

Observing International Women’s Day

In observing International Women’s Day, we talk today about women’s status in Islam.

The status of women in Islam is a pertinent topic, due to the divergence of cultural practices in the Muslim world from an Islamic perspective, as well as some people’s incorrect belief that Islam subjugates women. An impartial examination of Islam’s sources, as well as an examination of women’s positions where Islam is adopted, demonstrates that Islam is a special blessing for women.

Before Islam, a woman was seen by her parents as a threat to family honor and so deserving of being buried alive at birth. As an adult, she became a sex object that could be purchased, sold, or inherited. From this position of inferiority and legal inability, Islam elevated women to a position of influence and prestige in family and society.

Women’s rights and responsibilities in Islam are equal to men’s, but they are not always the same. This discrepancy is understandable given that men and women have different physiological and psychological make-ups and requirements. It is this difference that is sometimes misunderstood and always used. With this contrast in mind, there is no reason for a Muslim to believe that

women are inferior to men. Thus, it is arguably more appropriate to refer to the Islamic approach to gender relations as one of “equity” rather than the generally used word “equality,” which may be misinterpreted to mean equality in every detail of life rather than overall equality.

The sacred text of the Quran and the history of early Muslims demonstrate that women are just as important to life as men. From the start, Islam opposed the notion that Eve persuaded Adam to disobey God resulting in his downfall. The Quran states, “And they [i.e., Adam and his wife] ate of it (The Tree), and their private parts became apparent to them, and they began to fasten over themselves from the leaves of Paradise. Adam disobeyed his Lord and erred. (121)” [Quran: 20: 121] The Quran also states that they both disobeyed, refuting the notion that women are a source of evil. In a culture where women were nothing more than objects of sexual enjoyment for males, and at a period when religious circles debated whether women were human or not, Islam declared: (O mankind! We created you from a male and a female.) [Quran 49:13]. and, (O Mankind! Reverence your Guardian-Lord, Who created



Guest Column

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you from a single person, created of like nature his mate, from them scattered countless men and women) [Quran 4:1]

Men and women are members of the same family and hence have similar rights and duties, as promised by their Lord in the Quran: “Never will I waste the work of a worker among you, whether male or female, the one of you being from the other.” [Quran 3:195] Thus, in the Islamic tradition, a woman has an independent identity. She is a responsible being in her own right and carries the burden of her moral and spiritual obligations.

In Islam women have the same entitlement to education as males; about fourteen centuries ago, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said that the pursuit of knowledge is compulsory for all Muslims, male and female. This pronouncement was extremely clear and was widely followed by Muslims throughout history.

Islam elevated women’s place in society and regarded them on an equal level with men, and

in some situations, like being a mother, clearly gave them precedence over men. Thus, when a man asked Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) about leaving his mother, he replied, “Stay with your mother, for Paradise lies at her feet.”

As daughters, women have the right to fair and equitable treatment from their parents. The Prophet (pbuh) sent good news of paradise to those who did not disrespect their daughters or prefer sons over daughters.

A woman has the right to accept or reject marriage proposals, and her consent is a prerequisite to the validity of the marriage contract. A marriage is based on mutual peace, love, and compassion. The husband is responsible for the maintenance, protection, and overall leadership of the family within the framework of consultation and kindness. The mutuality and complementarity of husband and wife do not mean ‘subservience’ by either party to the other. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) assisted with home duties despite the enormity of his responsibilities and the challenges he encountered in the community, to set an example for his followers of their commitments.

In Islam, women are entitled to the same freedom of expression as

males. Women played an active role in public life among the early Muslims, particularly during times of emergency. According to the Quran and history, women not only freely stated their ideas, but also argued and engaged in serious conversations with the Prophet (pbuh) and other Muslim leaders.

Women have equal rights under Islam to contract, engage in business, earn money, and own property. Women’s lives, property, and honor are as sacrosanct as men’s. If she commits an offense, her penalty is no less or greater than that of a male in a similar situation. If she is wronged or hurt, she is entitled to equal compensation as a man in her circumstances.

Women are entitled to a share of the inheritance in Islam. Before Islam, women were not only denied that share but were also seen as property to be inherited by men. Islam created an heir out of that transferable property, embracing women’s innate individuality. Whether the woman is a wife, mother, sister, or daughter, she inherits a portion of the deceased kin’s property based on her degree of relationship to the deceased and the number of heirs. This is her share, and no one may take it or disinherit her. Even if the deceased desires to deprive her by drafting a

will for other relatives or any other cause, Islamic principles will not allow him to do so.

Women are immune from all financial liabilities. As a wife, she has the right to demand from her prospective husband a reasonable dowry that is her own. She is entitled to entire sustenance and whole maintenance from her spouse. She is not required to work or share family costs with her spouse. She is free to keep anything she had before marriage, and the husband has no title to any of her possessions. As a daughter or sister, she is entitled to security and provision from her father and brother, respectively.

Women have a high standing in Islam. Islam has offered them privileges that are perfectly aligned with their responsibilities. What Islam has provided for women is that which matches their nature, provides complete security, and shields them from shameful conditions and unclear paths of life. Islam did all of this with the larger picture in mind, including the family and society.

In summary, Islam sees men’s and women’s relationships as cooperative rather than competitive.

The author could be reached at: hatim@gmx.us. For more information, please visit: www.icstillwater.org/islam/

Southern Baptist agency says U.S. investigation into sexual abuse has ended with ‘no further action’

A Southern Baptist Convention leader said Wednesday the U.S. Department of Justice has ended its investigation of a top denominational agency’s handling of sexual abuse and doesn’t anticipate further action.

