

Engage360 | 3 - Charitable Orthodoxy in the Conversation About Gender Roles in Ministry

Introduction: Welcome to Engage360, Denver Seminary's podcast. Join us as we explore the redemptive power of the gospel and the life-changing truth of Scripture at work in our culture today.

Dr. Don Payne: Hi, I'm Don Payne. I'm glad to be your host for Engage360. So, yesterday I was having a lunch conversation with our dean of students, Rob Foley along with several other people here at the seminary. And Rob is a very avid mountain climber. He loves to scale a lot of the, what we call the fourteener's, the 14,000 foot peaks here in Colorado. And he was telling us about a particular venture he and a friend of his had had somewhat recently where they had scaled Aldiante [?] Peak and Mount Wilson Peak. And between the two those two peaks, there is a one mile long traverse that is a treacherous, narrow, very jagged, rocky ledge. He showed us a picture of it on his cell phone and Rob is just intoxicated. I think he's an adrenaline junkie because he was just intoxicated with this, the rest of us at the table were looking at the picture on his cell phone at this traverse and either saying to him, saying to each other, or saying to ourselves, there is no way in the world I would do that. But Rob was thrilled by it. He and his friend took this very jagged, very treacherous high elevation traverse, one mile in length between these two peaks. And he said, the way they did it was just basically 10 feet at a time. They looked forward, looked for the next handhold, and they got their way across it. I'm Don Payne your host and we've aimed ourselves at one of the most daunting, yet crucial, and I think hopeful, directions that a seminary could go. And you might say that we're nuts for trying something like this, but here we go because there's something I think spectacular on the other side of this traverse. This week we, we're going to welcome back to the podcast, the president of Denver Seminary, Dr. Mark Young and our provost and dean, Dr. Lynn Cohick. We recently spent time one on one with both Mark and Lynn, so to help you get to know each of them better, I'll refer you to the podcasts where each of them had a one on one. We're not going to repeat all of that today. If you missed those episodes, you can go to our website and find them. But we want all of our Engage360 episodes to be substantive, even though some will be a lot more lighthearted than others. Today's conversation is probably going to ask more of us hopefully, and is going to stretch every one of us in some important, and I think beneficial ways, because we're going to jump into the thick of a difficult conversation seems to be increasingly divisive within evangelical communities, with various parties sort of retrenching their positions in a stalemate. Before introducing that subject itself, I want to try to stage the conversation on the platform of wondering what are Denver Seminary's core values, Charitable Orthodoxy. Mark talked about this a bit recently in his one-on-one interview. When we encounter an area of disagreement as Christians that is both increasingly contentious and stuck. It seems like it's time to maybe back up a few steps and take a hard look at the way we're having the conversation. The method of the conversation, in this particular case, the issue we were going to tackle is gender roles in ministry.

What's often called complementarian and egalitarian positions though it's not always quite as simplistic or binary as that. Now, our objective today in this interview is not to resolve that issue but more to talk about how we talk about it, what Charitable Orthodoxy means for that often contentious subject, and maybe even more on the ground level, the kind of learning community that we want to be as Denver Seminary with that issue and others like it. Now, as many of you may know, Denver Seminary has intentionally chosen not to take an institutional position on that issue. Even though that is in a sense a position of its own and that it automatically brings with it some interesting tensions that we have to name and address as part of creating the type of, the unique type of learning informational environment that we want here. And so that's part of our conversation. So to get us started with this, maybe, well first let me welcome you both back. Lynn and Mark, welcome back to the podcast.

Dr. Lynn Cohick: Good to talk with you again Don.

Dr. Mark Young: Yeah, likewise. Thanks.

Dr. Don Payne: Maybe either one or both of you can give us, kind of the lay of the land for what this conversation currently looks like within evangelical, at the macro level? How it's being framed? That might be both helpful and unhelpful and we can go from there.

Dr. Mark Young: Sounds great.

Dr. Don Payne: Take it away.

