

# **Women Serving As Pastors:**

## **Stepping Out of Divine Order**

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### **Introduction**

In today's modern church age, more and more women are holding pastoral positions. But, did God call women to preach and teach, or should men hold the positions of leadership in the church? This is a good question; one that is frequently and intensely disputed in the church today. Recently, I was engaged in dialogue with a fellow believer and co-worker on the issue of women pastors. That conversation prompted me to write this article.

The goal of this article is to affirm the position that God exclusively ordained men to be pastors. Scripture is very clear that God has established distinct roles for men and women in the home and the church. Unfortunately, the principle of leadership by men has been corrupted due to the infiltration of false leaders, ignorance, decrepitude, and the feminist self-seeker movement. On account that my retort may not be popular with many, some people may not take cordially to my perspective. An accurate exegetical study of the Bible, however, will uphold this author's viewpoint.

This is not an issue of male chauvinism, prejudice, or the suggestion that men are superior to women. By no means, are women to be marginalized to any second class status. In Christ, women occupy the equivalent personhood as men and bears God's image equally (Gen. 1:27). It should come as no surprise that there are many key narratives in the Bible that plainly and effectively discloses the inherent value and vital roles of women in the early church.

To note a few for example, older women are encouraged to teach younger women (Titus 2:4-5). Both Priscilla and Aquila spoke privately to Apollos (Acts 18:24-26), correcting his false teachings. There were a number of women who played important roles in the ministry of the Apostle Paul (Romans 16:1-16, Phil. 4:2-3). Similarly, women played significant roles in the ministry of Jesus Christ (Luke 8:1-3). At the upper room prayer meeting, women were among the disciples in prayer and supplication (Acts 1:12-14).

Although women were created equally with men and held a place of prominence and propriety in the expansion of the gospel, in the context of teaching and leading a church, the Bible is emphatic in upholding the male leadership principle. Women are never alluded to and qualified as "pastors" and "preachers" in the Bible. In today's modern church age, women who hold the pastoral position within a church facility have entered a

domain of activity for which the Lord has never devised for them; and thus, have stepped out of God's divine order.

### **After the Fall: The Beginning of the Battle of the Sexes**

Over the course of history there have been power struggles going on between men and women. The failure of many marriages and the discontent of many others that are surviving can be attributed to what occurred after the fall into sin as stated in Genesis 3:16.

*"To the woman He said, 'I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.' "* (Genesis 3:16)

It is the interpretation of the latter half of this verse that is the main point of discussion in this section: **"Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."** The key word is "desire," translated from the Hebrew word "tesuqah" a rare word that is used only three times in the Old Testament: Here in this verse, Genesis 4:7 and Song of Songs 7:10. It can be rendered as a sexual desire between a wife and her husband as in Song 7:10. However, in this verse and in Genesis 4:7, the renditions are parallel. In this context, the word "tesuqah" appears to signify a desire that is corrupt in nature such as a thirst for power. The Brown, Driver and Briggs, a Hebrew lexicon, renders the word "tesuqah" as "unusual and striking."

Thus, God is announcing that a woman's desire will be to gain the upperhand and control her husband, but her husband will respond in like manner and dominate her by force. This is not the husband's proper authority over his wife; and as such, his authority is a perversion of God's original plan. An excellent read on this issue is by Susan T. Foh, "What is the Woman's Desire?", Westminster Theological Journal (1975): pages 376-383. In her commentary, she states:

*"After the fall, the husband no longer rules easily; he must fight for his headship. The woman's desire is to control her husband (to usurp his divinely appointed headship), and he must master her, if he can. Sin has corrupted both the willing submission of the wife and the loving headship of the husband. And so, the rule of love founded in paradise is replaced by struggle, tyranny, domination, and manipulation."*

In regard to Genesis 3:16, John MacArthur, author of "The MacArthur Study Bible" and pastor of Grace Community Church, adds:

*"Sin has turned the harmonious system of God-ordained roles into distasteful struggles of self-will. Lifelong companions, husbands and wives will need God's help in getting along as a result."* (The MacArthur Study Bible, page 21)

The perfect relationship between Adam and Eve as well as all humankind was shattered by sin and supplanted by a relationship of conflict and subjugation. Needless to say, this was not God's ideal plan. Where leadership and submission are discussed in the Bible, guidelines are given for how relationships may be managed so that they function in godly love and peace and not with abusive treatment. God's word does not exclude man's leadership, but warns that authority should be applied in a manner that brings honor and

glory to Christ. Moreover, those who are required to submit to authorities are directed by scripture to submit in a godly manner and not with a rebellious demeanor.

### **The Devaluation of Women Throughout History**

The collusion by men and women against God's divine order has produced cultural definitions and prejudices. During ancient times there was a much depreciated view of women; particularly in pagan societies. Male pagan gods were recklessly misogynistic. As a result, women in pagan cultures were defamed and frequently treated with slightly more decency than farm animals. Pagan societies considered women to be personal property of husbands or fathers.

During the old covenant, Jewish tradition degraded and debased women ... considering them inferior to that of men. And during the time of Jesus, women were treated with little dignity. The main objective of many Jewish men was to keep women in a condition of ignorance and pregnancy. They believed that women were not qualified to be included in the process of learning, especially in spiritual matters. Let me point out for the record, these traditions that devalued women were non-biblical traditions.

In our western culture, there have been an innumerable ways women have been derided and devalued. Underneath layers of anger and frustration, many women began to retaliate against the opprobrious manner in which men classified them. Determined to prove their "equality" with men, some women began overreacting to their suppression by distorting Scripture ... creating God in their own image or seemingly making it permissible to hold leadership positions within the church.

### **A Brief History of Women's Ordination**

The state of discord that was brought into effect after the fall of Adam and Eve has now infiltrated the church where women are now contending for positions of authority over men. Christian feminists, contesting that women are equally capable of qualifying for the pastoral office in the church, is the major contributing factor to cultivate the idea that God permits women to teach in a position of having authority over men. Moreover, rather than being content with their God-given roles, some feminists have used manipulative power plays against unconcerned and nerveless men to successfully accomplish their desires in gaining pastoral positions.

