

WOMEN AND CHURCH ELDERSHIP

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1. THE GENERAL MINISTRY OF ALL BELIEVERS

Every human being, regardless of age or gender, should be involved in serving God as a "minister" or *diakonos*. Rom. 13:4 & I Tim. 1:12 and esp. I Pet. 4:10-11. And every Christian person (at his or her baptism) has been anointed and appointed to the general ministry or office of all believers. See: Ex. 19:3-8; Num. 11:29; Joel 2:16,28-29; Acts 2:17,38-39; Matt. 28:18-19; I Cor. 12:13-20,26; Eph. 4:4-5,12-13,16; I Pet. 2:9. See too Martin Luther, as quoted in the Reformed Ecumenical Synod's *1968 Report*, p. 152; *Belgic Confession*, arts. 28 & 31; and *Heidelberg Catechism*, Q. & A. 32.

By virtue of this general ministry, all Christians are to be Christ's prophets and priests and kings. So all female Christians too are to be Christ's prophetesses and priestesses and queens in everything they do. I Pet. 3:7 & I Cor. 10:51 with Eccl. 3:1-13 & 5:18-20 & 9:7-10. See too Dr. F.N. Lee's *Principles of Biblical Church Government* (especially the section on "The Office of All Believers").

2. THE GENERAL MINISTRY OF ALL "SISTERS IN CHRIST"

Godly Christian women conscientiously occupying the general office of all believers, do wonderful work for the Lord and His people. One need only think of many of the very "elect ladies" mentioned in Scripture (cf. II John 1,5,13).

For Sarah was the very "mother" of all truly Christian women — even as regards Sarah's respectful obedience to her husband Abraham (cf. I Pet. 3:6 & Heb, 11:11). The penitent Rahab risked her very life to further the extension of God's Kingdom (Josh. 2 cf, Heb, 11:51 & Jas, 2:25). Under the blessed influence of her godly mother-in-law Naomi, Ruth even abandoned her own nationality — in order to become an ancestress of Jesus (Matt. 1 & Ruth chs. 1 to 4). And Esther Queen of Persia risked even her own dethronement — rather than not protest the persecution of the people of God (Est. 4:14-6).

Moreover, Mary the mother of Jesus gladly accepted the slander of evil men in exchange for the great privilege of bearing the Saviour in her own body. Luke 2:34-38 & John 8:18-42. Too, Mary Magdalene and Johanna and Susanna and many other women "ministered" to the Lord Jesus with their possessions and through their services — both during His lifetime and after His death. Luke 8:2-3 & 23:56 to 24:10. Both the female tentmaker Priscilla and the wealthy businesswoman Lydia placed their homes at the disposal of Paul and other preachers. Acts 16:14,15,40 & 18:2-26. And Timothy's mother Eunice and grandmother Lois gave that dedicated preacher his first infant groundings in the God-breathed Scriptures which they themselves had absorbed. II Tim. 1:5 & 3:14-17 cf, I Tim, 2:15 & Tit, 2:4-5.

3. THE TRIPLE MINISTRIES OF THE SPECIAL OFFICES

Yet in addition to the above GENERAL office or ministry of all male and female believers, there are also three SPECIAL offices or ministries. These all seem to root in the munus triplex or triple office of the man Christ Jesus' prophethood and kingship and priesthood. And these three special church offices are: the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments; the Ruling Eldership; and the Diaconate. Cf. F.N. Lee's *Principles of Biblical Church Government*, and especially the sections "What Is A Church Office?" and "The Triune God and the Triune Office." Cf. Luke 4:18.

4. THE DIACONATE AND DEACONESSES

As regards the Diaconate, it is clear that all of the first New Testament Deacons were males, even though elected to care for neglected widows. Acts 6:1-8 cf. I Tim. 3:12. Yet even in apostolic times, it would seem that certain qualified Christian ladies helped the male Deacons — in the ladies' own AUXILIARY ministry as what were soon called 'DEACONESSES'. Cf. I Tim, 3:8-11 & 5:9-11 & Rom. 16:1-2 with Pliny's mention of a *diaconissa* or "deaconess" in his A.D. 112 *Epistle to Trajan*.

Now the same Paul who mentions "the women" qualified to help the male Deacons in I Tim. 3:8-11 (and probably again in 5:5-16 where they would seem to be mature women and especially diligent widows 60 years old and above), also describes "our sister" Phebe not only as a patroness or "a helper of many" but also as "a *diakonos* of the church at Cenchrea." Rom. 16:1-2. Again, in the church at Lydda, Peter encountered the woman Tabitha or Dorcas who, by making "coats and garments" for impoverished widows, helped them in a similar way to the manner in which the first all-male Deacons did. Acts 9:56,59,41 cf. 6:1-8.

Not only the male Deacons but so too the "women" or *gunaikes* who obviously helped them, were to be faithful in their tasks of: caring for widows and orphans; showing mercy to the sick; providing all hospitality; and succouring many. Yet those womenfolk were to do so **unloquaciously**. I Tim. 2:9-11 & 3:8-11 cf. 5:3-16 & Jas, 1:27 & Rom. 12:4-13 & 16:1-2.

