

## God's Glass Ceiling *by Edward F. Sylvia, M.T.S.*

The term “glass ceiling” was made popular mostly during the women’s movement in the seventies to symbolize gender discrimination in the workplace. Women could see the corporate level above them but could not break through this transparent, yet “hard as glass” built-in barrier. Women who had equal abilities to men felt that they were competing in an unjust system based on an archaic model of male bias.

Now that this problem is getting somewhat remedied, and at a snail’s pace, we should also focus our ambitions on our eternal careers in the afterlife! This world beyond time and space has its own unique challenges when it comes to rising to the top!

God’s heavenly kingdom also has levels and glass ceilings. However, this hierarchical scheme is wonderfully just and applies equally towards all genders, races and religions.

According to the unique and profound visionary insights of scientist/theologian Emanuel Swedenborg, Heaven (and Hell) consists of three major divisions—one “above” the other. And there are glass ceilings between each one of them.

God’s Infinite Wisdom ceaselessly flows down through these levels into the minds of the spirits and angelic beings living there. Because each of these levels is transparent to the one below, those occupying the lower levels can discern and intellectually grasp much of the Divine Intelligence that the angels of the highest heaven enjoy, but cannot gain access to living there.

Why is this? Is God unjust? Isn’t heaven equal for everybody?

Swedenborg discovered that the human mind consists of two distinct functions—volition and discernment. One function represents the quality of the human heart and will, while the other represents the intellect, or quality of the understanding.

The Lord God designed the human mind this way so that an individual could grasp ideas and principles that are superior to his or her “worldly” and biological motives. Noble information, however, remains as mere data in the human memory if it is not acted on or implemented in one’s daily life. Even worse, this knowledge can be used to deceive others of our true intent (hidden agendas).

So, while different individuals can grasp similar ideas intellectually, their intent and volition will determine on which level these ideas take root. The heart must rise up to the level of the mind to be spiritually promoted.

What separates the angels in heaven from each other is not God favoring one group of individuals over others, but how individuals apply their knowledge. God loves everyone equally but not everyone responds equally (just as it is in the physical world). Some people are more inclined to be unselfish than others. When the Lord walked on earth He washed seemingly undeserving people’s feet—indicating that He was a servant to humanity and the “poster boy” for sincere humility.

So, even though there are glass ceilings in heaven, breaking through them requires strategies quite different from those used to obtain worldly ambitions. This is why the Lord uttered those curious words “But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first” (Matthew 19:30).

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