Below is a list of some beginning dates for the ordination of women. On account that many women have been ordained since the seventeenth century, for the sake of brevity, this list is not all inclusive.

1.) In 1647, George Fox, the founder of the Quakers, ordained Margaret Fell (1614 - April 23, 1702) to the pastoral office. The Quakers' subscribed to the egalitarianism perspective -- that is -- all persons are acknowledged to have equal worth, autonomous of their gender or class. Using this reasoning, they found it acceptable to ordain women to leadership positions within the church.

2.) In 1853, the Congregationalist Church in Butler, New York ordained Antoinette Brown (May 20, 1825 - November 5, 1921). She was a notable lecturer at many Women's Rights meetings. In 1920, at the age of 95, she was the sole participant of the Women's Rights Convention in Worcester, Massachusetts, to observe the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which gave women the right to vote.

3.) In 1863, Olympia Brown (January 5, 1835 - October 23, 1926) was ordained by the Universalist Church. As a blossoming preacher, she devoted much time fighting for women's rights. She played an important and supporting role in the women's suffrage movement and was one of a small number of suffragists to vote in the 1920 presidential election.

4.) In 1880, Anna Howard Shaw (February 14, 1847 - July 2, 1919) was ordained by the Methodist Protestant Church. Along with accepting the pastoral office, she was a leading civil rights leader and a physician. Moreover, she was engaged in the temperance movement; serving as national superintendent of franchise for the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. She was one of the chief leaders in the women's suffrage movement, heading the National American Woman Suffrage Association from 1904 to 1915. During World War I, she was the first woman awarded a Distinguished Service Medal for her work as chair of the Women's Committee of the National Council of Defense. In the year 2000, she was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame in Seneca Falls, NY, the birthplace of women's rights. Established in her honor, The Anna Howard Shaw Center at Boston University School of Theology was built to advance and cultivate the practices of women's empowerment.

5.) In 1889, Louisa Woosley (March 24, 1862 - June 30, 1952) was ordained by the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Three years later, Woosley published her book *"Shall Woman Preach"* which explained and defended the ordination of women. Woosley, believing that "God is no respecter of persons," associated women's ordination with equality of men and women.

6.) In 1965, Marjorie Matthews (July 11, 1916 - June 30, 1986) was ordained by the United Methodist Church. While serving the Wisconsin Episcopal Area, she attempted to "accustom people to the idea that either a man or a woman can be a bishop." Matthews was a strong advocate of women's empowerment ... accentuating to women in her workshop: "There's nothing wrong with ambition. Where do you see yourself in the ministry ten years from now?" Determined to fulfill her passions, she was elected for the position of district superintendent; and in 1980 was elected to the office of bishop at the North Central Jurisdictional Conference.

Again, this list is a small example to illustrate the ordination of women into positions of leadership within the church. Today, there are thousands of women who occupy the pastoral office. Consider the following statistics:

1.) The Assemblies of God has ordained approximately 4,000 women.

- 2.) The Southern Baptist Church has ordained 1,225 women.
- 3.) The United Methodist Church has ordained 4,743 women.
- 4.) The Presbyterian Church has ordained 3,715 women.
- 5.) The United Church of Christ has ordained 1,803 women.
- 6.) The Evangelical Lutheran Church has ordained 2,358 women.
- 7.) The Disciples of Christ Church has ordained 1,564 women.
- 8.) As reported by a study by the National Council of Churches, women ordained to ministry in 1986 elevated from 10,470 in 1977 to 20,730 in 1986. The research indicated that 84 of 166 denominations ordain women to teach.

These facts give testimony of the apostasy that exists in our present time. Feminism, women's rights, women's lib, a woman's choice, equality for women, and so forth, undermines and rejects scriptural compliance. Using a method common to false teachers, many pro-woman ordainers have twisted and exaggerated their interpretation of scripture for the sake of their own self-fulfillment.

It is interesting that many professing Christian women say, "I want to serve God, I want to bring honor to God," on one hand, then on another hand will deliberately violate God's command as it relates to divine authority in the home and the church. Ironically, in their efforts to gain positions of leadership in the church, so called Christian feminist have actually defamed femininity by deprecating natural gender distinctions.

The dismissal and denial of the veracity of scripture by representatives of the feminist movement has been unopposed by apprehensive, passive, and irresolute men in politically correct churches. Rather than possessing the moral courage to confront this issue, they have found it more convenient to conform to an infidelic and social agenda by adopting to a policy of theological liberalism. It takes an adaptation of the Berean model (Acts 17:11) to unveil this ingrained and misguided practice.

### **Confirming the Truth**

The proper exegesis of scripture is required to bring truth to this controversial issue. If we understand what the Word of God says, we will possess the ability to manage those who deviate from truth. That said; let's now engage in a careful contextual analysis by examining the following key passages that link to the headship principle with the authority of male pastors:

***"Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression." (1 Tim. 2:11-14)***

***"Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church." (1 Cor. 14:34-35)***

While men and women are equal in personal worth and in spirit, it is important to understand that God has empowered distinctive functions to men and women. The two passages above indicate that God has established an authority structure within the church. The Apostle Paul specifically states that women are restricted from teaching and exercising authority over men. He says "Let a woman learn (Greek "manthano") in silence." In the church, the woman's role is that she is to be a learner, not a teacher. The word "silence" (Greek "hesuchia") in 1 Tim. 2:11 does not mean complete silence (Greek "siopao"), but is defined as maintaining a composure of quietness and peacefulness. This is diametrically distinctive to teaching and having authority over men in a church assembly.

In verse 13 of the first book of Timothy, chapter two, Paul references back to the beginning when God created Adam and Eve. He states that God formed Adam first. As being first in the creation order, Adam patently stood as the natural head. Later in God's creation process the Lord formed Eve from Adam's rib to serve the role as a helper (Gen. 2:18), not someone to exercise authority over him. The concept of this verse is to illustrate the correlation between Adam and Eve (the creation order) with the relationship between men and women in the context of a church assembly. Thus, leadership should begin with the man.