5. CALVIN ON DEACONESSES

The above-mentioned passage Rom. 12:4-8 refers to Christian OFFICES — one of which "shows mercy." Calvin comments here that this means the offices of "widows and other ministers who were appointed to take care of the sick, according to the custom of the Ancient Church." Elsewhere (see his *Institutes* IV:3:9), Calvin further declares that this same passage — Rom. 12:4-8 & 12:9-15 — includes references to "those who had devoted themselves to the care of the poor and the sick. Such (very devoted caretakers) were the widows of whom he (Paul) makes mention in the *Epistle to Timothy* (I Tim. 5:10). For there was no public office which women could discharge [in the Apostolic Church] save that of elevating themselves to the service of the poor."

In his *Commentary on First Timothy* (5:9), Dr. Calvin refers to "widows at the age of sixty who serve the church as long as their health permits them to do so." Indeed, in

his *Institutes* (IV:13:19), while discussing I Tim. 5:9-12, he states that "Deaconesses were appointed...to perform the public ministry of the Church towards the poor.... They did...vow celibacy...only that they might be free from encumbrance in executing their office."

6. THE QUESTION: WOMEN AS ELDERS?

The question now arises as to whether Scripture, in addition to authorising and encouraging qualified Christian ladies to undertake the aforementioned AUXILIARY ministry as DEACONESSES — also authorises and encourages dedicated women to minister even in the RULING OFFICE(S). Should exemplary elect ladies ever be encouraged or permitted to become either Ruling Elders or Preaching Elders?

7. EVIDENCE FROM CREATION

Now at CREATION, the Lord made both man and woman together to rule or to have dominion over all of the other creatures (Gen. 1:26-28). God did not, however, create woman to rule over man. To the contrary, He created the woman to be ruled by the man (I Cor. 11:3,7-10). Indeed, God made woman in order that she should be man's AUXILIARY help "an help meet for him" or as an '*ezer k^enegdoo* or an auxiliary alongside of him (Gen 2:18-25 cf. I Cor. 11:7,9).

For God did not create the man for the woman. To the contrary, God created the woman for the man. I Cor. 11:9. And man is not the image and glory of the woman. To the contrary, woman is the glory of the man. I Cor. 11:7. And woman is not the head of man. To the contrary, the head of the woman is the man. I Cor. 11:3. For God first formed the 'male' or the *zaakaar* (alias 'the one who pierces actively') — and only later fashioned or manufactured the 'female'; that is, the *n^eqeebaah* (alias 'the one who gets pierced passively'). Gen. 1:27 & I Tim. 2:13.

8. EVIDENCE FROM THE FALL

Moreover, AFTER THE FALL, woman's subjection to man was intensified. For God then told her: "You shall be subject to your husband, and he shall rule over you." Gen. 3:16. Of course, in Christ, the two sexes are both fully "heirs together of the grace of life." I Pet. 3:1-7. And even outside of Christ, the two genders cannot properly function without one another. Cf. I Cor. 11:11-12. Indeed, the sexes are both equally saveable. For both "male" and "female" are "one IN CHRIST" (Gal. 3:26). Yet this does not in any way eliminate their functional DIFFERENCES.

Indeed, PARTICULARLY amongst Christians, the wife is to be in subjection to her own husband — AND the female gender-as-such is to be under the protection and rule of the male gender, in the Lord. Cf. I Cor. 1:2 & 11:2-10 & 14:34f. & Eph. 5:22f. & Col.3:18 & I Tim. 2:2-5,11 to 3:5. Now because especially Christian wives are to be subject "to their own husbands in everything", they must obviously also be subject to their own husbands even in Church Leadership (as part of that "everything"). This clearly precludes the Christian wives from becoming either Ruling Elders or Preaching Elders. Eph. 5:22-24 cf. I Tim. 2:11 to 3:5. And if even UNMARRIED

women are to be subject to men while the former are in CHURCH — it is clear that unmarried women too may neither rule over nor preach to the men in the Church. I Cor. 11:3-13 cf. 14:29-35 cf. 7:36-37 & Num. 36:1-12 & Judg. 11:34-39.

9. THE OLD TESTAMENT ELDERSHIP

THROUGHOUT the Bible the norm was and is CHURCH GOVERNMENT by MALE Elders ALONE. In Old Testament times, the Elders were always males. Gen. 24:2f.; Ex. 18:12,21,25; Deut. 1:13-16; 21:19-21; 22:15-21; I Kgs. 8:1f.; II Chr. 5:2f.; *etc.* One should note that the "Elders" mentioned in Ezra. 10:7-16 are all 'bearded ones' or *z^eqeeniyim*. And we should further note in the celebrated Prov. 31:10-23 that it is not the "virtuous woman" but rather her "husband" that "sits among the Elders" (or *z^eqeeniyim*).

Even Lapidoth's wife, the brave Deborah, who judged (*shoof^taah*) the Israelites during a time of great religious unmanliness and national apostasy, did not act — and unless she had a 'beard' could not have acted — as an Elder (or *zaqeen* alias 'a bearded one'). To the contrary, she "sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam" (who either had or could have grown a beard) himself to lead God's armies against the Canaanites. For she rightly protested against herself being asked to do Barak's job for him. Judg. 4:1-9,16f. See too section 14 below. Compare also Isaiah's infallible rebuke to Judah that women ruled over that land in his own day — and were leading God's people into error. Isa. 3:12.

