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THE ISAAC ARMITAGE LECTURE

18th

I am intrigued by the suggestion

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The equality theme is an interesting one. It ought to be grounds for great celebration. Somehow, I think, over time, it has been obscured by ego-centric, powerful masculine leaders in all spheres of society suppressing their female counterparts and, or in more recent times, by well-meaning, zealous feminists attempting to impose their own hegemony on the world in place of the males. For once it is both politically and theologically correct to assert unequivocally, that in the eyes of God males and females are of equal value. But that piece of theology is rarely recognised as having a Christian origin.

I might just observe, that earlier this week, in a Synod debate, discourse on what gender equity means in respect to governance, equality was defined, not unpredictably, in terms of numbers: that is, equality is realized by having 5 women and 5 men on a committee, or 10 women and 10 men in the Cabinet! Real equality is more than numerical.

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Dr Townsend cites a range of scientific sources that establish beyond doubt that there are distinct differences between males and females, not j,.0041 Tw [lle0039 Tw [(ient)5.2(ifly c)(mal)3n.9(e)J 19(e)J

empowering, and they are all of these because our wise God created us in that way.



More than merely being different, males and females have been created to complement one another. In her concluding paragraph Dr Townsend said, *'we must work together to celebrate differences, accommodate weaknesses and draw comfort from each other's strengths. With women and men working side by side, complementing each other, we may not make a perfect world, but we will be moving in the right direction.'* Where are the champions of such a great idea? In our schools? In our churches?



Dr Townsend suggests that we should educate girls to be women, we should educate boys to be men, we should value the differences between males and females, we should teach boys to value the female voice, we should strengthen girls' weaker traits, we should strengthen boys' weaker traits and we should promote equality. Together these seven

As an aside, I note that there is a debate going on in Britain and America among early childhood educators as to why less than 3% of the teachers of pre-school children are males, and whether our anxiety about child-abuse is depriving young children of a positive male influence. Is this something we should be concerned about?

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Finally, let me remind you of the question that prompted the lecture. Dr Townsend asked, “in the twenty-first century, should we be educating males and females or educating human beings?”

You, no doubt will have drawn your conclusion on what her answer was. Had the question been asked of the nineteenth century, or of the first century, would her answer, or would your answer, have been any different?

For my part, in respect to each of these alternative questions, I would have answered ‘both.’ And I would have done so for this reason, that in the hurly-burly of twenty-first century Anglican education, I think that many of our teachers have a very undeveloped, inadequate understanding of what it means to be a human being. They are weak on biblical anthropology and that is serious because virtually every subject taught in schools has an anthropological basis. And because of this, these teachers have an inadequate pedagogy.

A pedagogy fit for an Anglican sc