Dr. Mark Young: Let me begin by saying thanks for that analogy of walking across that treacherous path. It's an unfortunate reality that it is a treacherous path. It doesn't have to be that way. In fact, I think what we would all aspire to, is that two people with different points of view about hermeneutical, theological, missiological ministry positions could have a conversation walking down a very smooth path while they engage one another and learn from one another. That's really kind of the metaphor, the image that I would love for us to be able to establish. But you're right. Unfortunately as people become more invested in the positions they have and take a really just a perspective that there's only one right way to talk about an issue where the church has disagreed for a number of years, it does become treacherous. So if we look at our history as a movement, particularly the, well I would say both sides of the movement, both the more progressive side and the more conservative side, have a tendency to back away from each other and then simply talk about each other rather than talking with one another. And so at Denver Seminary, what we're attempting to do, and I agree with you, it's a, it's a different, more difficult path, is talk with one another about what we agree on and what we disagree about. And this issue in particular is one that comes up in our conversations with, among ourselves, as well as certainly as I interact with other presidents in other settings in evangelicalism.

Dr. Lynn Cohick: Yeah, and I appreciate the focus on theological and missional and I think that's what Charitable Orthodoxy is about. That's what we're trying to do. But quite often in this conversation, what we shift to is anthropological, what does it mean to be a man? What does it mean to be a woman? And then also we get tripped up as we talk hermeneutically, we have different hermeneutical lenses through which we view scripture. And so in those two things, I think complicate having a rather basic theological or missiological conversation because we shift to anthropological and then we fail to appreciate the differences of our hermeneutical approaches, which really, set the tone or the track. You know, it's sort of a where do you start? Do you start with 1 Timothy 2, or do you start with Jesus and his interaction with women in the gospels? Depending on where you start, often that will determine where you end up or what you consider to be important information, along the way.

Dr. Mark Young: That's a great observation and let's kind of back, backfill that a little bit too because there's a lot of history there, right? One of the defining characteristics of evangelicalism as it moves into the 20th Century is a very strong emphasis on Biblicism, meaning what we want to do is start with the Bible. In fact, in some camps that becomes a bit of a primitivism, which says there was one pure expression of our faith. That's what we read in the Bible. And that's the one, the only one that's pure and everything else after that is somehow tainted. So in the early 20th Century and then all the way up until today, we find ourselves with a Biblicism or an approach to scripture, as Lynn pointed out, hermeneutically that sometimes doesn't allow for us to admit that there are different ways to read the same passage. And so what I see happening is we end up then, if we don't agree with the way someone is interpreting a passage, we question their commitment to scripture. That's another trait of our movement that goes back to the early 20th Century. It's named the slippery slope in the 1950s. But it's the idea, if you give up on something, then there's a whole series of consequences, disastrous consequences that follow up, right? So in this debate, for example, you can find in recent years, those in leadership positions or those who are teaching or preaching, saying things like, well, if you give up a traditional view of men and women in ministry, then you've denied the inerrancy of scripture. What a leap that is. And when we make that leap. Right? We don't have anywhere else to go after that kind of thing is said.

Dr. Lynn Cohick: And as you mentioned, traditional view. I'm so glad you brought that term up because as someone who has studied the early church, in the historical period before Constantine, it's a lot less neatly, you know, tied up in a bow than what we tend to think.

Dr. Don Payne: The traditional view is not one thing.

Dr. Lynn Cohick: That's right.

Dr. Don Payne: You might associate with the 1950s or something like that.

Dr. Lynn Cohick: Exactly right. The 1950s had some positive and some negative, and we're talking about the 1950s here in the United States, not elsewhere. But in the first three centuries of the early church, women were called to be martyrs just like men, and women were martyred just like men. And the female martyrs were honored just like the male martyrs. And so the, the idea that there was a 1950ish American setting for the first three centuries of the early church just simply isn't the case. And so when we talk about tradition or the traditional way of doing things, I think we have to be really careful, what do we mean by tradition?