10. ELDERSHIP AT CHRIST'S INCARNATION

When Christ came, in New Testament times, the *Sanhedrin* councils or kirk sessions and presbyteries were still composed only of male Elders (Matt. 5:22 cf. Luke 20:1). There should be no doubt at all — especially not to Presbyterians — that Christ's New Testament Church "steps into the shoes" of Christ's Old Testament Church. Cf. Acts 7:58 & Rom. 11:16 & *Westminster Confession* 7:5-6 & 25:2. So, even the (all-male) New Testament Eldership of Christ's New Testament Church (I Tim. 3:1-5 cf. Tit. 1:5-7) is essentially a continuation of the (all-male) Old Testament Eldership of Christ's Old Testament Church (Deut. 17:6 & 19:15-17 cf. Matt. 18:16-17 & I Tim. 5:17-19; Num. 11:11-24f. cf. Luke 10:1f,17f & Acts 11:25-30; cf. the use of the word *presbuteerion* meaning 'presbytery' in Luke 22:66 as well as in I Tim. 4:14.)

11. THE ELDERSHIP IN THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

So, the New Testament too — which regards the *Episkopos*-Bishop as referring to just the same special office or ministry as does the *Presbuteros*-Elder (of Acts 20:17,28 & Tit. 1:5,7) — insists on an ALL-MALE ELDERSHIP. "If a man desire the office of a Bishop, he desires a good work. A Bishop, then, must be blameless, the husband of one wife...; one that rules well his own house well, having his children in subjection.... For if a man knows not how to RULE his own house[hold] — how shall he take care of the Church of God?" (I Tim. 3:1-4.)

"Ordain Elders in every city, as I had appointed you — if any be blameless, the husband of one wife!" Tit. 1:5-6. "Let the Elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honour; especially they who labour [as Preachers alias Teaching Elders] in Word and Doctrine! ... Do not lay hands suddenly [in ordination to the Eldership] on any man!" I Tim. 5:17,22.

Consequently, godly widows no longer subject to the household rule of a deceased husband, may perhaps well qualify for a ministry as Deaconesses. Cf. I Tim. 3:11 & 5:9-11 with Rom. 16:1-2. But they can never Biblically qualify as Elders — even if only for the reason that they never have been, nor ever could be, the required "husbands of one wife."

12. PREACHERS ARE ELDERS (WHO TEACH)

Now the Bible in general and Presbyterians in particular insist that 'Ministers of the Word and Sacraments' are 'Teaching Elders'. I Tim. 5:17-19 cf. II Tim. 2:2 & Tit. 1:4 to 3:1. So it must necessarily follow that whereas women cannot Biblically qualify to be Elders-in-general — they obviously cannot Biblically qualify either, to be Teaching Elders or Preachers-in-particular.

For Teaching Elders or Preachers must not only rule over their own wives and children in their own homes. And Preachers must not merely rule with all of the other Elders together in the Kirk Session and Presbytery. Ps, 107:32; Prov. 31:23; Acts 14:23; I Tim. 3:1-5; 4:14; 5:17-19. But in addition, the Preachers or Teaching Elders must also be able to teach — and be licensed to teach the WHOLE Congregation. I Tim. 4:14-16 & 5:17-22 & Heb. 13:7,17,25. However, by virtue of their gender and function, women are Biblically UNLICENSABLE. because inherently DISQUALIFIED from doing precisely that — as shown in sections thirteen to twenty-two below.

13. PROPHESYING WOMEN LIKE MOSES' SISTER MIRIAM

It is true that God did occasionally raise up godly persons as 'prophesing women' — such as Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, Anna, and Mrs. Isaiah. Yet He much more frequently raised up godly MEN as Prophets — such as Noah, Moses, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Judas, Silas, and Agabus, *etc.*

However, even while those prophetic gifts were still being exercised, this prophetic gifts of the female 'prophesing women' were being employed differently than were the prophetic gifts of male Prophets. For those prophesying women, even while they were prophesying, were always to be careful to signify their submission to the male rulership principle.

Thus, the prophesying woman Miriam — the first prophesying woman ever mentioned in the Bible — led only the women of Israel to praise the Lord. Ex 15:20-21. Nor are we ever told that Miriam was formerly installed into the prophetic office

— as the male 'Seers' or 'Prophets' were, and as *e.g.* Elisha was (I Sam. 9.9 & I Kgs. 19:16-21).

Significantly, when she later unrighteously sought to usurp Moses' leadership, Miriam (and not even Aaron her co-instigator) was smitten with leprosy — until the Prophet Moses prayerfully secured her restoration (Num. 12:1-5). Again, we need not spend any time dealing with "false-prophetesses" like Noadiah and "that woman 'Jezebel'" — for reasons that should be obvious (Neh. 6.14 & Rev. 2.20).

14. THE "PROPHESYING WOMAN" DEBORAH

We have already seen that Mrs. Deborah Lapidoth (Judg. 4:4a), who 'judged' Israel (Judg.4:4b), was not an "Elder" (see section nine above). As a "Non-Elder" — Deborah was neither a "Ruling Elder" nor a "Teaching Elder" alias a "Preacher" (I Tim. 5:17). We are never told that Mrs. Lapidoth ruled in the sanctuary, but merely that "the children of Israel came up to her for judgment" (*mishpot*) alias for advice — and not to a law-court but to a "palm-tree" at "the place where she dwelt" (Judg. 4:5).

