

Positive Masculine Profiles

To talk about masculinity with men sometimes could be very difficult and could be misinterpreted. Yet it is necessary to raise this issue with men, women and youth in church and society. It is necessary to understand that “Masculinity approach is not a theoretical or intellectual subject. One has to go necessarily through a personal revision, the way of thinking, feeling and acting. It goes through an inevitable rupture of personal schemes of life and vision of the world. It is not only limited to learn new roles such as doing housewives labors. It goes through a subjective change.”¹

The world has been experiencing a lot of changes in the roles of men and women brought about by opportunities for education and entry of women into professional spheres. There have also been several impacts made by women's movements for equality, economic globalization, media etc. While this has served in furthering the concept of equality in principle, it will not become a reality experienced at ground level unless we look seriously at the roles that we are taught and expected to play by our culture, religion and society. The changing contexts need models of support and complementarity rather than conflicts brought about by the pressure to fulfil age-old expectations and teachings. Professor Dr. Wanda Deifelt noted Latin American theologian remarks, “ if the twentieth century represented an advance of the women in their search for emancipation and true citizenship, the twenty first century will be century of changes to men.

Many men have understood the need to rethink gender roles and are playing positive roles in harmonizing relationships in family, church and society. In an era that is witnessing breakdown in families and in inter-personal relationships between men and women, these positive models can provide a way forward for men to know that there are other men who play proactive roles in building inclusive communities. However, it is true that many men still play old masculine roles characterized by a “macho” culture.

The LWF 10th Assembly made a commitment to “*challenge sexual stereotypes and raise gender issues early in the life of youth, seeking to build a just community of women and men.*”

Positive Masculine profiles are those models that show the efforts of men engaged in changing their thinking and behavior, alone or in groups, in an effort to bring in gender equality. They may be involved in the following activities:

- Promote gender equality by addressing issues of women ,
- Work for reducing violence against women,
- Play a proactive roles in bringing just gender models that shares in household chores, upbringing of children,
- Engage in rereading and reinterpretation of Bible affirming that women are made in the image of God with equal responsibilities and privilege of stewardship of God's creation,
- Support and promote women's leadership and
- Not feel threatened or insecure by adopting their roles to improve gender relations.
- Would emulate the compassionate caring model of Jesus.

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¹ WEM Institute – Costa Rica Institute of Masculinity, Couple and Sexuality: Building New Masculinities.