Dr. Mark Young: Well, Mark, you mentioned one thing that's worth looping back to the, well actually both of you have the issue of hermeneutics and there in some cases being more than one way that people can read texts. Now that very fact has itself been quite unsettling to lots and lots of biblically anchored people, people with the commitment to the authority of scripture. And I mean that's a complicated conversation, but part of what drives that is the assumption that every text of scripture has to be renderable in a straightforward, obvious way. So that when someone says, Oh, there's more than one way to read a text, what that often suggests to people is that it's all up for grabs. Now, you're both textual scholars. I'm, that's not my wheelhouse, but that needs attention at least needs to be named that, for there to be more than one way to read a text is not the same thing as saying, well, the text and the meaning of the text is all up for grabs.

Dr. Mark Young: That's true. I think there are some good historical reasons that this approach to scripture becomes a part of evangelicalism in US and in the UK as well in the late 19th century. Of course, coming out of the reformation, there was this idea that scripture alone is what guides us toward our conclusions and then who interprets Scripture, at that point, we want to strip away the church, strip away the papal authority and make scripture and our encounter with scripture the centerpiece of how God is speaking to us. Of course, that leads then into a nice mix of common sense realism that comes out of Northern, the Northern UK or Britain at the time.

Dr. Don Payne: Purposcewity Scripture.

Dr. Mark Young: Exactly. Scripture is playing. All you have to do is read it. It's there, every man could read it, read it, live by it. What was that thing we used to say, the Bible says that I believe that that does it. Right? That's what we learned in, in kindergarten. What happens though of course, is that when you have points of view or when you have, how would I say it, you have realities that the church is facing that may not be directly addressed in Scripture. That approach to reading Scripture can lead us to some very dangerous conclusions. The best example of that is the Civil War with evangelicals came down on both sides of the equation as to whether or not it was okay. Think about that. Okay. For Christians, for evangelicals, to own slaves.

Dr. Lynn Cohick: And the question really was even more focused, wasn't it? It was about white men and women owning black men and women. You never had the reverse. So

it really wasn't about slavery in the abstract. It, there was a racism that underpinned the common sense kind of approach to Scripture. And I think that's one of the dangers of this kind of common sense approach to Scripture. Is it doesn't always help us see our own blind spots, so that the elephant in the room, so to speak was racism and throughout this conversation between the abolitionists and those pro-slavery people, only a few of them recognized that there was, there was also a question of race underneath this. A really good book, I think that highlights this is Mark Knowles, a book called, *The Civil War as Theological Crisis*. And I would encourage those who want to explore this a little bit more to take a look at this because it, he gives so much primary sources, he quotes so much from the sermons and the articles of the day and I think it will really help people see what we're talking about.

Dr. Mark Young: No question.

Dr. Don Payne: I've seen a little bit of that scholarship from the 19th Century and it's very bracing to see what conservative Bible-believing Christians were arguing. Sometimes even in the Northern States, for the right of white people to own black people as slaves. It's very, very staggering, chilling.

Dr. Mark Young: And what Lynn pointed out, I think is, is a historical tragedy because we address slavery, but we didn't address white supremacy. We didn't address racism at its core. And we're still living with that today, right? Even up through the Civil Rights Movement, we struggle and struggle and struggle and frankly, we are further along in terms of having some laws in place and some genteel practices in place, but that underpinning of white supremacy and racism remains a part of evangelicalism, in some cases. I think there's another part of this conversation that's important and that is those who wanted to argue against the institution of slavery, even if they weren't addressing racism, approach Scripture with a more nuanced perspective. They wanted to understand the contexts within which those verses that sanctioned slavery in the Old Testament were given, and they wanted to bring in theological underpinnings. What are those three illogical truths about, what it means to be human or about how God's at work in the world? Well, if you have a conversation and one person is saying, well, it's right here in the Bible, and another person is saying, yeah, but we need to read it with this kind of nuanced perspective of context, both for the writer and the reader and with an awareness of our theological underpinnings. For most of the Church, through the 19th Century, and even today, the person who says, well, it's right here in the Bible has the upper hand. That's the easier point to argue with. And it carried the day for many, many people. I mean, think about the outcome of a hermeneutic that actually led to people, both of whom named Jesus Christ as savior, slaughtering one another in a war. That ought to give us a bit of pause, about whether that hermeneutic remained or ought to remain a part of the way we read scripture. Now let's be quick to say that those who have different points of view and complementarianism and egalitarianism are, we're not in any way equating what that conversation is like, leading to a war, right? We're not talking about that scale of other parts of the divisiveness of the 19th Century, but I do think we need to take, we need to ask ourselves this question.