In verse 14, Paul states that Eve was deceived, not Adam. This means that women, in general, are more vulnerable to Satan's deceptive tactics than are men; and only in the context that they are the "weaker vessel" (1 Peter 3:7). It is a fact that women are typically more emotional than men; a trait that, if not balanced, has a tendency to cloud good judgment -- especially as it pertains to doctrinal and relationship issues. In any case, although Eve was the one who was deceived, Adam was the one who God held ultimately responsible (Romans 5:12-21). Authority is seated on those whom the Lord regards accountable.

The Apostle Paul's exhortation to "keep silent" can also be found in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35. In contrast to 1 Timothy 2:11-14, this passage differs in context -- in that it is speaking in terms of prophecy and tongues rather than authoritative teaching. However, the universal principle of male leadership within the church remains the same. The word "silent" (Greek "sigao") which is synonymous with "hesuchia" is used here to express this principle. In this context, Paul's interdiction that women "keep silent in the churches" is in reference to the judging of prophecy. If women were to publicly question or judge prophecy, they would be illegally taking authority in the church assembly. Supposing that women had inquiries regarding prophecy, they were to be submissive and ask their husbands at home (verse 35); or perhaps their questions could be addressed by other men

in the church meeting. A woman's flagrant failure to adhere to God's divine order in the church is considered as "shameful".

Interestingly, there are some male pastors who allege that they can dismiss 1 Timothy 2:11-14 and 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 by giving a woman permission to teach under his authority. However, if the Word of God states that a woman is prohibited from teaching or exercising authority over a man, then it is inapplicable for a pastor to use this line of reasoning to justify a woman to teach in a church assembly. This type of rationalism, which undermines the authority of God's Word, usually stems from ignorance and weak men who succumb to manipulative feminist pressures.

### **Other Noteworthy Points to Support Male Leadership**

1. Although Jesus had many women followers, He appointed no women apostles. They were all men.
2. Only a man can be the "husband of one wife" and can "rule his own house well" (1 Tim. 3:2, 4; Titus 1:6).
3. In the Old Testament, there was not one woman appointed as a priest. All priests were men (Exodus 28:1).
4. Only masculine names are to be found in the genealogies of Genesis, chapters five and ten.
5. Only men received the sign and seal of the covenant (Genesis 17:10).
6. Abram is called; not Sarai (Genesis 12:1).
7. Only men were commanded to appear before God (Exodus 23:17; Deut. 16:16-18; Neh. 10:36)
8. The wife is under her husband's authority (Numbers 5:19; Eph. 5:23, 24; 1 Peter 3:1).
9. All scriptures were written by men.
10. Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, was a man, not a woman.
11. Not one woman baptized someone else.
12. There is not a one instance in the Bible where a pastor shared authority with his wife.
13. Adam, not Eve, represented humanity (1 Cor. 15:22)

### **Opposing Arguments**

In spite of the positive and clear cut precepts that support male pastoral leadership and the lack of biblical precedent for ordaining women, there is still much repugnance to this point of observation; particularly by enraged feminists. In a bid to maintain their views, they have raised a number of objections in an attempt to evade, discredit, or reinterpret 1 Timothy 2:11-14 and 1 Corinthians 14:34-35. Let's now address some of their currently circulated arguments in support of women pastors.

#### **1. Deborah the Judge**

The Claim: There are those who believe that it is permissible for women to hold authoritative positions within the church based primarily on the account of Deborah the

judge (Judges 4:4-5). But does Deborah in the book of Judges truly provide us with a concrete model about the office of authoritative leadership within the church? I believe that it does not for the following reason:

Rebuttal: Deborah was a judge and prophetess. Other women who were prophetesses include: Miriam (Exodus 15:20, 21), Huldah (2 Kings 22:14), and Anna (Luke 2:36). There is no question that Deborah and these other women were great and godly individuals who had significant influence. Their positions, however, are not comparable to that of a pastoral role. While God richly blesses women with spiritual gifts, nowhere in the Bible do we read that these women, or any other women, were ordained by God to the pastoral office and take authority in a church meeting. Thus, to employ the account of Deborah in the book of Judges as a basis for women leaders within the church is an inappropriate use of scriptural text.

## **2. Women Lacked Education**

The Claim: Feminists allege that, in reference to 1 Timothy 2:11-14, the Apostle Paul disapproved of women in public ministry or to exercise authority over men on account women were generally untaught during ancient biblical times. Therefore, on the grounds that women today are significantly more educated, Paul's command is not universally binding in our current church age.

Rebuttal: Firstly, God chose female prophets who were intellectually capable to fulfill some significant roles in His Kingdom. Secondly, many women followed Jesus and learned from Him. Thirdly, nowhere does Paul infer educational status as a criterion for ministry. He (Paul) specifically mentions the reason for his directive for the prohibition of women pastors; and it is the creation order of man and woman by God. Apparently, many feminists have disregarded Paul's reason and substituted it with a speculative viewpoint. Let's assume for a moment Paul's prohibition was due to lack of education. Then why would he interdict uneducated women from teaching and not also uneducated men?

## **3. Restricted to Ephesian Women**

The Claim: Pro-women ordainers assert that, in reference to 1 Timothy 2:11-14, the Apostle Paul only restricted the women in Ephesus from teaching. They claim that women were teaching false doctrines due to the influence in the worship at the Temple of Artemis. Artemis was a Greek pagan goddess, aka Diana, (Acts 19:23-41) that was worshipped by women in authority. Thus, in effect, it is suggested that Paul's statement in 1 Timothy, chapter 2, was to invalidate the doctrine of Artemis and create a platform of equality between men and women. However, on account that the women in Ephesus had been misled, Paul restricts women from teaching. At that period, they were to resign themselves to learning The Word of God in silence. Therefore today, as long as a woman does not adopt a feminist supremacy mindset, this does not restrict her from acquiring a pastoral role within the church.