The statement by Jonathan Howe, interim president of the denomination’s Executive Committee, said the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of New York informed the com-

mittee’s legal counsel on Feb. 29 that there is “no further action to be taken” in the probe.

The investigation began a year and a half ago into the Executive Committee and several other denominational entities, including seminaries and mission agencies. Howe’s statement did not address the status of the investigation into those other entities.

The DOJ did not immediately respond to The Associated

Press’ request to confirm the statement, which was reported earlier by The Tennessean.

The federal investigation followed a blistering 2022 report from an outside consultant that found disturbing details about how denominational leaders mishandled sex abuse claims and mistreated victims.

“While we are grateful for closure on this particular matter, we recognize that sexual abuse reform efforts must con-

tinue to be implemented across the Convention,” Howe said in a statement. “We remain steadfast in our commitment to assist churches in preventing and responding well to sexual abuse in the SBC.”

The Executive Committee has continued to struggle to respond to the issue, most recently announcing plans for an independent commission to oversee a public list of abusive clergy – but is still seeking

funds for it.

The reported end of the federal investigation “does not lessen SBC’s moral responsibility for grievous harms,” said Christa Brown, a longtime advocate for survivors of abuse in Southern Baptist settings. “Nor does it alter the reality that, in countless SBC churches, leaders violated state laws & standards,” she said on X, formerly Twitter.

– AP

Worship at the church of your choice this week

The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life,
turning a person from the snares of death.



Proverbs 14:27

Stillwater Bible

Proclaiming Christ, Training Believers

JB Bond, Senior Pastor

Sundays

Worship Service8:30 a.m.

G.R.O.W. Groups9:45 a.m.

Worship Service11:00 a.m.

Kids' Church11:20 a.m.

Tuesdays

Cornerstone @ The Union (RM 297).....7:30 p.m.

Wednesdays

Stillwater Bible Institute.....6:30 p.m.

Impact Youth.....6:30 p.m.

Bible Kids.....6:30 p.m.

7617 W. 6th Ave.

Stillwaterbible.org (405) 564-5794

Crosspointe

CHURCH

Sunday School - 9:30

Sunday AM Worship - 10:30

Sunday PM Family Service - 6:00

Wed PM Bible Study - 7:00

1807 N. Jardot

gocrosspointe.com

FIRST BAPTIST

CHURCH

701 S. DUNCAN • 405-372-5212

SUNDAY

Bible Study • 9:30am

Worship Service • 11:00am

WEDNESDAY ACTIVITIES

Begin at 6:00pm

Watch our worship service on Facebook

www.fbcstillwater.org

FIRST UNITED

METHODIST CHURCH

www.fumcstw.org

400 W. 7th • 372-5854

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

Worship.....8:30am & 11:10am

Sunday School.....10:00am

Closer Walk.....10 am Family Life Center

UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS

BAPTIST CHURCH

4th & Knoblock • 372-2744

Sunday School

9 am

Worship Service

8 am & 10:30 am

GRACE BAPTIST

CHURCH

Independent Baptist

Expository Preaching

CHURCH SERVICES

Sunday10:30am

Thursday7:30pm

723 E. 17th

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

524 S. Duncan • 405-372-5580

www.stillwaterfpc.org

Sunday Worship

9:45 a.m. - Sunday School

11:00 a.m. - in person, online

On KSPI radio AM 780 & FM 94.3

and the Stillwater FPC Facebook page

Sunnybrook

Christian Church

421 E. Richmond Rd • 377.0923

www.sunnybrookcc.org

SUNDAY SERVICE

9:45 am

11:15 am

SUNDAY SCHOOL

8:30 am

9:45 am

KIDS CHURCH 9:45 & 11:15 am

GO • GATHER • GROW

Stillwater

Church of Christ

stillwatercoc.org

Your place for

"Faith, Family and Friends"

SUNDAY

Meeting Times

Bible Study.....9:30 AM

Worship.....10:30 AM

Bible Study.....5:00 PM

WEDNESDAY

Bible study.....7:00 PM

821 N. DUCK • 372-7439

Southside Baptist

Church of Stillwater

1223 S. Perkins Rd.

Perfectly • Purposely • Placed

SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:45 AM

SUNDAY WORSHIP 11 AM & 6 PM

WEDNESDAY

YOUTH & ADULT BIBLE STUDY 6:30

Paul Hinchison - Pastor

Address - 1223 S. Perkins, Rd.

Phone: 405-372-2411

Email: southsidestillwater@gmail.com

Zion Lutheran

Church - LCMS

Sunday - 8:00, 10:30 AM

www.zionlutheranstw.org

John E. Wackler, Pastor

504 S. Knoblock • 372-3703

St. Francis Xavier

Catholic Church

711 N. Country Club Rd.

Sunday Mass

8:30 | 11:15 a.m.

en Español | 1 p.m.

Tuesday Mass

12:10 | 5:30 p.m.

Wednesday Mass

12:10 p.m.

en Español | 6 p.m.

Thursday Mass

12:10 | 5:30 p.m.

Friday Mass

12:10 p.m.

Saturday Mass

9 a.m.

Saturday Vigil Mass

5 p.m.

Confessions before every

12:10 Mass at 11:30 a.m.

Wednesdays at 5 p.m. and

Saturdays from 9:45-11 a.m.

372-6886

www.sfxstillwater.org