Have we essentially changed the way we read Scripture from what led to that type of division in the 19th script's century to what's happening in the Church today or has happened in the Church since that time? And if we haven't, then I do think we need to step back, take a deep breath, and say maybe there are important more nuanced ways to read Scripture that we need to appropriate and practice as we engage with one another.

Dr. Don Payne:

You know, when I was in seminary, I remember one of my professors making this statement and this was in a preaching class, a homiletics class, and this prof said, that the word of God will always be truer than your preaching of it. And I've realized I think that that statement can be extrapolated into or maybe transferred into a few other arenas. The word of God will always be bigger than, the word of God will always be truer than, any single reading of it that I might engage. That's been for me anyway, a bit of a bit of a flip, a bit of a shift in thinking because it does pertain to some of the ways we're discussing about how the Scripture is read and still be authoritative for faith in practice. And it's been rather, y'all can come in and comment on this if you want, it's been a bit mind blowing. That might be a slight exaggeration to say that or to realize that the authority of the Scriptures functions at a level beyond my immediate reading of it and my immediate comprehension of it. And in fact, it's written for all the people of God of all time, not merely for me and to answer my questions. So it should not puzzle us that there will be many things in Scripture that will puzzle us.

Dr. Lynn Cohick:

Yes. And that we can't tie up in a neat little bow. Yeah. Well, and I think one of the connections that I think we can make when we talk about the issue of slavery and then now in our conversation about egalitarians, complementarians as it relates to hermeneutics, is that I think a recognition that our culture is not only racist in different ways but also sexist. I don't think I'm saying anything controversial in identifying that. And so to what degree are we aware of the sexism that we have all grown up with? I think of, for example, the, what are the symptoms of a heart attack? Well, it used to be that they would say the heart attack, you know, you know you're going to have a heart attack if your arm starts tingling, you feel a tightness in your chest or something. That's how it was worded. And then people said, Oh, and if you're a woman that it'll feel like this. And I thought, well, wait a minute then what we need to say is if you're a man, a heart attack is going to feel like this. And if you're a woman, a heart attack is going to feel like that. But notice how the standard was male. A heart attack feels like this unless you're a woman. And then it'll feel like that, Oh, wait a minute. I'm also human, as Dorothy Sayers long ago, in the what? 1930s or whatever, argued women are human also. And so I think when we go beyond Scripture for those who believe that there are certain roles that women should not have in the church because they've executed particular passages and concludes that, that to me is the job of the exegete. And that's, that's what we hope to train people to be, really good exegetes, here at Denver Seminary. But if we go beyond that and help explain why God did this, because for example, women are more gullible, you know, you can still pick up commentaries written by evangelicals in the 1980s, that will say that, that women are by nature more

gullible and therefore they should not have final authority. But that's not actually what the biblical texts says. So when we go beyond the biblical text to try and explain God's point and we do so in sexist ways, that's I think where we run into the problems because we're exegeting at that point, right? We're not actually staying with the biblical text.

Dr. Don Payne:

So you could say that, it actually is a higher, we want to use that kind of metaphor and escalating metaphor. It is a higher view of Scripture. To allow Scripture to speak on its own terms even when that is more obscure to me or I have to do more work for it, or even when that might really fly in the face of some long and deeply held assumptions that I've rested a lot of personal weight on. Now, Mark, I know I've heard you speak, this has been some time ago, but I've heard you speak as a former missionary about the sort of missiological backdrop of some of the, the restrictions on gender roles that we do see in some of the Pauline letters. Could you rehash, share some of that?

