women should be the driving force of a women's ministry because this is part of our covenant privilege and responsibility.

The goal is that each woman will "know Christ personally and be committed to extending His kingdom in her life, home, church, community, and throughout the world" and thus God will be glorified.

The WIC ministry is not project or event-driven. It is theology driven. The philosophy gives the guidelines for mapping out the specifics of the WIC ministry. Each project, event, and written resource is one point on the total ministry-map. To understand the purpose of any specific project, one must understand the philosophy of ministry and where a specific project fits on the map. The WIC ministry-map is just one piece of the total ministry-map of Christian Education and Publications, so it must always help to achieve the over-all objectives of CE/P.

A final word:

Whatever else you do, you must pray. Everything we do must be saturated with prayer. Unless God shines His face upon us, there will be no blessing. We must live in His presence and radiate His glory. Then we will know His pleasure upon us. The ultimate question: Is God glorified?

Glorify the LORD with me; let us exalt his name together (Psalm 34:3).

<http://www.pcanet.org/cep/Wic/Philosophy.htm>