Again, we are not told that Mrs. Lapidoth ever "preached" (and still less that she ever preached in the sanctuary). We are merely told that she was a "prophesying woman." Even later, she did not preach but merely "sang" — sang a duet with "Barak the son of Abinoam" to celebrate his victory as one of the (**male**) "governors of Israel" whom God had commanded and whom Deborah had encouraged to "lead" the Lord's armies (Judg. 5.1,9,12).

15. OLD TESTAMENT PROPHESYING WOMEN LIKE HULDHA

The *n^ebiy'aah* in Isa. 8:3 seemingly refers to Mrs. Isaiah, alias the wife of the Prophet (thus Calvin & Alexander). In II Kgs. 22:12-16f, the prophesying lady Huldah, alias Mrs. Shallum (*haan^ebiy'aah 'esheth Shallum*) — not in the sanctuary but in her own dwelling — told her visitors HiIkiyah and his party to go and "tell the men [from Josiah] who sent you to me" what the Lord had told her to get conveyed to Josiah.

Huldah did not herself go and prophesy to Josiah. Still less did she go and prophesy to the whole congregation in public. She prophesied privately in her home, and then told hier listeners to go and repeat to the king what they had heard her say.

Note too that Deborah, the Isa. 8.3 *n^ebiy'aah*, and Huldah — are always explicitly or implicitly named Mrs. Lapidoth, Mrs. Isaiah, and Mrs. Shallum respectively. Note further that their husbands are never referred to as "Mr. Deborah" and "Mr. Huldah" *etc.* Note too that Mrs. D. Lapidoth and Mrs. Isaiah and Mrs. H. Shallum never prophesied in the sanctuary, nor even in public. And note finally that none of these ladies is ever said to have been ordained and installed in the office of "Prophet" (nor even in the office of "Elder").

16. NEW TESTAMENT PROPHETESSES LIKE ANNA (AND PHILIP'S FOUR DAUGHTERS)

Anna the prophesying woman (*propheetis*) gave her witness for the Lord in the outer courts of the city of Jerusalem (Luke 2:38). She did not preach from a pulpit, nor in a gathering of a synagogue or a church — as did the male Prophets Ezra and Jesus and Paul. Neh. 8:4f; Luke 4:15-20; Acts 13:14f. Too, the words "your daughters shall prophesy" in Acts 2:17 do not imply preaching sermons — but simply mean that young ladies would forthtell God's messages in word or in music or in song, whether instrumentally or orally. Cf. I Chr. 25:1-6 & I Cor. 11:3-5.*

Consequently, it follows that also Evangelist Philip's four "prophesying" virgin daughters doubtlessly exercised their prophetic gift. in the manner just described* — and possibly even only at home. Acts 21:8-9. We are never told they had been ordained as 'Prophets'— nor that they prophesied publically.

To the contrary, as Rev. Dr. John Owen rightly comments: "It is not said that they were 'prophetesses'" but only that these four daughters of Evangelist Philip were 'prophesying' virgins (*thugateres tessares parthenoi propheetousai*). We are NOT told that they 'were prophets' (or *propheetai eesan*) as *e.g.* in the case of those mentioned in Eph. 4.11. Nor are we even told that they 'were prophetesses' (or *propheetides eesan*) as *e.g.* in Luke 2:36. Nor are we told "they began to prophesy" (or *propheeteumon*) — as did those described in Acts 19:6.

No! We are simply told that they were "prophesying...daughters" (or *thugateres...propheetousai*). Acts 21.9 cf. 2.17. No wonder, then, that not Philip's four prophesying daughters resident in Caesarea but only the **male** Prophet Agabus was sent all the way from Judaea specially to prophesy to Paul in public even in Caesarea. Acts 21:10-12. Moreover, the Lord Himself commanded even in the Newer Testament that — unlike the male Prophets — suitably gifted ladies (even while prophesying) were visibly to signify their submission to the God-given principle of male rulership and headship, by wearing on their heads a sign of their submission to male leadership. Cf. I Cor. 1:2 & 11:3-10,17f.

17. THE PROPHESYING WOMEN IN I CORINTHIANS 11:5

Now this congregational "prophesying" of certain or all of the Christian ladies at Corinth, may simply be referring to 'prophesyingly' playing musical instruments or singing the 'prophetic' psalms or singing in choirs in the worship services. I Cor. 11:3-10 cf. I Chr. 25.1-6 & II Chr. 35:25 & Ezra 2:65 & Ps. 68:18-26 & Eph. 4:7f & Col. 5:16-18. But even if I Cor. 11:3-10 is referring instead to spoken public testimony (cf. Acts 2:17 & Joel 2:16,28-29), these prophesying Christian ladies were still required — even while prophesying — to signify their submission to male leadership in the Church. I Cor. 11:3-10 cf. 14:25-35 & I Tim. 2:5-15.

Naturally, different rules entirely apply *a fortiori* to the different task of PREACHING! For in both Old and New Testament times, PREACHING (or *keerussein*) — not to be confused with the different work of "evangelizing" to be done by every member of the Church — was undertaken, and is to be undertaken, ONLY by qualified MALES. Cf. I Pet. 3:19 & II Pet. 2:5; Ezra cbs. 9-10 cf. Neh. 8:1-8 &

6:7; Matt. 3:1 & Mark 1:4 & 5:19-20; Luke 4:18-19; Acts 13:15f. & 20:20f; I Tim. 2:7; II Tim. 1:11 & 4:2,5. Cf. too, once again, F.N. Lee's *Principles of Biblical Church Government*, and especially the section on "The Ministry of the Word."