Dr. Mark Young:

Yeah. I really appreciate what Lynn said in terms of there are solid exegetes who come down on both sides of this equation. They are equally adept at understanding the text as it's written and understanding some of the contextual matters that are part of the text. So I want us to be sure and say they're very skilled exegetes and theologians who can come down on either side of this equation, which makes it even more, in my view, more a reason that we should come together and talk about this in ways that are meaningful for the Church as a whole. But I think there's a bigger theological picture here, Don, and you used the word missiological. Missiology is essentially the bringing together of culture, anthropology, and theology, and hermeneutics, and ministry into how do we live as the people of God in a place in a time so that those who among who we live, will want to believe in the Jesus we believe in. So that we can live out God's desire for them to be redeemed. Well, that's exactly what Paul was doing as he wrote to groups of believers who were springing up in communities within the Roman Empire or in Israel, land of Israel itself, Judea. So if that's the case, let's just assume that Paul was attempting to help the people of God live in a way that communicated their fidelity to Jesus and the marvelous offer of redemption of Christ's death on the cross. I think that's a fair assumption. Paul wanted that to be true in Ephesus and Thessaloniki and Philippi and Corinth and Rome. So when Paul begins to address the lives of these people through sometimes called household codes or other exhortations related to how they work, how they relate to one another, how they think, how they eat, how they worship together. With that as a backdrop, Paul is consistently challenging that community to live in a way that everyone who encounters them would say, they're Jesus followers and I want to know that Jesus. Now that's the case. For those of us who've lived around the world, we recognize that there may be different behaviors, different ways to structure relationships, different ways to think about time and how we engage one another, that accomplished that same purpose, were identified as followers of Christ and those around us want to know that Christ. If that's the case, then we come back into this whole idea of why Paul directed or why Jesus directed his disciples to live a certain way. And if we understand how those directions in that context identified those believers as

followers of Jesus and committed Christ to that community, then we have the same privilege to take that same dynamic and figure out how to live in a way that accomplishes those same two purposes. That's what those of us in the missions world call contextualization and to be quite frank, it's messy, it's messy, it's threatening. It has caused mission communities, missionaries to split from one another where they couldn't decide how they were to live out in a context that's so dramatically different than their own.

Dr. Don Payne: Because there's not going to be a standard template or what we used to call a boiler point.

Dr. Mark Young: Not at all. Exactly.

Dr. Don Payne: And what that has to look like.

Dr. Mark Young: Exactly, one of the big conversations for now, well over 150 years is, can a person have more than one spouse, whether we're talking about polygyny or polyandry. Polygyny was a, and continues to be a practice throughout the Arab world as well as in some parts of Central and East Africa. And so missionaries have been at odds over this question and you can go to the Bible, hey, it's in there. People had more than one spouse and then you can go, I won't say, wait a minute. You can only be the husband and wife. And so as a result, they come to the point where they no longer are living out the unity of the body of Christ because they're at odds with one another.

Dr. Don Payne: Okay. So this brings up a point of, a stuck point. Let me put it that way, in this conversation that we're, we're having a conversation about. And that is when, whenever a particular position on gender roles, particularly gender roles in ministry is made into a gospel issue, that is a conversation changer. And I've heard, that card played, that this is a gospel issue on both sides of the conversation. That elevates the conversation and in a way it kind of grinds it to a halt. And again, we're talking about the method of the conversation. What does it mean to have this conversation in the right kind of way so that we can, we can allow for areas where we're simply not going to perhaps see the text in the same way or see what the text is blind for us in our situation in the same way. Speak to that, if you will. What happens when we get the conversation wedged with that terminology? It's a gospel issue.

Dr. Lynn Cohick: I think the one, one of the things that the egalitarian camp often does is, it talks about things in terms of justice and that not having women in particular roles of authority in the church is a justice issue that needs to be addressed. This is taken I think from the Civil Rights Movement. And I think, you know, for the most part, most evangelicals are happy that women can vote in elections. That was a big justice issue back, you know, in the suffrage movement. I think most are happy that their daughters would earn the same wage as their sons if the work was equally done. So I think there are certain justice issues that both can agree on. But I think when it, when the quote unquote justice card is played, it does shut down conversations. So I would say from the egalitarian side,

sometimes justice can be used not to further the conversation, but to shut it down.