Rebuttal: Any suggestion that the Apostle Paul is confronting an issue of gender equality is faulty speculation ... reading into the text what is not there. Although Paul addressed errant teachers who were advocating unbiblical roles for women as well as stating that false teachers were plaguing the church at Ephesus (Acts 20:29-30), nowhere does he

infer the worship of Artemis as a grounds for his restrictions of women pastors. Again, he indicatively points to the order of creation of man and woman by God to illustrate that the pastoral role should be occupied by a man. From God's perspective, gender functions are not related to gender equality. In the body of Christ, the Lord has assigned specific roles for men and women while affirming equality of personhood. Likened to Artemis worshippers, there are many today who are attempting to pervert God's design roles for men and women. And this is attributed to what occurred after the fall into sin as stated in Genesis 3:16.

#### **4. Restricted to Husbands and Wives**

The Claim: Advocates of women pastors declare that 1 Timothy 2:11-14 pertains only to husbands and wives and not to a church setting. They say that the Greek words for man (aner) and woman (gune), when used together, are indicative to wives and husbands, not men and women in general.

Rebuttal: The Greek words "aner" and "gune" in this passage could allude to "man" or "husband" and either "woman" or "wife" respectively. However, according to the context of this passage, the Greek words are in reference to men and women. The same Greek words are used in the preceding verses: *"I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works."* (1 Timothy 2:8-10) If we accept the interpretation that verses 11-14 are referring solely to husbands and wives, then we must ask; "Are only husbands to pray everywhere?" "Are only wives to dress in modest apparel?" The answer to these questions should be obvious. Thus, the decisive clues from verses 8-10 should bring contextual balance in this entire passage ... proving that the Greek words are in reference to men and women, not husbands and wives.

#### **5. A Temporary Command**

The Claim: Proponents of women's ordination argue that the Apostle Paul knew that there was an abolishment of all gender-based roles, but neglected to fully address biblical equality on account that he feared to break with his culture. Such a radical move could potentially hinder the gospel. Thus, Paul's command in 1 Timothy 2:11-14 is culturally conditioned to the male chauvinist attitude of the church during his time period. This, coupled with the fact that Paul uses a present tense verb ("*I do not permit*"), illustrates that his command was a temporary cultural arrangement rather than universal truth for all cultures. Today's culture is supposedly more knowledgeable about the equality of men and women. Thus, Paul's teachings on women's submission to male leadership in the church and the home are no longer applicable.

Rebuttal: This type of argument is simply contradictory speculation. There are no indications in scripture that Paul's command was grounded in cultural conformity. It bears repeating. Paul's prohibition for women exercising the role of authoritative teaching is grounded in the creation process of man and woman by God. This dispels any notion that his command was temporary or culturally conditioned. Furthermore, to contend that Paul's use of the present tense verb can be interpreted as a temporary command overlooks the fact that he also used present indicatives to give acceptable and authoritative

instruction in Romans 12:1; 1 Corinthians 4:16; 1 Timothy 2:1,8; just to mention a few. Let's also consider that Jesus chose twelve men to be his disciples. Some advocates of women's ordination find it easier to resort to faulty conjecture rather than accept the explicit reason for Paul's interdiction of women pastors. In this example, as well as others, pro-women ordainers attempt to twist and nullify the authority of scriptures in an endeavor to occupy leadership positions in the church.

## 6. The Definition of the Word "Authority"

The Claim: Proponents of women's ordination contend that the word "authority" (Greek word "*authentain*") in 1 Timothy 2:12 was altered. Instead of being rendered as "to exercise authority", its true definition means to "not domineer" or "not misuse authority." In the context of its diction, the Greek word "*authentain*" is used only once in the New Testament by the Apostle Paul. Thus, referencing back to the pagan goddess Artemis (Diana) in Ephesus, what Paul is really saying is that women should "not dominate" or "misuse authority" over men. If Paul was speaking in context of the normal word for "authority", why didn't he use the Greek word "*exousia*" (to rule over, to have authority over) instead of "*authentain*" (to domineer, misuse authority)? Therefore, it is permissible for women to teach and exercise authority over men pending that their authority does not become domineering or abusive.

Rebuttal: The Greek word "*authentain*" has various renditions. Its definition is dependent upon its linguistic source and the context of its usage. In ancient extrabiblical literature, "*authentain*" could mean in a negative connotation "to domineer, misuse authority." However, "*authentain*" in the New Testament (1 Tim. 2:12), being a *hapex legomenon* (meaning occurring once) is defined in a positive manner as "to exercise authority over." One major aspect of this deduction is based on the fact that the word "or" ("*oude*"), which juxtaposes "to teach" and "to have authority", coordinates terms that are either both observed positively or negatively. The term "to teach" is always interpreted positively in the New Testament. The only exclusion is in Titus 1:11 where the context is explicitly referencing false doctrine. Thus, viewed within its correct grammatical context, "*authentain*" should be rendered in a positive aspect to mean "to exercise authority." A lexical study of the Greek word "*authentain*" in this verse has revealed it as being synonymous with the word "*exousia*". The *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* project established in 1972 by the University of California, Irvine, and a data bank of ancient Greek/Roman manuscripts at Duke University states that the primary definition of "*authentain*" in Greek vernacular during the time of the Apostle Paul was rendered as "to exercise authority over." Lastly, Paul's expression "to be in silence" is distinctively contrary to teaching and exercising authority over men in a church assembly. Thus, if we accept the proponents of women's ordination viewpoint, then 1 Timothy 2:12 makes no biblical sense.

## 7. On account that Paul was prejudiced against women, his statements to Timothy in 1 Tim. 2 are incorrect. It was just his personal perspective, not a stipulation from God.

