

A better half learns a better way

By Ed Fowler

The Gathering of Men is an organization of men, by men and for men. I went there to hear a woman speak.

Her name is Sandy Schultz and she told the all-male audience of how she had become a wife. Already married for several years, she had thought she had it figured out. She had read this stuff about submitting to her husband but relegated it to that pile of biblical idiosyncrasies we Christians keep out away from the house, like a compost heap.

She was a CPA and president of a company with more than 100 employees. Her marriage was in good shape. She knew she knew more than her husband about many shiny things. How very odd, this notion of submitting to him.

Then one day when she was with God he mentioned something. Submission to her husband was not, in the end, about her relationship with her husband but about her relationship with God. And so she changed course. Now she runs a Houston ministry called the Working Connection God uses to clean up ex-offenders and addicts and put them to work. And she is a true wife.

Now here was God, up to his old tricks again, using a woman to teach men how to be men. Hadn't he done the same some time back, using another plucky lady named Debra? I looked around the room and wondered how many he had sent to hear a prophetic word. It is an exquisite agony, this death to self. God, being God, allows men and women alike to experience it. It is how we are joined to his Son, who is our Lord. We have another word for it: salvation.

Asked if he was saved, Bishop Westcott said, "I was saved, I am being saved, I will be saved." So it goes.

Later in the day, I turned on my computer and learned that Gov. Huckabee, the candidate for president who had been a Baptist pastor, was taking fire for something he said some years back. He had agreed with the leadership of his denomination that wives should submit to their husbands.

Words spilled out from the pulpit, reverberating on the stump. The question intrudes: how to distill a 2,000-year-old faith down to a sound byte? The things of the Spirit are spiritually discerned. It is an exquisite agony, this death to self. It is how we are saved from the self, and for God, who is the Husband of us all.