Dr. Mark Young:

That is very true, and gospel and inerrancy on the other side. Right? If you don't hold my view on these passages, then you don't believe the Bible. You don't believe in inerrancy. Or if you don't hold my views, actually I've seen this in print, if we don't agree to strict complementarian hierarchical view of gender roles, we will ultimately deny the gospel. I've seen that. That kind of conversation, that kind of language makes those who may have a different point of view really just say, well, I have nothing to say. You don't think I believe in the gospel. You don't think I believe in justice or that God is just then, I guess there's no more place for us to have a conversation and that's really what we want to avoid, isn't it? We don't want to put a person in a place where we're accusing them of denying something they believe in. What we really want to do is have a conversation where we can begin to probe what are the consequences of the positions that you're holding, so.

Dr. Lynn Cohick:

And I've wondered too often, why this is such an important issue for so many people. It's visceral, right? It's not, it is not a sprinkle or dunk kind of thing. Although I'm sure there are small groups for whom that is also visceral. But, this really is, and I think I, I've come to the conclusion that a lot of it is, it's this is a misnamed topic at times. We talk about it as, the woman's issue or the women in leadership issue. But to me it is as much about the question of what it means to be a man as it is what does it mean to be a woman? Because if you define what it means to be a man, as male equals authority, however you want to phrase that or parse that, then the opposite of that is someone who doesn't have authority and that would be the opposite would be female. So we, we kind of taken through the back door a very Aristotelian binary view of male and female and we baptize it, and say that somehow then if what it means to be male is having some sort of, as I say, authority or a leadership role or something along those lines. Then by definition that that women can't do that, and so when women do or when women ask for that, it really topples the whole house of cards but that's because I think we are importing Aristotelian view. Going back to Genesis, we find that that male and female are both created in God's image and they are to be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth, and to gently rule the earth. That should be our starting point.

Dr. Don Payne:

That makes me, go ahead Mark, you were going to.

Dr. Mark Young:

I was also going to add, it's important for us to say that more likely than not the majority of evangelicals worldwide do not struggle with this question. Actually as we look back into the history of our movement, even in the United States, the wing that comes from a more chiastic perspective from a more [inaudible] background from then develops into holiness and Pentecostal movements. Many, many, many of the denominations that flow out of that stream. I simply had men and women equally yoked together or equally engaged in leadership in their churches. So it really is only one part of that stream that flows out of the great awakenings. And then later 19th Century evangelicalism that begins to

tighten down and say, no, men can only do certain things and women can only do certain things. And globally, the primary presence of evangelicalism worldwide is in the Pentecostal tradition. Historically, the Pentecostal tradition has been far more open for women in leadership than the non Pentecostal tradition. So I think it's important for us to say that this is somewhat of a localized issue, in that one camp, not one camp, but one side of evangelicalism or one stream of evangelicalism is fighting wars over this. Well, most of evangelicalism likely isn't.

Dr. Don Payne:

Right. That's always curious when you go abroad and interact with evangelicals outside the US, they will sometimes look at you rather quizzically when you talk about the things you talk about, your own tribe and they'll say, and I've had this put to me by British evangelicalism. We don't even talk about that. Whether it's this issue or, or others, which does kind of put in perspective the relative gravitas or lack thereof, of the things that we can get incredibly spun up about. Lynn, I want to return to something you said about understanding what it means to be a woman or a man. And that makes me think, now, this may be disagreeable to some, but it may, it makes me think that in some respect, all Christians should be complementarian, but by that meaning what it means to compliment each other as women and men, and then be who God made us to be. Not in a generic gender neutral sense, but in an appropriately complimenting sense.