18. WOMEN IN CHURCH TO TEACH ONLY WOMEN AND CHILDREN

It is, of course, quite true that Christian women, though never to preach or *keerussein* — are indeed to be encouraged to teach (or *didaskain*). Indeed, they are to teach children. Prov. 1:8; 3:3; 6:20; 31:1-9. Too, they are further to teach other women. For Paul inspiredly insists that "the aged women" are to be "teachers of good things, [in order] that they may teach the young women to be sober; to love their husbands; to love their children; to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands — so that the Word of God be not blasphemed." Tit. 2:3-5.

Married women too need to be instructed — by Preachers like Timothy and by *Diakono*i like Phebe — to "guide the(ir) house" alias to supervise their home. I Tim. 5:9-18 cf. Rom. 16:1-2. But the very same Paul who inspiredly wrote this, also inspiredly wrote and insisted that Christian "women keep silence in the churches (or meetings of the whole congregation). For it is not permitted them to speak" or to utter judgments about the messages, during the worship of the Congregation. "But they are commanded to be under obedience (or in subjection to male leadership), as also saith the Law [Gen. 2:18-25 & 3:16 & Isa. 3:12 & I Tim. 2:11-15].... For it is a shame for women to speak in the church!" I Cor. 14:29-35.

19. THE "WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT" IN ANCIENT PAGAN SOCIETY

Yet however submissive they may have been in earlier times, heathen woman were NOT AT ALL silent in public in the pagan Greco-Roman culture of the first century A.D. Indeed, by New Testament times pagan women were constantly usurping the male leadership position. And they were doing this not only in their homes (cf. Eph. ch. 5 & Col. Ch. 3 & I Pet. ch. 3), but also especially in their idolatrous heathen religious practices.

On this, just compare Euripides' "gunocracy" and the "Pythoness" oracle of Delphi and the priestess of the goddess Diana at Ephesus — with Acts 16:16-21 & 19:24-35 & Rev. 2:20. Cf. too Balsdon's *Roman Women*; Hurley's *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective*; Lacey's *Family in Classical Greece*; Braunstein's *Political Activities of Greek Women*; Leipoldt's *Women in the Ancient World and in Primitive Christianity*; Pickett's *Epigraphic Texts on the Social History of the Greek World*; and Schneider's *Cultural History of Hellenism*. Indeed, even the famous Pre-Christian Pagan-Greek playwright Euripides during the fifth century B.C. had already popularised the emancipation of women for every theatre-goer — so that even some of the worldlier Christian woman in Corinth rejected male headship and, together with some of the like-thinking men, propagated even in the Church too the same levelling attitude they had become used to in their surrounding pagan society.

20. PAGAN "WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT" ENTERS THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH

It was under the worldly influences of the pagan Greco-Roman culture, then, that some of the Christian women — with the unfortunate approval even of some of their backslidden Christian menfolk — had apparently started preaching and ruling even in the churches. I Cor. 14:29-35 cf. I Tim. 2:9-15. Using his apostolic authority, Peter apparently condemned this. I Pet. 3:1-6 cf. 5 :1-4.

The Apostle Paul too wrote what he did, NOT (as some somewhat syncretistically assume) in a 'brave' attempt to bring the Apostolic Church's practices into line with the allegedly "restrictive" paganistic practices of then-current Gentile society outside the Church — in order to make it easier for the Gentile Pagans to identify with the Gentile Christians inside the Corinthian Church. No!

To the contrary, Paul wrote what he did — precisely in order to encourage the Gentile churches to DISengage from the actually "UNrestrictive" or LOOSE pagan practices they had sadly fallen into. For the Church at Corinth and elsewhere — just like very many churches today — had fallen into the unbiblical trap of the "women's emancipation movement" of the surrounding pagan society, with all of its truly heathen prophetesses and priestesses. Acts 16:16-21 & 19:24-35 cf. Rev. 2:20 & Neh. 6:14 *etc.*

21. PAUL'S MEASURES AGAINST "WOMEN'S LIBERATION" IDEAS IN THE CHURCH

Paul found it necessary, under divine inspiration, TO COMMAND ALL of the Christian men and women that were doing so, to cease allowing women to preach and to rule in the congregation — lest the turmoil and confusion already there, should worsen. Immediately, then, after issuing this divine prohibition — Paul adds, and not without sarcasm (I Cor. 14:36): "What? Did the Word of God come forth FROM you? Or did it not only come TO you?!"

Here, the inspired apostle means that the guidelines for preaching and for ruling and for congregational worship can never come forth FROM Christians themselves — as if their own whims, whether male or female (*humas monous*), under the influence of the surrounding pagan spirit of the times (and whether aware of this or not), should ever be allowed to direct worship practices. To the contrary, the worship practices of the congregation, no matter how strong the surrounding pagan spirit of the times, must be shaped only by the Word of God which comes TO the worshippers — and FROM God. I Cor. 14:36.

