

A Brief Critique of Darby Strickland's Articles on Spousal Abuse by J. Parnell McCarter

(Note: This article is available at www.puritans.net/articles/Strickland.pdf, and it is part of a series of articles at www.puritans.net critiquing the Federal Department of Education's "diversity agenda", which is promoting feminist ideology, cultural Marxist ideology, and LGBT ideology. Also there is an article critiquing Prof. Engelsma's cave in to feminist ideology. "Darby Strickland, M. Div.", as she labels herself, has posted a variety of articles on spousal abuse. This is a response to her articles.)

1. Darby Strickland is a feminist holding to feminist ideology, which is a sinful rebellion against God and historic Biblical reformed standards:
 - She got her "M. Div." from a seminary. This is the degree of ministers, but God forbids women from the ministry. She is defying God by taking on what God has forbidden to her, even as Eve defied God by eating the forbidden fruit. The fact that the Federal Department of Education is promoting this as part of its "diversity agenda" does not make it right. (Men should not repeat the sin of Adam by providing tacit approval of this rebellion.)
 - She speaks of "rape within marriage" and defends use and application of this term, consistent with feminist ideology but contrary to Biblical reformed standards (see "marital rape" definition and history below). For centuries English common law, reflecting the historic Protestant Biblical position, has maintained "the husband cannot be guilty of a rape committed by himself upon his lawful wife, for by their mutual matrimonial consent and contract the wife hath given up herself in this kind unto her husband which she cannot retract."
 - She denies that "conjugal love and cohabitation" are moral duties of spouses associated with the marriage covenant. Her views are contrary to the Biblical principles outlined in the Westminster Larger Catechism.
2. The definition and history of so called "marital rape" and its relation to the feminist movement are explained at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marital_rape: "**Marital rape** or **spousal rape** is the act of **sexual intercourse** with one's spouse without the spouse's **consent**. The lack of consent is the essential element and need not involve physical violence. Marital rape is considered a form of **domestic violence** and **sexual abuse**. Although, historically, sexual intercourse within marriage was regarded as a right of spouses, engaging in the act without the spouse's consent is now widely recognized by law and society as a wrong and as a crime... From the beginnings of the 19th century **feminist movement**, activists challenged the presumed right of men to engage in forced or coerced sex with their wives. In the **United States**, "the nineteenth-century woman's rights movement fought against a husband's right to control marital intercourse in a campaign that was remarkably developed, prolific, and insistent, given nineteenth-century taboos against the public mention of sex or sexuality."^[14] **Suffragists** ... "singled out a woman's right to control marital intercourse as the core component of equality."^[15] ... The marital rape exemption or defence became more widely viewed as inconsistent with the developing concepts of human rights and equality. Feminists worked systematically since the 1960s to overturn the marital rape exemption and criminalize marital rape.^[21] Increasing criminalization of spousal rape is part of a worldwide reclassification of sexual crimes "from offenses against morality, the family, good customs, honor, or chastity ... to offenses against liberty, self-determination, or physical integrity."^[22] In December 1993, the **United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights** published the **Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women**. This establishes marital rape as a **human rights** violation."
3. Darby Strickland insinuates that we must accept her feminist approach in order to prevent things like a husband who insists that the married couple watch pornography together or engage in 24/7 sexual intercourse, but this is a lie of the devil. Historic Biblical reformed theology recognizes that "we ought to obey God rather than men", including when a husband commands a wife to commit sin. Watching pornography is clearly a sin against the Seventh Commandment, so any husband commanding it should be disobeyed by the wife, but not on feminist grounds of overturning the conjugal love mandate. No, the grounds she would disobey it is the Seventh Commandment. Similarly, if a husband commanded 24/7 sexual intercourse, this would be a violation of the Fourth Commandment to labor six days and rest one day, as well as the Eighth Commandment which requires us to labor honestly. Engaging in inordinate sexual recreation is a clear violation of these principles. In order to address these sins we do not need to resort to the feminist approach.
4. The response to sin should never be sin. Feminist ideology and its approach to sinful behavior of husbands are sinful. God has instituted the institutions of the church and the civil magistrate as instruments to help enforce justice, and Christians may properly look to these institutions for assistance *if* such is done in a morally lawful way. Nevertheless, we must realize there will never be perfect justice in this fallen world. We must trust in the Lord Jesus Christ that He will make all things right on the Day of Judgment. It is our duty, whether male or female, to follow Biblical Commandments, and these are accurately outlined in such historical reformed standards as the Westminster Standards and Three Forms of Unity.