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Fashion Conference: Beauty that Enriches and Inspires

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in the lives of Canadian men and women.

Heather Ratzlaff, a professional image consultant, began with a discussion of the history and philosophy of beauty, which used to be considered a virtue until the Enlightenment, when a shift to the subjective in thought, perception, and ideas gradually led to distorted images and even the denial of the existence of objective truth, goodness and beauty. Darwin's theory of evolution also led to a significant and lasting change in man's perception of himself, Ratzlaff said. Forgetting that human beings are unique masterpieces of God, with the awesome capability of reflecting and transmitting beauty, people began to see themselves as helpless victims on the evolutionary cycle.

According to Ratzlaff, nowadays we cannot appreciate beauty because we

do not know how to think about it. To appreciate one's own beauty is considered narcissistic. While there is a fine line between caring for one's personal appearance and being vain, Ratzlaff said there is a radical difference, which becomes evident when we consider the true purpose of beauty.

Beauty is not meant only to be seen, but to enrich the lives of human beings by reflecting God's image in his creatures. If we make ourselves beautiful only to be looked at, then we are not fulfilling beauty's transcendent purpose. Beauty becomes a distraction, rather than an inspiration. In conclusion, Ratzlaff said that beauty causes us to acknowledge our small part in a much bigger world, and that we must shine as children of God and help others to do so.

The second speaker was Steve Frulling, the general manager of Freedman Shoes, a local chain of shoe stores. Frulling gave a preview of fashion trends in the coming fall and winter, as well as practical tips for women on how to use accessories effectively and thriftily, reminding them that only a few accessories in the latest style are necessary to look up-to-date. He also emphasized that confidence is a woman's most valuable accessory.

The lunch hour combined a buffet meal and a brief fashion show, with Heather Ratzlaff while women of various nationalities modeled outfits and accessories from local designers and boutiques. The conference concluded with a panel discussion. Ratzlaff and Frulling were joined by Rani Dee, a former model and actress who left the fashion world to pursue a university degree in commerce. She is now a wife and mother of

three young children with another
on the way.

by Maria Olaguera

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