Accordingly, women are not to rule or to lead or to preach in Christian congregational worship — no matter how much women do lead and instruct in the surrounding pagan society of the time. Rather are Christian women — and especially those confused men in the congregation who might otherwise permit the women to lead and to preach — to "acknowledge that the things which I [*viz.* the Apostle Paul] am writing unto you, are Commandments of the LORD." I Cor. 14:36.

For even when merely praying in the congregation, women are to do so only in ways that clearly signify their acknowledgement of male leadership in the worship services. I Cor. 11:3-10,15. This is the thin end of the wedge. Where this requirement is transgressed — greater errors are sure to follow.

22. THE THEOLOGICAL REASONS FOR WOMAN'S ECCLESIASTICAL STATUS

Elsewhere, the inspired Paul brings all of the above together into one short passage where he gives two good reasons for the need of folk to subject themselves in the churches to the rule and the instruction of the male Elders and Preachers. These reasons are: the reason of the creation order, and the reason of our still-enduring fallen condition. See sections seven and eight above.

Writes Paul: "Let the women learn in silence with all subjection! For I do not permit a woman to teach. NOR to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence! For Adam was formed FIRST — THEN Eve." This first reason is that of the CREATION order.

Continues the Apostle Paul: "And Adam was not deceived; but the woman, being deceived, was in the transgression." This second reason is that of our still-enduring FALLEN condition. "Notwithstanding, she shall be saved" — Paul nevertheless adds. I Tim. 2:11-14.

23. GODLY ACTIONS OF EXCEPTIONAL WOMEN ONLY PROVE THE BIBLICAL RULE

It is sometimes objected that women ordained as Preachers and/or Elders have often been a very great blessing to the church — especially in situations where Christian men are rare or unspiritual. We have already dealt with the important examples of Miriam and Deborah — and seen that they were neither Preachers nor Elders. Cf. sections thirteen and fourteen above.

Furthermore, though the gentlewoman Abigail was undoubtedly much wiser and godlier than her crude and foolish husband Nabal — this greater wisdom did not make her either a Preacher or an Elder. Cf. I Sam. 25:3-37. So too, although Zipporah's action in herself circumcising her infant son did indeed save his father Moses' life — this does not detract from the fact that not Zipporah but Moses should have administered that Sacrament. Ex. 4:21-26 cf. John 7:22 & I Cor. 4:1. Indeed, all of these quaint and exceptional cases — only serve to prove the Biblical rule.

24. BUT HASN'T GOD BLESSED SOME WOMEN APPOINTED PREACHERS OR ELDERS?

Certainly God has blessed, and will bless, any man or woman for doing what the Lord WANTS him or her to do — even if he or she may in addition sinfully do what the Lord has forbidden him or her to do. Cf. Rom. 5:20. Hence, God blessed Sarah for her overall obedience to Him (Heb. 11:11-13 & I Pet. 3:5-6) — even although He

surely did not bless her for her very impetuous actions in insisting that her husband Abraham sleep with her own slavewoman Hagar; nor for Sarah's audaciously laughing at the Lord, and then denying it. Gen. 16:2-6 & 18:10-15.

On the other hand, it must not be forgotten that God punished the otherwise godly woman Miriam when she exceeded her legitimate functions as a prophesying woman — when in her misplaced zeal she tried to usurp Moses' office too. Num. 12:1-13. Nor should it be forgotten how God also punished the otherwise godly king Uzziah when he exceeded his legitimate "kingly" functions by attempting to usurp the priestly office in his misplaced zeal. II Chr. 26:3:21. For God's Word is clear in all such cases: "Has the Lord as great a delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices — as in [the] OBEYING [of] the voice of the Lord? Behold, to OBEY is better than to bring a sacrifice." I Sam. 15:22.

25. THE MANY APPROVED LABOURS OF WOMEN IN THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

Now outside of a congregation's worship services, there are PLENTY of wonderful and God-pleasing opportunities for elect ladies to work for the Lord. Thus, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus and Salome were privileged to tell the Apostles that Jesus had risen from the dead, even though not those women but only the all-male Apostles and their male ordinands themselves were to preach the Gospel and to administer the Sacrament of Baptism. Mark 16:1,7-10,13-16 cf. Matt. 28:1,7,16-19.

Again, Aquila and his wife Priscilla invited the mighty Preacher Apollo out of the synagogue and into their own home — where they both explained (*exethento*) the Christian religion to him more acutely. Acts 18:26. Too, the godly women Euodia and Syntyche laboured together in the Gospel (*en too; Euangelioo; suneethleesan*) with Paul and with Clement and with others. Phil. 4:3.

Further, Paul asked the Romans to remember him to a whole host of godly women, including: Phebe, the servant or *diakonos* of the church; Priscilla, his helper or *sunergos*; Mary, "who bestowed much labour (*polla ekopiasen*) on us"; Junia, his kins(wo)man; the ladies "Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour (*kopioosas*) in the Lord"; "the beloved Persis, who laboured. much (*teen agapeeteen heetis polla ekopiasen*) in the Lord"; Rufus' "mother, and mine"; and Julia; as well as Nereus' sister. Rom. 16:1,3,6,7,12,13,15.