Dr. Lynn Cohick:

Yeah. I think that's, that's helpful. I think the language of complementarian in egalitarian, I think one level, I want to say yes to both, right? Because, excuse me. And I think that, that would be helpful, especially now when in our culture we're moving away from thinking about distinctives of male and female. Oh, there are biological differences between male and female. And I celebrate those, the culture celebrates this, I think through defining what's masculine and what's feminine, in each culture does that in particular ways. And in America we tend to do pink and blue. When I lived in Kenya, that wasn't the case. They didn't. And in other parts of the world, there's not a pink and blue kind of, so you have to know how your particular culture understands masculine and feminine. I think to think about how you then come together, and where I feel that at times women would feel frustrated is when sort of all the good and fun stuff is what men can do. And that's an overstatement, but it's kind of, if we were just different, but both were equally valued, that's great. And I think that's what you're talking about when we're different. And there's a lesser value placed on being on what is stuff that women do, women's work, that sort of thing. And it said with a sneer, not, not just descriptively. That's where I think that the frustration can come from women.

Dr. Don Payne:

Right. And it seems like from the vantage point of many complementarians I know, they're intelligent, informed, committed, from that particular interpretive angle. There is a fear and I think it's not unfounded. There is a fear that many egalitarian Christians are basically neutralizing gender and doing away with all of those important distinctives that you've mentioned, and a sort of chastened egalitarianism, like maybe a chastened, some chastened forms of

complementarianism would come at that conversation and their conclusions quite differently, I expect.

Dr. Lynn Cohick: Yeah. And I think again, it starts with, well, what do you think women could do or not do? And so I think that that's where there can be of that struggle. If you've already said that women, you know, shouldn't fly combat missions or shouldn't fly, you know, we're here at Denver, very close to the Air Force Academy and women now can fly, I don't know if they fly like combat missions or not, but they can fly aircraft. And I was just recalling this morning, Tammy Jo Schultz, I don't know if you remember the incident that happened last year. She was the captain of the Southwest Airlines flight 1380, that landed that plane safely, even after an engine covering had broken off. And depressurized the plane, there was a fatality. We don't hear too much about Tammy Jo. We hear all about, Captain Sculley and his miraculous landing of the plane on the Hudson. I don't want to take anything away from that. But I think we're less, for some reason we just don't want to celebrate Tammy Jo. Right. And her remarkable abilities to land that plane safely. And I think it's, I think I'd like to celebrate both. And if she's just as much of a captain and represents what women can do. And so let's just celebrate that.

Dr. Mark Young: I think part of the challenge we face of course, is we're living into a history, all of us are. And part of that history is the perception that something like honor or respect has a limited, there's a limited amount of that. So if there are.

Dr. Don Payne: Zero sum game, fixed commodity.

Dr. Mark Young: That's right. So there are cultures whereby if somebody else gets some of that honor, that means I get less. So those are called agonistic cultures. And so there's a constant fighting for that limited commodity. Whether that's money, whether that's honor, respect, whatever, and whether we want to admit it or not. There are some times where we think if someone else gets the honor, someone different than me, than somehow that diminishes my honor. By the way, there's no biblical justification for an agonistic approach to cultural values or to relationships. In fact, we're called to do the opposite. We're called to deny ourselves, to sacrifice for the honor and sake of others.

Dr. Don Payne: And those with power, those with authority are called to use that in particular ways. [inaudible].

Dr. Mark Young: Exactly right. You know, so Don, my vision, my prayer for Denver Seminary is that as we come together as a community, faculty, staff, students, trustees, recognizing that some of us hold different understandings to certain parts of scripture or have a different missiological justification for how we want to structure the relationships in our church or we start from a different theological perspective. I want us to have those conversations in a way that I can learn from people with whom I disagree. It is an impoverished knowledge that is not entertaining, opposite points of view. That's the cheapest way to pound on the table and say, I know this is true without asking the questions that those who

disagree with you are asking you to ask. So I want us to be willing to ask those questions and I want us to be willing to listen in ways that broaden our knowledge, increase the breadth and the depth of the positions that we hold. I think that's what seminary's for, so that cause, I always want to add that, so that we create communities of faith who are identified solely as followers of Jesus, a Jesus that others want to believe.

