

The Cauldron: or The Modest Newsletter with a Few More Ideas.

Directions to the Bash - corrections and reflections.

I have given you incorrect directions to the bash. The mistake lies in the name of a contemptible road that runs near our house. I used to have such a low opinion of the road that I thought it was called Progress. It is not called Progress or even Process, it is called Program Avenue. So once you are on County H (also known as County 10) you need to look for Program and follow that around to Raymond. Before it reaches Raymond, the silly road becomes County H-2. This unfortunate road then continues, and to what I imagine is the great embarrassment of itself or the real County H, it runs across County H. So you could miss the ridiculous Program and come down the benighted County H-2 instead. The thoughtless planners of roads in our part of the world were even so tactless as to place a traffic light at the indelicate intersection of H and its sub-categorical deviant. I don't really like to come that way because besides the embarrassment of meeting the road from whom its name is so blatantly ripped off, the miserable county H-2 is subjected to two stop signs of great inconvenience and little value that are situated between the intersections for County H and Raymond Avenue. These stop signs only make the road that much more contemptible and one begins to wonder if the reason for our road system was not in large part due to the sheer malevolence (a most cunning malevolence) of the planners (or lack thereof).

Should any woman devote herself to advanced levels of theological training?

by Debbie Forteza

We all agree that Theology is good. God's supreme commandment for man is that he love God with all his heart, mind, soul, and strength, and in order for man to do this, he must know God's Word. In addition, most of us would agree that it is very profitable and necessary for at least some Christian men to acquire a deep theological knowledge and critical thinking skills for teaching and apologetic purposes. However, not everyone agrees that women should also aim to educate themselves theologically in the same manner that men should. Why do godly people think this way? Are any of their arguments valid? Is it possible that our culture has shaped our understanding of male/female roles in a way that is unscriptural? Which of the opposing views is more biblical? In this essay, I will attempt to fairly present the arguments of those against training women in advanced theological levels. The goal is that we analyze our views concerning this topic and arrive at the most biblical conclusion. However, because I don't have all the answers that I would like, I am hoping to make this essay the first in a series that will help me to think through this issue.

The first argument is that women are naturally caregivers, encouragers, made to help others, and therefore, should dedicate themselves primarily to these tasks. Of course none of us would consider this a demeaning argument, unless we were influenced by feministic views.

Second, the nature of the questions that are asked in advanced theological levels can cause a woman's faith to be shaken or even destroyed. Of course we can say that this could also be true of men; however, I don't know that in the questions this essay addresses we can always appeal to the response that men also can fall prey to these dangers. The Bible does differentiate between men and women, particularly in leadership issues, and in being deceived.

Third, by giving this kind of education to women, we are making them too independent (from their husbands, pastors, etc.), and therefore, we subtly adopt egalitarian practices. In addition, a woman who knows the same or more theology than her husband will have a harder time submitting to his leadership. It would be unfair for any of us to assert that there is no truth in this argument. Since Eve, all women struggle with submission, particularly when they disagree with their husbands.

Fourth, because women become more independent through theological education, they tend to also become masculine in their deportment. This masculinity may include: being too assertive, provoking debates, taking leadership, etc. Although a meek and quiet spirit does not necessitate timidity and continual silence, it surely does exclude an attitude of masculinity in women. Again, those of us who have a struggle with acquiring a meek and quiet spirit realize that seminary training does sometimes make it more difficult for a woman to cultivate this virtue.

Fifth, since women should not be competing with the pastor in the theological teaching of other women, there is no reason for them to go to seminary. It is the pastor and husband's job to teach theology, not the woman's. In this argument, the Titus 2 passage is not taken into account because it refers to a different subject. Titus 2 is considered to be referring to women teaching other women about practical home issues rather than advanced theological material.

Sixth, only those who have a special call should study advanced theology because of the dangers inherent in the study. Since men are to be the teachers and leaders, this call can only be for males. Thus, women should not be in seminary.