The Claim: Radical liberal groups believe that the Apostle Paul penned 1 Timothy 2 in a manner that reflected his own personal prejudices against women rather than what was given to him by Divine inspiration. An article regarding the epistles of the Apostle Paul was presented in the April 5, 1999 issue of the *U.S. News & World Report*. The article

titled, *"Reassessing an Apostle: The Quest for the Historical St. Paul Yields Some Surprising New Theories"*, stated that Paul's writings were words *"not quite in lock-step with his master."*

**Rebuttal:** The Apostle Paul prejudiced against women? The Apostle Paul theologically inconsistent? I believe such caricatured charges by proponents of women's ordinations are rooted more in satanic influence than honest ignorance. The Bible states that the Thessalonians, the Philippians, and the Corinthians received Paul's teachings not according to personal prejudices, but as inspired truth (1 Thess. 2:13; Phil. 4:9; 1 Cor. 14:36-37). If Paul was prejudiced, why would he have shared his efforts for the gospel with numerous women? If Paul was prejudiced against women, why would he state, *"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church"* (Eph. 5:25-29). Here, Paul expressly states that it is a husband's responsibility to love his wife as Christ loves the church -- a love that embraces unreserved and sacrificial love, and if necessary, at the price of his own life. In verses 28 and 29, Paul continues by saying that a husband is to love his wife with the same devotion that he naturally demonstrates for himself. Such statements by Paul clearly indicate that his teachings were void of personal prejudices against women. Paul's character and teachings are completely harmonious with the character and teachings of Christ. Likened to Jesus, he never appointed women to leadership positions within the church. Bear in mind, all twelve apostles appointed by Christ were men.

### **8. Phoebe was a preacher.**

**The Claim:** On the premise of Romans 16:1-2, some have contested that Phoebe was a preacher. The *Amplified Bible* states that Phoebe was a "deaconess." On account that the Apostle Paul is referred to as a deacon in 2 Corinthians, some have suggested that Phoebe was an overseer in the church. Since the church was to "assist her in whatever business" and she was "a helper of many", the implication in Roman 16:2 is that she was in a position of authority over the church in Cenchrea.

**Rebuttal:** Phoebe was not a preacher. However, she did hold office of deacon or "deaconess." A "deaconess" is a female believer who serves in the office of deacon in the church. Depending upon the context of the passage involved, a deacon could be a servant and / or a preacher. In Romans 16:1, the Greek word for deaconess is "*diakonos*"; simply rendered as "*servant*." In reference to this verse, the King James, New American Standard, New International Version, and New King James Bibles have translated "*diakonos*" as "*servant*." While the scriptures do not explicitly define Phoebe's responsibilities, as a servant, she could have been responsible for taking care of the administrative needs of the church, teaching other women, caring for the sick, poor, etc. The qualifications of deacons as it relates to pastoral positions can only be occupied by men (1 Tim. 3:12). Furthermore, the Greek word "*prostatis*" ("helper") in verse two simply means "*assistant*" or "*patroness*." There is no such rendition during New Testament times to suggest that "a helper of many" is exclusively indicative of one who

exercises a position of authority in the church. If this was the case, then Phoebe exercised authority over the Apostle Paul, for she had been his helper. Clearly, the latter viewpoint is extremely vague at best.

### **9. The Apostle Paul authorized women to be preachers in Galatians 3:28.**

The Claim: On account that God is not a respecter of persons (Romans 2:11), feminist point to and emphasize the sociological implications of Galatians 3:28 to claim that Paul authorized women to be preachers. Because feminists want to rule out the submission of women to male leadership in the church, they allege that Paul rendered void any gender-based differentiations within the church.

Rebuttal: To assert that this verse eliminates differences in authority and submission will simply not suffice. In Galatians 3:28, Paul is not discussing the matter of whether Jews or Gentiles, slaves or those who are free, or men or women, could take authoritative positions in the church. If we read the preceding verses, it should be clear that Paul is speaking in the context of salvation, which is also the theme of Romans 2:11. In expounding the meaning of salvation, the Apostle Paul asserts that in Christ there is "neither Jew nor Gentile, slave or free, male or female." Everyone who is baptized into Christ, irrespective of ethnicity, economic status, or gender, inherits grace apart from works; and thus, are to be unified in the Body of Christ (Gal. 3:22, 24, 26). Although those within the Body of Christ are considered equal by God, this does not eradicate legitimate gender distinctions and God's divine order of authority between men and women. For example, Ephesians 5:23 clearly states: *For the Husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.* Thus again, Galatians 3:28 pertains to salvation, not headship in the home or the authority structure within the church.

### **10. The exclusion of women from the pastoral position is comparable to slavery, which also existed during ancient biblical times.**

The Claim: During ancient biblical days, just as in our present age, there were oppressive systems that regarded women and other nationalities as inferior. For example, likened to the hierarchy of men over women, slavery was a system that was in force during biblical times. It is an oppressive structure that is defended by Christians today that is similar to their defense of male headship.

Rebuttal: The principle of male leadership is similar to slavery, but not in the context of conventional thinking. The word, "*slave*", is not necessarily a negative term. A slave is simply one who is owned by another. It is the abuse of slavery that is problematic. God never condoned nor condemned slavery, but regulated it simply on account that it existed during ancient biblical times. Where slavery existed in the New Testament, God commanded masters and slaves to conduct themselves in Christ like manner. For Christians, we are slaves to Christ (1 Cor. 6:19-20; 7:22-23, Romans 6:17-22); and Christ is our leader and master. Similarly, man is the leader in the home and church. Again, male leadership is a principle that was established by God at creation. On the contrary, the abuse of slavery is a man-made cultural system that misrepresents God's perfect will for mankind, is morally wrong, and cannot be comparable to male leadership within the home or church. The "Illustrated Dictionary of The Bible" states:

*"The Bible contains warnings about the practice of slavery. The prophet Amos spoke woe to Gaza and Tyre for their practices of slave-trading entire populations (Amos 1:6-9). The Book of Revelation declares that disaster awaits those who sell slaves (Rev. 18:13). (The Illustrated Dictionary of The Bible, Slave, Slavery, p. 998, Herbert Lockyer, Sr., Editor)*