Dr. Lynn Cohick: And that might feel in the classroom, that might feel awkward at times for men and women who come from a more complementarian position and hear those men and women from an egalitarian position express their views. If you're not used to women voicing their opinions, then I think at times it can feel uncomfortable and you're not sure what to do. And so I'm saddened to hear, but I know that it happens here on the campus where some who called the complementarian view feel like they can't give their opinion. And I feel badly for that because we want to be a place that welcomes all conversations. I think that it's the way that we say it, we want to make sure that our positions stay at the theological and the missional level that we discuss our hermeneutics, that we recognize our theological anthropology that we bring in. And then we recognize that we live in a culture that is sexist to one degree or another. As all of that, as we recognize all of that, hopefully we'll be able to have conversations where those who have these two different views will welcome the comments of others because these are lived out views, right? I mean, we don't take a position on this, which means you'll have women egalitarians who are speaking up in class, and there might be a male or female complementarians for whom that just feels odd and discomfoting. And so we want Denver Seminary to be a place where we can work through that discomfort, not change somebody's mind necessarily, but just feel more comfortable and therefore build a stronger community.

Dr. Don Payne: How do we nurture that in the other direction as well? The discomfort that's going both ways.

Dr. Lynn Cohick: Oh, absolutely.

Dr. Don Payne: How we get at that?

Dr. Mark Young: Yeah. I think those who have experienced exclusion, for example, it's can sometimes see that exclusion in comments that are made or behaviors that take place where certainly that's not the intent. Now that doesn't excuse someone saying something just for being wrong. I mean saying something for the purpose of downgrading. But for there, there are times when someone will voice an opinion that touches that nerve for us, right? Because it's something that we've worked hard to overcome, that we believe. And then we take it in a way that's perhaps personal or we explode that comment into meaning more than it's actually intended. So we both have to kind of step back from our emotion as best we can. I know that's like, that's impossible, but to at least step back and say, I want to hear you. I really want to hear you. I want to know what you're saying. I want to understand it before I draw conclusions about why you're saying it.

Dr. Don Payne:

Well, this is one of the reasons that I likened this to that traverse between two mountain peaks. It's far easier not to even get on it to begin with. Right? And we know of schools and traditions and denominations that have chosen to take, you know, posture one way or the other. And that is far more convenient, far more, I don't know what the next word would be, but a more, more simple position. I don't, I don't mean simplistic, but a more simple way of going about it. And we've intentionally chosen not to do that so that we can be the kind of learning environment that's going to be unique and to help people center on what truly is non-negotiable, stable, those pylons, and to be able to learn and grow, not to abandon necessarily prior convictions, maybe to hold it and retain them, but for different and better reasons. Maybe to change them if the evidence warrants that and that's simply an uncomfortable place to be. That's a challenging a way forward as a Seminary. That's our commitment. And if you're listening to this, we want you to know that because that means that we're committed to being and we're willing to be an uncomfortable place. And Mark, you've said that a number of times, and I think that is a far more fertile learning environment, a far more fertile formational environment than simply sort of galvanizing and reifying one's position, so that you don't have to listen to those who think in a studied way differently than you do. Obviously this conversation needs to continue along with the, some of the broad based and the rigorous scholarship that extends beyond what each of us already have mastered. But I hope, and we hope with this conversation on Engage360, that we can push that conversation forward in a different way to learn to have the conversation in a more, not only productive but redemptive way rather than simply continuing the endless exegetical and theological ping pong that has marked the conversation for so long.

Dr. Lynn Cohick:

Because the world is watching. And that that is, I think that one of the driving forces for Denver Seminary's position, if we can show the world how to discuss something as important as this in a charitable way, staying to the truth, their Charitable Orthodoxy that is holding Scripture high, but submitting ourselves to one another in love. That's a powerful mission statement.

Dr. Don Payne:

Here, here. Lynn, Mark, thanks. Thanks again for both being here and for guiding us through some rather tough sledding on a tough topic as we move forward. This is Engage360, Denver Seminary. I'm Don Payne. Thanks for listening.