Seventh, by encouraging women to be in seminary, we are giving them leadership skills that they will never be able to fulfill in a fundamental church. Thus, on one hand we make them leaders, and on the other we don't allow them to lead because we believe that this task is exclusively for men.

Eighth, while to know God intimately and to be a wise person one does need to know Theology, this theology does not include the skills of the "science of theology" (Redaction criticism, apologetics, etc.). The "science of theology" makes a person a critical thinker, but does not help him to know God better. While it is true that all women need to have an intimate relationship with God, they can have this by obeying what they know is true and learning from their pastors and husbands. The "science of theology" only hinders one's simple and loving devotion for God.

Some questions that come to my mind are the following: Does the "science of theology" indeed help us to know God in a deeper way? If so, how can we preserve our devotion to God while having a critical thinking mind set? Do the Scriptures encourage women to become theologically astute (i.e., become a critical thinker in deeper theological issues)? What would be compelling biblical reasons for a woman to get advanced seminary education? Is it reconcilable with the Scriptures that a woman write books for men to read? How? Is it possible that our western culture has negatively shaped the way we think about this subject? Could we picture NT women studying in a seminary? Would Paul encourage this practice? I hope that these preliminary thoughts concerning this issue will be helpful to stimulate our thinking in

Overheard.

An Appeal for Vibrant Music

By Sil Lybunday

In these troubled times it is vitally important that music be agreeable to the majority of those assembled. Overlooking this important truth is a common mistake made among stiff traditionalists. As a result many people fail to get out of a worship experience what they want, and some may not come back. We must give people what they want!

The sad fact of the matter is that this problem is easily avoided, if only the worship leaders are willing to try.

In order to avoid this unfortunate situation, the music director should first and foremost inform himself on what the man or woman in the pew wishes to sing and to hear. Those who insist on tradition typically fail to seek out and learn this important information. And such a simple thing to do! Simply ask, and you will learn. You may be surprised to find that the most musically inexperienced person in your assembly still has strong opinions about what is pleasurable. Listen, and you will hear that person share from the heart what he or she considers the most vibrant music in today's world.

Pleasurable, vibrant music is what is needed to 're-charge' our spiritual batteries when we escape to church for rest from real life. The troubles of life soon melt away when we lose ourselves in upbeat music. Major keys with simple phrases captivate the worshiper in blissful happiness. How fortunate we are to have a great pool of such happy songs to choose from today! Truly, it is time to do away with the stately songs (and especially the minor keys and mournful chants) of yesteryear that remind people of the lives they live outside the assembly.

If anybody so much as raises an eyebrow about traditional songs of the faith, and if the music director insists on leading them, you should consider replacing that director quickly. Frankly, those old songs have not been happy enough anyway for most fundamentalists. The claims by some that musical education is the key, in hopes that the person in the pew will grow to love the God of whom the traditional hymn extols, is obviously a high-brow fantasy.

Satisfy the appetite of the man in the pew, and he will keep coming back for

more!

Outstanding! Maybe instead of "remind people of the lives they live outside the assembly" it should be "remind people of the life of faith."

Todd

Good point, thanks.

Sil

Dear Sil,

Thank you for your heart-felt appeal to all that burns deep within our souls. I have long thought that church is about atmosphere, and the atmosphere of a church is very important. At church you should feel good. Really good. If you can't feel good at church, where can you feel good at? The truth is that the church is facing perilous post-modern times and the answer to these grave and depressing days is a place where people can go and feel good. This is where the church comes in. Are you hungry? Are you longing for inner peace and happiness? That is what the church is for, and this music, as many great men have pondered, such music as you suggest, Sil, is exactly the kind of music that contrasts these deep, dark depressing feelings. You have hit on an important point, Sil, for your suggested music is the music of joy and happiness. This vibrant music shows and proves that Christians are happy people. And why shouldn't they be happy? They are forgiven so they can sin forever and ever and not worry about it. God has blessed many of them with great worldly riches. They have a peace this world could not afford. Furthermore, now, more than any point in human history, great Christian resources are available at their very fingertips to enjoy. More cities in America than ever before now have their own Christian bookstore. There is excellent, family, Christian entertainment out there for them to enjoy in all their spare time. There is no question that the Christian can thrive in these wonderful, modern times. They can buy curse-blockers for their television so that they can watch the world's movies without the cussing. Who can have more to be thankful for than a Christian? This vibrant music reflects this. You have stumbled upon, almost without thinking, a great truth . . . Christians are happy people. Ridiculously happy! And that's what we need more of, what I like to call