26. ONLY MEN QUALIFY FOR MALENESS NEEDED BY CHURCH ELDERS & PREACHERS

Yet the people of God's Teaching and Ruling Elders, according to the Bible, were and are to be chosen from qualified males alone. There is no evidence any of the sixty-six books of the Bible was written by a woman. But there is overwhelming evidence that most if not all were definitely written by men.

The seventy Teaching Elders that Christ sent out to preach the Gospel two by two, were apparently all men. Luke 10:1-9 cf. 9:1-6 & Num. 11:16,25. All twelve of the

Patriarchs of Israel, were men. Gen, 49 & Deut. 33. All twelve of the Apostles of Jesus, were men — and men alone. Matt. 10 & Mark 6.

Moreover, at the election of the Apostle Judas' replacement, in the presence not merely of the male disciples but also in the full presence of the elect ladies such as "the women and the mother of Jesus" — it was not from among those women but only from among "these men which had communed" with the eleven remaining Apostles, that those Spirit-inspired men prayed that a new twelfth Apostle should be added. Acts 1-13-16,21,26.

Later, the Apostle John — also under divine inspiration — rebuked the congregation of Thyatira in the Presbytery of Asia Minor for allowing the self-styled 'prophetess' (*sic*) Jezebel to TEACH as well as to mislead even Christ's own servants. Rev. 2:20. Indeed, if anyone adds the acceptability of 'Women Preachers' to the text of that *Book of Revelation* (22:18) — God will add to that person the plagues that are written about in that Book.

Recently, many of the false-prophets and false-prophetesses of our own day — who start off by boldly demanding that the Eldership and the Preaching Ministry be opened up for women — soon end up by demanding also that God be referred to not only as "Our Father" and "He" but more significantly even as "our Mother" and "She." Cf. the Emswilers' book *Women and Worship: A Guide to Non-Sexist Hymns. Prayers. and Liturgies* (New York, Harper & Row, 1974, pp. 81-84). Well may one wonder just how long it will be before it is further demanded that Christ Himself should at least sometimes be referred to as God's Only-begotten DAUGHTER. Indeed, some feminist "theologians" even now wear crucifixes with their naked Saviouress Christa idolatrously draped around their necks.

27. LUTHER AND CALVIN AND KNOX ON THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN

However, according to Scripture, Christ is the Bridegroom and His Church is His bride and wife. Rev. 21:2,9 cf. 19:7 & II Cor. 11:2. Similarly, "the Head of every man, is Christ; and the head of woman, is man." For "man...is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man." See: I Cor. 11:3,7. So too, "the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head. of the Church." Eph. 5:25. Yet the general priesthood/priestesshood of all believers — should never be confused with the special priesthood of qualified males alone. Heb 5:4 cf. 13:7,17,24f.

So, according to the Scripture-obeying Martin Luther, the glorious doctrine of the "general priesthood of all believers" should never be used to try to equate the "manly and divine priesthood" of the special ecclesiastical office(s) with a "satanic superstitious female priesthood" of unscriptural female special officers. Thus the 1968 *Reformed Ecumenical Synod's Report*, p. 152. Indeed, according to Holy Scripture, only males may qualify for the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments. I Tim. 2:12-13.

So, according to the Scripture-obeying John Calvin (in his *Commentary* on I Cor. 14:34-37), "the task of teaching is one that belongs to someone with oversight, and is for this reason inconsistent with being in subjection. For how unsuitable it would be for a woman who is in subjection to one of the Members [namely her believing

husband] to be in an. authoritative position over the whole body!" Accordingly, insists Dr. Calvin, "if the authorities establish the practice of baptism by women — this must be resisted, even unto blood!" *Corpus Reformatarum*, X:625.

According to Scripture, only males may qualify for the Office of the Ruling Eldership. I Tim. 3:1-5. So, according to the Scripture-obeying Rev. John Knox, government by women is "a deviation from the original and proper will of God to which the Gentile is no less bound than was the Jew." See B. Percy: *John Knox*, London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1937, pp. 259-64. For Knox opposed what he so aptly called the "regime(nt) of women."

28. OUR PRESBYTERIAN WESTMINSTER STANDARDS ON THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN

Yet it is not only the great Protestant Reformer Martin Luther and the great French Presbyterian John Calvin and his student the famous Scottish Presbyterian John Knox who upheld this Biblical point of view. It is the viewpoint also of the Presbyterian *Westminster Standards*, to which all Presbyterians have pledged their most solemn and sacred support. The *Westminster Confession* (27:4) insists that neither Sacrament "may be dispensed by any but by a Minister lawfully ordained" — adding that "no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron (Heb. 5:4)."

The *Westminster Larger Catechism*(in QQ. & AA. 156 & 158) insists that "all are not to be permitted to read the Word publically to the congregation (Deut. 31:9-12 & Neh. 8:2-3 & 9:3-4)", for "the Word of God. is to be preached ONLY by such as are sufficiently gifted and also duly approved and called to that [male] Office. I Tim. 3:2; Mal. 2:7; Heb. 5:4." The *Westminster Assembly's Directory for the Publick Worship of God* knows of only male Ministers of the Word and Sacraments. And the *Westminster Assembly's Form of Presbyterial Church-Government* itself knows of only male Pastors and Church-Governors or Elders — quoting I Tim, 3:2 & 5.17 & II Chr. 19:8-10 & Rom. 12:8 [*viz.* not 'she' but "he that ruleth"] *etc.*). Compare too, very carefully, Titus 1:5 to 2:5.

