

# Feminism

*Feminism by Nathan R. Pope*

(Northwestern Publishing House, 290 pp., \$15.95)

Reviewed by Al Todd

This was an eye-opening book for me. Like the author, I thought I knew in a general sense what Feminism was and what the “movement” was trying to achieve. However, I had very little appreciation for the history of the Feminist movement nor how it had morphed into more than a score of different types since the end of World War II.

What the author calls the “first wave” of Feminism began in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when young women began to be recruited to perform charity work and then were enlisted in the Abolition movement, the Temperance movement, and Suffrage. In these endeavors women were working alongside men. The author calls this first wave “equity feminism”. I think most people agree with many if not all the goals of equity feminism. As radical as it was in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, most now accept that women vote, hold public office, own property, and are allowed to be married and have a salaried job at the same time.

The author cautions us however to draw a line between first wave equity feminism and second wave feminism that had its origins shortly after World War II.

The author reviews all the major types of second wave Feminism and compares and contrasts these types with God’s Word on women’s roles in marriage, in society, and in the church. The author explains that “(W)hereas 19<sup>th</sup> century feminists wanted equality with men, many present day feminists want superiority over men or, especially, to be free from men. Equality versus independence....” In part I of this book, the author seeks to explain how this difference not only causes tension between men and women but has also fiercely split the Feminist movement today. Especially interesting was the author’s analysis of the cultural/gender feminists. In just one of many examples, the author analyzes how the women (and men) who are mostly concerned with the emancipation of women are at war with the radical wing of the gender feminists as represented by, among others, Anaesthetic Feminism also known as the “look like crap” school of feminism. This type, for example, considers all men to be rapists and are offended that men should hold up women as objects of desire.

This book is written in two parts. Part I provides an overview of Feminism and part II provides an overview of women’s roles in the policy process of church government as revealed in God’s Word. In part II, the author does a good job of explaining the three basic forms of church governance (episcopal, presbyterian, and congregational) and makes a pitch for moving away from a congregational governance model to a presbyterian model where the church council, members of which are elected by the voting members of the congregation, make all the

decisions. The author has many examples of how Christian women are able to influence church policy and “have a voice” in the church even though God has mandated that they submit to the authority of men just as men submit to the authority of Christ.

If you’re wondering how the author, a man after all, can have intimate insights into women’s issues, you are not alone. The author understood his limitations and enlisted four women (his “Group of Four”) from his WELS congregation (the author is a WELS pastor). These women each brought unique perspectives and circumstances without which, the author readily acknowledges, this book could not have been written.

Finally, for all you men out there the final chapter entitled “Ten Things That Women Want Most in a Man” may be of great interest. The survey comprised women from teenagers to 60-plus and was broken down by age/demographic groups (all of whom were “very eager” to provide input)! I have to admit that, like the author, I was totally shocked by the results. Now, if I could just go back 50 years.....

The author concludes: “If the world were filled with such men...” he probably wouldn’t have had to write this book.

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