

Redeeming Peace: A Biblical Perspective on Women, Security, and Global Leadership

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Abstract

This article reexamines the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda through a biblical and theological lens, integrating scriptural imperatives with global policy objectives. Since the adoption of UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008), women have been increasingly recognized as essential contributors to sustainable peace. However, systemic barriers such as structural discrimination, limited access to education, and tokenistic representation persist. Drawing upon biblical concepts of justice (Micah 6:8), human dignity (Genesis 1:27), and godly leadership (Judges 4), this article argues that true peace requires the full inclusion of women as image-bearers of God and agents of redemptive change. Case studies from South Asia, the Middle East, and Africa are analyzed alongside biblical models of leadership, offering an integrative framework that aligns kingdom values with policy solutions.

Keywords: Women, Peace, Security, Biblical Justice, Gender Equality, Public Theology, Leadership, International Policy, Imago Dei, Shalom

Date of Submission: 09-07-2025

Date of acceptance: 23-07-2025

I. Introduction

The pursuit of peace and justice is central to both international policy and the Christian worldview. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) and its subsequent developments, particularly Resolution 1820 (2008), signaled a global shift by emphasizing the critical role of women in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. These efforts reflect a growing recognition that peace is not merely the absence of conflict but the presence of justice, inclusion, and human flourishing (Isaiah 32:17).

Yet, more than two decades later, women continue to be marginalized in formal peace processes, leadership roles, and security frameworks. According to UN Women (2023), women make up less than 5% of signatories in major peace agreements. This exclusion contradicts both empirical evidence and the biblical mandate to seek justice and uphold the dignity of every human being (Genesis 1:27; Proverbs 31:8-9).

This article explores five interconnected areas:

1. Women's participation in peace processes.
2. Ending impunity for violence against women (VAW).
3. Prevention through empowerment.
4. Intersectionality and inclusion.
5. Data-driven policies and biblical accountability.

These areas are examined through the theological frameworks of the **Imago Dei** (Genesis 1:26-27), **Redemptive Leadership** (Judges 4; Luke 4:18-19), and **Shalom** (Isaiah 32:17; Jeremiah 29:7), which collectively advocate for the full flourishing of all people through just structures and godly leadership.

I. Women's Participation in Peace Processes: A Biblical Mandate

Biblical leadership is not defined by gender but by calling, character, and obedience to God. Deborah (Judges 4–5) led Israel as both judge and prophet, guiding military and civic decisions with wisdom and authority. Her example illustrates that women have always played strategic roles in delivering peace and justice.

Research by UN Women indicates peace agreements are 35% more likely to endure when women are involved. However, structural discrimination—legal barriers, cultural norms, and educational gaps—continue to prevent meaningful inclusion. As Proverbs 31:9 commands, "Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy."

Policy Implications:

- Establish gender quotas in peace talks.
- Invest in education and leadership training for women in conflict zones.

- Reframe participation not as symbolic inclusion but as faithful stewardship.

Theoretical Anchor: This section is undergirded by **Redemptive Leadership Theory**, which emphasizes the godly appointment of women as peacebuilders and prophets within societal systems.

II. Ending Impunity for Violence Against Women: A Call for Justice

The biblical narrative consistently upholds protection for the vulnerable and condemnation of violence. In Genesis 34, the outrage over Dinah's violation underscores the seriousness of violence against women. Psalm 10:17-18 affirms God's commitment to defending the oppressed.

Yet in modern contexts, perpetrators of sexual violence in conflict zones often enjoy impunity. Whether in the DRC, Syria, or even post-conflict India, survivors face systemic failures in justice and accountability.

Policy Implications:

- Strengthen survivor-centered judicial mechanisms.
- Engage international tribunals in prosecuting wartime sexual violence.
- Encourage faith-based reconciliation and healing programs.

Theoretical Anchor: Drawn from **Biblical Justice through the Imago Dei**, this section affirms that all women are sacred image-bearers deserving justice, restoration, and safety.

III. Prevention Through Empowerment: Restoring Image-Bearers

Empowerment is not merely a policy tool but a theological imperative. As image-bearers (Genesis 1:27), women reflect God's creativity, wisdom, and strength. Economic empowerment initiatives, educational access, and civic engagement restore this agency.

Programs like India's Bell Bajao and Bangladesh's microfinance initiatives reveal the transformative potential of localized, gender-aware development. Biblical justice, as seen in Proverbs 31 and Ruth, values proactive restoration over passive charity.

Policy Implications:

- Fund education for girls in fragile states.
- Support women's economic self-sufficiency.
- Equip men and boys to model biblical masculinity that protects and honors women.

Theoretical Anchor: Empowerment efforts are consistent with **Shalom Theology**, which seeks human flourishing through holistic well-being, economic justice, and social peace.

IV. Intersectionality and Inclusion: Seeing the Whole Person

Jesus' ministry regularly uplifted marginalized women: the Samaritan woman (John 4), the bleeding woman (Luke 8), and Mary Magdalene (John 20). A biblical lens recognizes the compounded vulnerabilities experienced by women who are poor, displaced, disabled, or part of minority groups.

Intersectionality in policy must be more than a metric; it should be a missional commitment to full inclusion.

Policy Implications:

- Ensure representation of minority women in policy design.
- Provide faith-based trauma services tailored to vulnerable groups.
- Center survivor stories in research and policy recommendations.

Theoretical Anchor: Grounded in the **Gospel's Inclusive Ministry**, this section affirms Jesus' commitment to the least and the last in society.

V. Data-Driven Policies and Biblical Accountability

The Book of Numbers illustrates the value of data in organizing God's people, while Proverbs repeatedly extols wisdom and knowledge in leadership. Accurate, disaggregated data on VAW and women's inclusion is essential for accountability and transparency.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, violence against women surged, yet responses were hindered by lack of actionable data.

Policy Implications:

- Mandate gender-based data reporting.
- Fund longitudinal studies on women in peacebuilding.
- Apply biblical ethics of stewardship and truthfulness in data governance.

II. Conclusion

The Women, Peace, and Security agenda offers an opportunity for the global church and Christian policymakers to advance biblically grounded peace. When women lead, communities flourish. But inclusion must be rooted in a theology that honors every person as a bearer of God's image and a potential instrument of His justice.

Policy and theology must converge in this moment. We must act not only out of moral obligation but in obedience to the biblical mandate to "do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8).

Through redemptive leadership and faithful policy, the vision of Isaiah 32:17—"the fruit of righteousness will be peace"—can be realized in our time.

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