"ridiculous happiness" (that's my own little catch phrase). Is there anything in this world that Christians don't have? Ah, yes, nothing shows this happiness more than the great songs of the faith that you recommend. Great old songs. These songs are happiness. They automatically bring happiness!

To tell you the truth, Sil, your message has struck a chord for me that I have had to contemplate so much more as of late. I used to think that the only way to really worship was to worship seriously. Now, thanks to some "refining," I have come to acknowledge that the only way to really get anywhere in this movement is to bow to this music and worship at its altar. I have now come to appreciate that I should not be alienating my brethren with archaic forms, but utilizing Christian liberty to be more flexible. Thanks for your reminder.

Ryan M

Yes! Yes! You get it. I am positively wriggling with happiness, so happy I think I'll go watch Bob the Tomato do something spiritual!

Somebody reading over my shoulder suggested to me that there was a note of satire in your letter, but I shrugged that off quickly. It is easy to do when you are accustomed to seeing sunshine in every corner, for if I ever begin to feel humble because of sin in my life, I just turn on a good tune and it melts away!

I suppose that there might be some "serious" Christians out there who are actually content in whatever state they are in, who seek to edify one another for the glory of God, who earnestly pursue Him without becoming discouraged by what they see around them, and delight in obeying Him all the more in times of trial -- but they are missing out on our world, THE world. Come, come with me, and reap the fruit of what we have sown...

Sil

Ideas for a Publication.

Philip: Something on St. Thomas or on Pieper or on both.

Debbie: The ultimate response and defense of women in seminary.

Ryan: Something on contemplation, quiet, restfulness, solitude.

Todd: Something on going on living when you are way confused about life, or the unauthorized biography of Sil Lybunday.

Jill: I think Jill who is obviously well familiar with Impressionism should produce an evaluation of it.

Ideas for the Next Bash.

Something on the propriety of being or not being immoderate in the expression of one's opinion and how much concern one gives to the opinions of other people, if any. It has been suggested that reading the chapter in *The Four Loves* by C. S. Lewis would be appropriate. Also some sort of presentation of position Pro and Con would be in order.

Something on Lent. There are lots of potential subjects here: there is the discussion of the value of the observance of lent which includes the value of the liturgical calendar, there is the possibility of discussing Bach's *St. Matthew's Passion*, I would like to read and discuss *Ash Wednesday* by T. S. Eliot, there is lots of other lenten art, I would think.

Fundamentalist Software Presents: *by Ryan Martin*

SIMYouth Pastor

_____ From the software designing team who brought you *Dungeons and Dragons: the Evangelist Edition* and the popular, best-selling *TEEOBST (The Extremely Entertaining Online Bible Study Tool)*, experience the hottest new game to hit Christian bookstores everywhere: SIMYouth Pastor! Tired of having your latest gym night flop? Afterglows lost their burn? It will never happen again with SIMYouth Pastor! The thing which sets SIMYouth Pastor apart from all the rest of the Christian computer games out there is SIMYP's uncanny ability to serve as both a ministry tool *and* a fun, endlessly entertaining computer game. Imagine this: you can spend hours on end playing SIMYP in your office, and not feel one tinge of guilt for it. Why? Because you're working while playing! SIMYP lets you test your latest ideas on its state-of-the-art Trend Processor™. Never again worry about whether that game or skit will go over with the kids. Simply enter in the socio-economic indicators of your particular youth group, type in the activity, and SIMYouth Pastor will do the rest! *Finally, you can have fun at work!* Not sure how that little talk you have planned for Sunday School is going to be received? Type in the outline to the Trend Processor™, and fear your crowd no longer!