The "Baker Theological Dictionary of the Bible" says:

*"The Old Testament record of Israel's origin and development demonstrates that they functioned within the cultural milieu of their own time. God's self-disclosure and direction to his elect nation often accommodated existing cultural aspects. While such accommodation reflects God's way of dealing with his creation, it does not necessarily imply his ideal will. Slavery is accepted in the Old Testament as part of the world in which Israel functioned....The Old Testament raised the status of the slave from property to that of a human being who happened to be owned by another person (Exod. 21:20, 26-27; Job 31:13-15; Eccles. 7:21-22).... Inhumane treatment by masters was grounds for release (Exod. 21:7-11, 26-27; Deut. 21:14)." (Baker Theological Dictionary of the Bible, Slave, Slavery, p. 740, Edited by Walter A. Elwell)*

Although slavery existed during biblical times, we cannot assume that it was a system established by God and place the principle of male leadership on par with such a system.

### **11. Jesus did not ordain women preachers on account of the culture during His time.**

The Claim: Some proponents of women preachers insist that Jesus could not ordain women as pastors because the culture during His earthly ministry would have opposed Him. This is the reason that the twelve apostles were all men.

Rebuttal: Do proponents of women's ordination mean that Jesus was taking a politically correct position rather than doing the will of God? I don't think so. The Word of God states that Jesus never yielded to sin (Heb. 4:15); and "sin" in this case includes putting the traditions, customs, and cultures of men on a higher plane than the scriptures. Christ understood the headship principle as it relates to the creation order established by God. This is the reason the Lord chose twelve men to be apostles. His choices were not rooted in cultural conformity. Jesus was well-known for fearlessly rebuking and shattering the traditions of men when they conflicted with the Word of God (Matt. 15:1-12, 23:1-36; Mark 7:1-23; John 2:14-17). It was this argumentation that provoked much hatred towards Him. In any case, the cultural disputations employed in this matter by proponents of women's ordination sounds inane and clearly reveal their lack of biblical knowledge as well as contempt for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

### **12. The new priesthood of believers.**

The Claim: Pro-women ordainers argue that since there is now a new priesthood of believers (1 Peter 2:5, 9-10), then it is permissible for women to pastor a church.

Rebuttal: Yes, all believers are priests, which include women. However, the Christian priesthood is not a concept that means every believer has been called by God to preach. Each Christian based upon his/her talents and spiritual gifts (Romans 12:4-9) have a specific ministry (service) within the Body of Christ. Romans 12:4 states that: *"For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function."* That said, although women are a part of the new covenant priesthood (the Body of

Christ), God did not create them to function in leadership positions within the home and the church. Using proper exegetical balance of the scriptures, an understanding of Paul's directive in 1 Timothy 2:11-14 should become evident; and thus, does not negate his command that women are prohibited from teaching within the church. If we read the entire New Testament, we will discover that there are no priestesses or women pastors in the scriptures.

### **13. No women pastors, then no Gentile pastors!**

The Claim: Pro-women ordainers argue that if Jesus' example of not electing women Apostles applies to this issue, then similarly, Gentiles should be prohibited from teaching on account that Jesus ordained no Gentiles to be Apostles.

Rebuttal: Jesus did not ordain Gentiles to be Apostles because initially the church consisted solely of Jews. There were no Gentiles present during the ordaining of the Apostleship. After the resurrection, Jesus' mission expanded to embrace Gentiles (Matt. 28:19, Eph. 2:16).

### **14. Junia was an apostle.**

The Claim: Romans 16:7 states: "*Greet Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.*" Based upon the phrase "*who are of note among the apostles*", pro-woman ordainers contend that Junia was a woman apostle; and thus, occupied a position of authority in the church.

Rebuttal: There is much debate concerning the gender of the name "Junia" (feminine) or "Junias" (masculine). The name is rendered "Junia" in the KJV and NKJV translations; while it is rendered "Junias" in the Amplified Bible, NAS, and NIV translations. For the sake of brevity and irrelevance to my rebuttal, I will not contest the gender issue. Why? Because I submit that the phrase "*who are of note among the apostle*" does not mean that Junia (woman) or Junias (man) was an apostle. Firstly, the Amplified Bible states, "*...held in high esteem among the apostles...*", whereas the NAS and NIV states, "*are outstanding among the apostles...*" Both of these phrases means that Junia/Junias was well known to the apostles, rather than actually being an apostle. Secondly, the word "*among*" is used in the wrong context by pro-women ordainers. It does not mean that Junia/Junias was one of the apostles. This word is more accurately rendered as "in the midst" or "amid". For example, in 2 Peter 2:7-8 it states: *....and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them ...*" Take note that Lot resided among the wicked, but was not himself wicked.

### **15. If women are restricted from teaching, then does this also mean that they are prohibited from wearing braided hair and jewelry?**

The Claim: Some contend that if women are restricted from pastoral offices, then the context of 1 Timothy 2:9-14 also commands the prohibition of wearing braided hair and jewelry in the church. Thus, since such demands are not put on women today, then why should they be prohibited from holding positions of leadership within the church?

Rebuttal: One factor regarding the use of proper exegesis of scripture involves the discernment between cultural issues and commands from God. In 1 Timothy 2:9-14, the

Apostle Paul provides a culturally based assessment along with an assessment based on God's creation order. Paul explains that women should dress modestly as an expression of love and reverence for God. During Paul's day, elaborate hairstyles such as braided hair and expensive jewelry were considered an incessant preoccupation with the outward appearance to the dismissal of the inner character (1 Peter 3:3-4). While styles in personal appearance and apparel may differ today than from those during Paul's day, women are nevertheless required to dress modestly with a focus on inner character rather than a self absorption of outward attributes.