29. TWO CONTEMPORARY FAMOUS ELECT LADIES ON WOMEN'S ORDINATION

The famous contemporary missionary Elisabeth Eliot rightly remarks that "we are daily subjected to undermining by the secular presuppositions of our ago. There has been an attempt to impute guilt to the Church for denying to women equal status with men....

"The answer must finally rest in the command of God.... The exclusion of women from ordination is based on the order established in creation.... Exceptional women were sometimes found functioning as prophetesses and judges, but none was ever admitted to the priesthood" (cf. Deut. 23:1) nor to the eldership (cf. I Tim. 3:1f).

To this, the equally-famous (Evangelist's wife) Mrs. Ruth Graham adds regarding women's ordination: "I believe that it basically goes against the principles of

Scripture." On the other hand, Billy Graham's wife then concludes that men are not superior in at least two other areas. For "women make the best wives, and women make the best mothers." *Christianity Today*, June 6th, 1975.

30. ARE MEN AND WOMEN REALLY COMPLETELY EQUAL?

So then, Rev. Dr. Billy Graham's wife Ruth (see section thirty) declares that not men but only "women make the best wives." We ourselves would prefer to say that women make the ONLY legitimate wives of men — rejecting as we do the homosexual attempt to "equalise" men and women. Cf. Rom. 1:26-27.

Mrs. Ruth Graham also declares that "women make the best mothers ." We ourselves would prefer to say that women alone can become mothers — rejecting as we must the obviously erroneous notion that a man ever could give birth to babies and thus become a mother at all — any more than a woman ever could become "a man of one wife" and thus qualify for Bishophood-Eldership (I Tim. 3:1-5).

True, men and women are indeed both equally saveable and equally precious in the sight of God. See I Cor. 11:11-12 & Gal. 3:28. But although men and women, are indeed "heirs together of the grace of life ," the husband is nevertheless to give "honour" or financial support (or *timee*) to the wife precisely because she is indeed at least physically "the weaker vessel." I Pet. 3:7.

So men alone may qualify for the Eldership (and only some men at that), and woman alone qualify for motherhood (and only some women at that). Or, as Paul inspiredly puts it: "I do not permit a woman to teach nor to usurp authority over the man, but...she shall be saved in childrearing" (I Tim.1.2-15). For both genders, though equally precious, are not functionally equal. See too section seven above (especially at the end of it).

31. EQUALITARIAN HUMANISM VS. TRUE CHRISTIANITY ON WOMEN'S ORDINATION

The above has been the understanding of all branches of the Historic Christian Church down through the centuries. Within these Historic Christian Churches it is only in the last decades — and apparently only under the penetrating influence of the Neo-PAGAN religion of modern HUMANISM rather than under the wholesome influence of the Biblical religion of Christianity — that the DOCTRINALLY-LOOSER religious groups have sought to change this Historic Christian understanding and practice.

Certainly not all, but at any rate some forty members of the doctrinally-LOOSE World[ly] Council of Churches now permit women to enter their Preaching and Ruling Eldership. But far more than forty denominations — and many scores of denominations such as those of conservative Lutherans and Presbyterians and Baptists throughout the World - still continue the Historic CHRISTIAN practice. And the thirty-six member Reformed Ecumenical Synod, in Holland in 1968 and again in Australia in 1972, reaffirmed the ALL-MALE Preaching and Ruling Eldership as the ONLY position permitted by the Scriptures. So too do other Presbyterian Churches

not associated with the Reformed Ecumenical Synod (such as the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, the Continuing Free Church of Scotland, and the large Presbyterian Church in America). And so too — especially after the departure of the doctrinally-looser faction into union with the Methodists and others — should the still-continuing Presbyterian Church of Australia (as it always did, until the traumatic nineteen-seventies).

32. WHAT DOES THE SCRIPTURE SAY? (ROM. 4:3)

For this is what the Lord says: "let the woman learn in silence, with all subjection! ... I do not permit a woman to teach nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve.... Adam was not deceived. But the woman, being deceived, transgressed. Notwithstanding, she shall be saved." I Tim. 2:11-14.

And this is what the Lord again says (I Cor. 11:3-13 & 14:29-37): "I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonours his head [Christ]. But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered, dishonours her head [the man].... For a man indeed ought not to cover his head [when praying or prophesying], forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God.

"But the woman is the glory of the man.... Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman [was created] for the man. For this cause the woman ought to have power over her head [and thus be in subjection to the man, yet in authority over all OTHER creatures].... Judge in yourselves! Is it seemly that a woman pray unto God [in the Church] uncovered?...

"Let the [male] Prophets (*alloom...ho prootos*) speak two or three, and let the other males (*hoi alloi*) judge [or rule, by orally weighing these prophecies while in Church]! But...let your WOMEN keep silence IN THE CHURCHES! Far it is not permitted unto THEM to speak [or orally to weigh the prophecies of the male Prophets while the women are still in Church]. But they are commanded to be under obedience, as also the Law says. And if they wish to learn anything, let them ask their menfolk at home! For it is a shame[ful thing] for women to speak IN THE CHURCH... If any man think himself to be...spiritual — let him acknowledge that the things that I write to you, are the COMMANDMENTS of the LORD!"

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