But this is only the beginning. SIMYouth Pastor is more than the greatest ministry tool to hit the evangelical scene since the gospel song, but a challenging and fun game as well. You see,

SIMYP not only lets you enter in your unique youth group setting and “play” with the results, but it also lets you start from scratch with your very own Youth Pastor character. SIMYP starts your character out as he is going through high school. You make all the decisions from there. How will you rebel in high school? Better not over do it, or the Bible college you are looking at may not accept you. And what Bible college will you choose? Small colleges make you appear more devout, which may mean success down the road as you climb the fundamentalist ladder, while larger ones could get you bigger churches early on in your career. SIMYP then traces the steps of your character while at Bible college. Can you make the collegiate sports team? Making a sports team gets you extra points in the Trend Processor™. What classes will you take seriously? Or do you want to try to keep a balance between social life and studies? Remember, the more you socialize the hotter the woman you get to marry. And just who do you marry? SIMYP presents many choices that will help determine your character’s ministry down the road. Will you try to woo Mrs. Bible College, the pretty girl who plays the piano and sings or the really hot girl who all the other sports guys are after? SIMYP lets you turn on the suave and try to melt that girl’s heart . . . but don’t get rejected! SIMYP Youth Pastor also takes you beyond graduation (if you make it) and lets you start candidating at the churches. Try to get a big church! All these factors are not only contributing to the complexity of the game, but are also impacting your Trend Processor™, which ultimately will judge how well you are able to minister to kids. And all this is preliminary . . . When SIMYP gets you into the drivers seat of its incredibly life-like youth ministry, this is where your decisions really start having an impact. What kinds of games will you run and how often? What music will you choose? SIMYP takes your every decision and allows you to see where it takes you. Try the outlandish and watch the reaction! Be careful, or a parent revolt could take place (you don’t want to end up selling cars). Build a small town youth ministry into the biggest in the state! Then, watch the offers come in from other, bigger churches! The more kids, the more points, and the more points you get, the better the perks. Build your youth group to 60 and automatically get a pretty, young secretary. Build it to 70 and be asked to speak at youth retreats. It’s all a game and *you* can become the master of it! Watch the trends and decide which ones you want to pursue. CCM too hard for your teenagers? Maybe choruses is the compromise you are looking for. Choose from a SIMYP’s myriad of catchy cliches to use often in your Bible lessons like “Extreme Christianity” or “Bible Addicts” or “It’s Exciting!” Be careful, though, if you’re not also watching your SIMfamily, your own children could end up rebelling and that would seriously damage your ability to climb to better ministries. SIMYP gives all these choices and much, much more in this addicting and easy-to-learn game. Pick your copy up today!

Some Instructions

Please read the two articles for the bash. *Synagogue or Temple? Models for the Christian Worship* by Peter J. Leithart and *An Evangelical and Catholic Methodology* by Robert E. Webber. We will discuss these and also smell some frankincense. Bring fertile ideas for future bashes.

Something Sober.

Ah, Lord God, thou holy lover of my soul, when thou comest into my soul, all that is within me shall rejoice. Thou art my glory and the exultation of my heart; thou art my hope and refuge in the day

of my trouble. Set me free from all evil passions, and heal my heart of all inordinate affections; that being inwardly cured and thoroughly cleansed, I may be made fit to love, courageous to suffer, steady to persevere. Nothing is sweeter than love, nothing more courageous, nothing fuller nor better in heaven and earth; because love is born of God and cannot rest but in God, above all created things. Let me love the more than myself, nor love myself but for thee; and in thee all that truly love thee, as the law of love commandeth, shining out from thyself. Amen.

Thomas à Kempis.