Today it is permissible for women to wear standard braided hair and jewelry. God's Word does not completely prohibit women from wearing those things (Song of Sol. 1:10, Proverbs 31:22). The Bible does, however, prohibit women from wearing braided hair and jewelry with inappropriate or concealed motives. Attired for worship service as if one is participating in a fashion show or dressing in a sexually provocative manner are two examples which would be deemed improper.

That said; the interdiction of specific apparel worn by women is distinct from the interdiction of women pastors. Paul explains that men are the spiritual leaders in the church on the basis of the creation order of man and woman by God. The woman, while equal in personhood, was created to help man and to submit to his leadership, just as Christ acknowledges the headship of God the Father. This is a universal principle that is independent of cultural issues.

#### **16. The meeting at the well between Jesus and the Samaritan woman.**

The Claim: Based on John 4:7-42, there are those who assert that Christ ordained a Samaritan woman as a preacher on account she shared and brought forth the Word among the townspeople.

Rebuttal: In verse 39, the Bible states that the Samaritan woman "testified" (*"He told me all that I ever did."*). Thus, many (but not all) Samaritans believed in Christ due to the woman's testimony. Bringing the unsaved to Christ through a personal testimony does not qualify or constitute one as a preacher. There are many Christians today who can offer personal testimonies to those who are unsaved. Would that establish them as a preacher/pastor? I think not. In any case, after Jesus stayed with the Samaritans for two days, many more believed in Christ not on account of the woman's testimony, but because they heard Jesus for themselves (verses 41-42).

#### **17. Some New Testament passages were not written by the Apostle Paul.**

The Claim: The perspective of some feminists is that the Apostle Paul did not write New Testament passages of scripture which teach the submission of women to male leadership. They allege the passages of scripture that relate to women's submission to male authority in the home and the church were added by scribes, and therefore, are not valid.

Rebuttal: Apparently, some feminists will accept God's Word where they find it favorable. In instances where Scripture does not fit their agenda, they resort to scripture twisting tactics, taking scriptures out of context, as well as blatantly conjuring up falsehoods ... as in this case. According to this viewpoint, some parts of the Bible were inspired by God, while other parts were not. Thus, rather than conforming to God's Word, the individual (Christian?) serves as the judge of the Bible... making personal choices

about which passages of scripture are inspired and which are not. The Bible, however, says that all Scripture is inspired by God, not by human authors (2 Tim. 3:16, 2 Peter 1:20-21). True and intellectually honest Christians do not cherry-pick scriptures from the Bible that they find personally advantageous while contorting and dismissing other portions of scriptures that do not fit their agenda.

### **18. Submission for women existed only as a result of the fall.**

The Claim: Some feminists allege that submission for women did not exist prior to the fall, but actually began in Genesis 3:16. This allegedly signifies that Adam's rule over Eve is God's curse on Eve. After the establishment of the new covenant, submission for women to male authority has become abolished.

Rebuttal: A woman's submissive role was established as part of God's creation. Submission for women to male leadership did not emerge after the fall. Firstly, it bears repeating, the apostle Paul interprets male leadership based on the creation order (1 Tim. 2:13). Adam was created first (Genesis 2:7). Eve was created as Adam's helper (Genesis 2:18-23). Thus, we have it on the authority of Scripture itself that Adam being created first and Eve later indicates that Adam properly had authority over Eve imparted at creation.

Secondly, the fall actually confirms why women are not suited for leadership positions. For in 1 Timothy 2:14, Paul also states that it was the woman who was deceived, not Adam. By nature, as the "weaker vessel", women are not fully equipped to undertake the position of ultimate responsibility in the church and home. On account women, in general, are more emotional than men, they have greater vulnerability to Satan's clever and smooth talking lies. Strong emotions have an inclination to weaken discernment skills.

Thirdly, the feminist interpretation of Genesis 3:16 is in error. As we discussed earlier, the Hebrew translated "your desire shall be for your husband" betokens a desire for a woman to dominate her husband. Taking these facts into account, the establishment of the new covenant does not rid us of authority and submission. Actually, if men and women obey the guidelines as expressed in the New Testament, it would bring harmony to authority and submission relationships.

### **19. In the New Testament, male headship does not indicate authority.**

The Claim: There are a number of feminists who tell us that men held exclusive positions of authority only in the Old Testament. By contrast, in the New Testament, the hierarchical position of men over women is no longer valid. Thus, the New Testament teaches that women may occupy positions of authority in the home and the church. This line of thinking stems from the notion that the Greek word "head", which is "*kephale*", means "source" and never "authority." The two chief verses that feminist reference is 1 Corinthians 11:3 and Ephesians 5:23 -- "*But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church.*" It is alleged by some critics that male chauvinist took the word "head" out of context to mean "authority" in an effort to marginalize women.

Rebuttal: The evidence to support the claim that the Greek word "*kephale*" is rendered "source" is weak; and is nothing more than a product of an insipid theological

argumentation. It is impossible that the apostle Paul meant this word to be rendered that Christ is the "source without authority" of the Church and a husband is the "source without authority" of his wife. An investigation of thousands of examples of "*kephale*" from numerous ancient Greek literature presented no persuasive examples where "*kephale*" was defined as "source." On the other hand, the evidence to support the claim that "*kephale*" is rendered "authority over" is firm. Major Greek lexicons indicate that the context of "*kephale*" is rendered "authority" or "ruler", whereas none give the rendering "source." For example, *The KJV New Testament Greek Lexicon* defines "*kephale*" as: "*the head, both of men and often of animals. Since the loss of the head destroys life, this word is used in the phrases relating to capital and extreme punishment. metaph. anything supreme, chief, prominent of persons, master lord: of a husband in relation to his wife of Christ: the Lord of the husband and of the Church of things: the corner stone.*" Another example is: *The NAS New Testament Greek Lexicon*. Its rendition of the Greek word "*kephale*" is: "*the head, both of men and often of animals.*" *Since the loss of the head destroys life, this word is used in the phrases relating to capital and extreme punishment. metaph. anything supreme, chief, prominent of persons, master lord: of a husband in relation to his wife of Christ: the Lord of the husband and of the Church of things: the corner stone.*"

Simply put, to be the head of a person or a group of people always means to have authority over those people. The feminist assertion that a person who is termed the "*kephale*" can be the "source without authority" is simply a concocted fictitious and deceptive idea that should be rejected. Excellent reads on this issue are: "Does '*kephale*' ('Head') Mean 'Source' or 'Authority over' in Greek Literature? A Survey of 2,336 Examples" (*Trinity Journal* 6 NS [1985], pages 38-59). "The Meaning of '*kephale*': A Response to Recent Studies" (*Trinity Journal* 11 NS [1990]), pages 3-72.

