

Voices: How the church—and me too—should respond to #MeToo

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Without question, our culture affords women second-class status.

(As a Hispanic male, first-generation immigrant, and first-generation college graduate, I would like to clarify many people are second-class citizens in this culture. But maybe that's a subject best addressed at another time.)

Recently, we saw women bravely and firmly say, “Me, too.” After multiple women in Hollywood stepped forward to accuse movie producer Harvey Weinstein of sexual harassment, Alyssa Milano [urged women](#) who have been sexually assaulted and/or harassed to post “me too” in their social media. “We might give people a sense of the magnitude of the problem,” she said.

This is not the first time we've heard of a massive sexual abuse problem, and it will not be the last. But I hope we can start talking about our massive involvement in this issue.

The church's response

Sexual abuse happens in the church. Men have grown up—and are growing up—with an addiction to porn. And sexually oriented businesses move men to use women as a good that can be acquired. You can see the results of these detestable acts in broad daylight, in the advertisements and in the way men interact with women on the streets, but it gets darker if you dare

to see how horrible this is.

Now, we can say that is just sin or the consequence of our sinful nature, but that simply helps us leave ourselves out of the problem. We conveniently ignore our responsibility to confess those sins and our duty to be a light to that darkness. Being a light does not mean we simply expose what is wrong; being a light is to live out justice and redemption. We are to help the oppressed, and we are to change culture so women are not seen simply as the objects for our satisfaction.

The will of God

There has to be redemption for the church, as well. Living out the will of God on earth as it is in heaven involves not enabling leaders to abuse their positions to take advantage of young girls. The will of God is not to hide that abuse for the sake of the church's credibility. But the will of God involves more than dealing after-the-fact with the reality that something wrong happened, nor can it be simply a set of preventive rules.

The will of God for the church, and for the entire creation, is that women not be given a second-class status just for being women. The will of God is for us, as men, not to see women as things that can please our desires or as tools we need in order to have children.

The will of God is that we will be a light in this darkness, and that we will see that women carry the very image of God. So, all women will be given their rightful and holy place—not as sexual objects, but as the holy image of God. That means whatever we say about men who do the will of God has to be said about women, too.

My response

I say this because I have been part of the system that objectifies women. I have knowingly and unknowingly participated with the culture that objectifies and makes victims of women. Sometimes being broken is not a choice, but many times, I did make choices that hurt my sisters. But change can occur, and it can begin today.

Men, it would be beautiful for us to begin by saying, "I was wrong, and I am sorry." And then say, "Help me to make this better." When we confess our faults, and when we allow ourselves to be led for the better, that is when we truly become lights in the darkness.

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