

Group that demanded apology over view of women's roles still waiting

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CONROE, Texas (ABP) — An organizer of a recent women's-rights convention for evangelical Christians said the group is still awaiting a response more than a week after demanding a public apology from the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood for teaching they say is harmful to women.

"They are ignoring us," said Shirley Taylor, one of five women who signed a letter on behalf of a new Freedom for Christian Women Coalition [calling on the Council](#) to "make a public apology for the misuse of Holy Scripture as it relates to women."

Shirley
Taylor

Taylor, a former Baptist General Convention of Texas employee who with her husband in 2009 started a website called [Baptist Women for Equality](#), admitted that the statement she presented at the July 24 Seneca Falls 2 Evangelical Women's Rights Convention in Orlando, Fla., was "audacious."

"We threw a rock at Goliath," she said. "We don't know yet whether or not we are Davids."

The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood has offices on the campus of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. The Council is non-denominational, but [its membership includes](#) several influential Baptist leaders. [Its president](#), Randy Stinson, [is dean of](#)

Southern's School of Church Ministries. Stinson did not respond to e-mail requests for comment.

The Seneca Falls 2 convention specifically called on the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood to repudiate the [Danvers Statement](#), the group's statement of core beliefs that advocates male "headship" and female submission in the home and church.

Many people have never heard of the statement, but Jocelyn Andersen, an author and another organizer of the Freedom for Christian Women Coalition, said it has had a huge impact on the Southern Baptist Convention.

"It was issued in 1987, but its consequences are growing and growing," Andersen [said July 25](#) on moderate Baptist minister Bruce Prescott's ["Religious Talk"](#) radio program on KREF in Norman, Okla.

Andersen said the Danvers Statement was the basis for adding controversial statements on gender roles to the SBC's Baptist Faith and Message confessional document in 1998 and 2000. When the SBC International Mission Board required field personnel to affirm the revised statement in 2003, [Southern Baptists lost 43 missionaries](#) in a single day.

"Some of them were terminated, they were fired," she said. "Some of them just absolutely quit rather than sign the Baptist Faith and Message 2000, which was based on the Danvers Statement, in regards to the family, that the women always take a subordinate role, that they can't be pastors — in marriage and the ministry, they must take a subordinate role."

"Many of these foreign missionaries were tenured," Andersen continued. "I mean they had been on the mission field for 20, 30 — 35 years was the longest, I think, and it was one woman. They were either fired or they resigned. Some of them went ahead and signed, but they said they were doing it under duress, because they were not going to give up their life's

work in these people that they loved, that they were working with, forbidding women to disciple and pastor those people whom they had led to the Lord.”

Danvers Statement ‘closed the loophole’

Andersen said there is nothing new about “traditional-role religion,” but the Danvers Statement “closed the loophole” around gender roles. She said a traditional reading of the Genesis creation account is that men and women were created equal to rule the Earth together, but sin entered and altered that relationship.

“Now the woman is subservient because of sin,” she said. “The man is to rule and is to submit, but that is because of sin. This is traditional-role religion.”

The “problem” with that, Andersen explained: “If this happened because of sin, Jesus came and redeemed us from the curse of the law, he redeemed men and women so now in the New Testament there is no reason to say that we are not once again spiritually restored in right standing with God and therefore equal and co-equal with each other.”

“The complementarians came in and they plugged that hole,” she said. “They say: ‘No, God created us into certain roles. The hierarchy was always there. Sin did not create the roles, all it did distort them so that the woman no longer wanted to submit to her husband, and he ruled over her harshly.’”

Andersen calls that “the evil-woman mantra.”

“All women are inclined to want to usurp and dominate and resist the authority of their husbands as a result of the Fall,” she said.

Andersen said the teaching is why evangelical churches give abused

women potentially dangerous advice. “They’re often told to go back into the homes and if they are advised to leave for their own safety they are advised to continue to honor their husband and respect their husband and be submissive to this abuser, even while they are separated,” she said.

“They are poisoning the church,” Andersen said of the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. “These tentacles are reaching everywhere, and entire denominations have been taken captive by this Danvers Statement and by complementarianism.”

—*Bob Allen is senior writer for Associated Baptist Press.*

[Christians demand apology for anti-women teaching](#) (7/26/2010)

[Website seeks to rally support for women’s ordination](#) (1/26/2009)