## **Jesus and Women**

After the fall of mankind, women have been treated as second-class citizens; unworthy of equality, and in many instances, they were depersonalized. In this section, I will point out some interesting facts about the relationship Jesus had with women in contrast to other men of His day. When we begin to examine the women in the New Testament, we will observe that Jesus viewed women in a different and remarkable aspect. Not only did Jesus honor and respect his mother, Mary, He revolutionized the way all women were treated; demonstrating utmost love, dignity, and respect for them; and often violated the rules that were laid down by the "religious" leaders.

Although the Jewish Talmud prohibited women from being taught, Jesus was consistently willing to dialogue and teach women freely. During His conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well, Jesus taught her about living water; indicating that He was the Messiah. Other points discussed by Jesus included eternal life and the manner of genuine worship (John 4:7-26). Unlike the religious leaders of His day, Jesus did not adopt the position that women could not understand spiritual truths or theological issues. He expected women as well as men to be taught from him.

During the account of Mary and Martha, Mary was being taught by Jesus along with the rest of His disciples. Martha, on the other hand, complained to Jesus concerning her lack of help from Mary. In response, Jesus gently pointed out to Martha that Mary's thirst for

spiritual truth took priority over her domestic responsibilities (Luke 10:38-42). Take note that this passage does not mean domestic duties are always to be ignored. In context, it simply means "what is better" at the current moment under the current conditions.

Luke, chapter seven tells the account of a sinful woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears and anointed him with fragrant oil. This humble act was evidence of her faith, and thus, she was forgiven (verses 37-50). Anna of Asher, a prophetess, gave thanks for Jesus when Mary and Joseph dedicated him to God at the age of six weeks (Luke 2:22, 36-38).

Women were free to travel with Christ and take part in his earthy ministry. Numerous women, including "Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons" followed Jesus and cared for his needs (Matt. 27:55-56). Their association with Jesus was something that was considered unprecedented during that time period. Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna traveled with Jesus and his 12 disciples. These women contributed to the support of Jesus and his disciples with their own funds (Luke 8:1-3). They were present at Christ's crucifixion and were the first to testify of His resurrection.

Many healings were indicative of Jesus' love and concern for women. Mary Magdalene had seven demons cast out of her (Luke 8:2). Jesus healed a Gentile woman's daughter who was demon-possessed (Matt. 15:22-28). Jesus healed Simon Peter's mother-in-law (Luke 4:38-39). Jesus healed a girl 12 years of age (Luke 8:41-42, 49-55). Jesus healed a woman who had been afflicted with a blood flow problem for 12 years (Luke 8:43-48). Courageously, Jesus healed a crippled woman on the Sabbath and inside the synagogue -- an event that was contrary to the legalistic, pharisaical system (Luke 13:11-13).

While Jesus placed high value and dignity on women, he nevertheless, recognized role distinctions for men and women; and thus, did not exalt women to a place of leadership over men. Jesus never stated anything that reprimanded the divine creation order in which men carry the primary responsibility of leadership. Surely Jesus, who often broke religious rules and social customs, would have chosen at least one woman into the Apostleship. But, no such arrangement was implemented. Even in Acts 1:15-26, the only account of a replacement apostle, the one chosen was a man (Matthias). Since it is a fact that many women traveled with Jesus and his disciples, one must question why a woman was not chosen as a replacement apostle. Taking this into consideration along with the fact that Christ elected 12 men to the Apostleship, which is in harmony with Paul's command in 1 Timothy 2:11-14, we can conclude that it is God's will for only men to lead in the church as well as the family structure.

## **Conclusion**

There are some men and women who have attempted to reconstitute the renditions of Paul's writings. Christians should take heed of consenting to their deviations and conforming to the defiance of women pastors who refused to adhere to God's divine order in the church. Instead, we should develop proper biblical discernment and conform and adhere to God's Word.

In view of the biblical evidence presented in this article, the apostle Paul stated clearly his deduction for male leadership and the prohibitions for women preaching and teaching in a church assembly. Furthermore, an analysis of the arguments by Pro-women ordainers has disclosed that there is no evidence in Scripture of women holding pastoral positions.

For those who truly accept the sufficiency and authority of the Bible, how can this be overlooked or denied? To allege that God's Word sanctions women to hold the office of pastor or preacher illustrates that one has to reject the biblical teachings on the leadership and authority of man; and dismiss the biblical representation of the virtuous woman. Likened to Eve, when a woman veers from God's ordained plan, she will fall to the stratagem of Satan.

While some male pastors and feminists outside and within the church may show anger, frustration, and disdain at these conclusions, it is irrelevant to the reality that their mindsets are contrary to what God's Word teaches. Thus, we should not compromise to this aberrancy by supporting a woman who has stepped out of God's divine order in the church. Instead of dismissing the truth and remaining in a state of indolence, we should speak out and help restore God's proper order for the body of Christ ... in the church as well as the family structure.

Women who love the Lord have a very important place in the plans of God; and they are spiritually equal with men, but distinct in role. And it was God who designed the role distinctions between men and women. As each of us performs our god-given gifts and duties, our home life and church body will be able to function in a manner which glorifies God.

In the body of Christ, I appreciate the women who have contributed much to the church; understand both the importance of spiritual equality and the clear responsibility that God has designed for them. I pray that God will continue to bless and honor them for their loving and committed faithfulness. In like manner, men should love and honor them with dignity.