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BRETHREN IN CHRIST HISTORY AND LIFE

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From the Editor

This journal, as readers have been reminded from time to time, has as one of its functions the presenting of issues that have current significance for the Brethren in Christ Church. The previous number of the journal (December 1989) on the church and public policy illustrates this function. This current number is devoted to the same purpose.

Our intent is to provide a forum for the discussion of issues, not to promote positions. This provision for a forum and the open discussion of ideas is in good, historic Brethren in Christ fashion. Even the earliest issues of the *Evangelical Visitor* took this approach. Such editors as Henry Davidson and George Detwiler insisted openly that they not only desired but were obliged to print comments on both sides of controversial issues. Thus on the pages of the church paper and on the floor of General Conference, earlier Brethren took firm (often categorical) positions, against which other members took equally firm and categorical stands.

Women in leadership positions in the church is a current growing issue (Janet Peifer in her article notes that it will not and should not go away). In recognition of this fact, two denominational boards (the Board for Brotherhood Concerns and the Board for Ministry and Doctrine) sponsored a conference (or retreat, as it was called) on the subject in late March of this year. By agreement between the retreat's planning committee and the editor, the papers given at the retreat (including the presentations made at the workshops) are printed in this issue of the journal. By publishing these papers the journal preserves a body of thought on the subject, and in a convenient form for future discussion by both those who agree and those who disagree with the ideas presented.

Janet Peifer sets the historical context for the papers that follow.

She shows that earlier in the life of the Brethren in Christ Church considerable debate on and openness to women in the ministry prevailed. This position, however, gave way to opposition and silence. Only recently has the issue been revived.

In the following three articles, Aida Besancon Spencer provides an exegesis of several passages in the New Testament that appear to prohibit, or at least to lessen, women's role in church leadership. Her careful study shows that these passages should be given a reading in favor of women's active participation in church leadership.

The following nine papers, covering a variety of facets on the subject, were presented at the retreat's workshops. Luann Zercher's article is the text of the sermon which she preached in the final session of the retreat, preceding a communion service. In a concluding article, Harriet Bicksler, chairperson of the planning committee, offers an evaluation of the retreat.

This issue of the journal also maintains two traditions: reporting on the annual meeting of the Brethren in Christ Historical Society, and listing all who are members of the Historical Society. One of the pleasures in making these reports is to show the commendable state of the Historical Society--in interest maintained, in numbers of members, and in financial health (this last is largely owing to the generosity of people who contributed financially beyond the membership fee). All of this, as may be imagined, is of great encouragement to those responsible for the conduct of the Historical Society's affairs.

E. M. S.

Brethren in Christ Studies and Writing on Women in the Ministry, 1887-1987

By Janet M. Peifer*

In mid-1984 when I began my search on what was being written about women in ministry, I was aided by two excellent books written in the late 1970s and 1980s.¹ Although thirty-nine years old, I read for the first time interpretations of Scripture affirming the public ministry of women. Surely, I mused, this must be the result of the refined contemporary research of today's theologians. My research, however, quickly revealed theologians and authors who for centuries had been writing and doing scriptural exegesis that sought to free women from the bondage that traditionally kept them from actively responding to a call to ministry. The most prolific period prior to the decade of the 1970s and 1980s was the latter years of the nineteenth century. As Janette Hassey has written in *No Time for Silence*: ". . . Rich literature circulated at the turn of the century, written from an Evangelical perspective (with its high view of Scripture), that exegeted texts and found the Bible to support, rather than forbid, women's public ministry."²

This paper examines what Brethren in Christ have been studying and writing about the public ministry of women from 1887-1987. I am indebted to the well-ordered Archives of the Brethren in Christ

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Church that made my hours of research a distinct delight and permanently fueled my love for church history.

The Period from 1887-1899

Discussion on the role of women in the church is reflected in the *Evangelical Visitor*. Two months after it began publication in 1887, Henry N. Engle wrote an article entitled "Prophecy." His purpose in writing, he said, was to call the church back to the importance of prophecy (not only foretelling but unfolding mysteries that have been hidden), and to allow all members in the church to participate in prophesying, whether men or women.³

Less than two years later, S. E. Graybill wrote of his conviction that "the prophesying of women was predicted by the Prophet Joel and had there not been such gifts bestowed on women, the prophecy could not have had its fulfillment." He believed that misinterpretation of the Apostle Paul's admonition to the women at the church in Corinth accounted for the large number of late nineteenth-century churches that imposed "silence on the Lord's handmaidens in the public assemblies."⁴

Numerous articles in the *Evangelical Visitor* by both Brethren in Christ and selected non-Brethren in Christ authors advocated the importance of encouraging women to testify in public meetings. Not all agreed; although encouraging women to "testify," the author of an article printed by request from the *Church Advocate* stated strongly that preaching and public teaching were out of bounds for women because "their modest, retiring natures do not fit them for this kind of work, and it would also interfere with there [sic] more important one of making a home of purity, sweetness, and beauty."⁵

However, John Fohl later in the same year submitted an article that revealed his disagreement with such assumptions about the female nature.

... And all are ready to admit that the male portion of the church are [sic] more experienced and better adapted to attend to the finance, and govermental [sic] portion of the church than females,

who are generally busied with their family cares and household duties: but in Christ Jesus "there is neither male nor female." Gal. 3:28. Therefore in the service of God they are upon an equality with their brethren, to sing, pray, exhort and preach: and for scholarship, piety and zeal they frequently excel the brotherhood.

The main part of Fohl's article dealt with significant women in the Old and New Testaments who contributed their gifts through leadership roles. In concluding his article, he had this word of admonition:

For some time the writer has been impressed to write an article in vindication of the sisterhood of the church, thousands of whom, in many churches, with their brilliant talents and zeal for God, are held in bondage by their so-called leaders, and not suffered to pray in the congregation, neither to speak of what Jesus has done for their souls, neither to exhort or preach. Of such we would inquire, in the language of the apostle, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto men more than unto God." Acts 4:19. The position we have taken in this communication is, in our opinion, so clearly set forth in the bible as to convince the most skeptical men and women, that God approves of women declaring the story of the cross, as well as men, so that he that readeth may understand.⁶

In an article several years later, Fohl reminded his readers that redemption elevated women to noble rank. He called the women of the church to assume their rights that "by your influence and labors a great work may be accomplished in these latter days of degeneracy, as the harvest is great but also true and faithful laborers are few."⁷

Other support for such views may be found in the denominational papers. For example, several news items appeared during the mid-1880s in praise of contemporary women who were in evangelistic and preaching missions.⁸

Charles Baker of Nottawa, Ontario, provided the traditionalist voice during the 1890s on the role of women.⁹ Through his articles in the *Evangelical Visitor*, he declared his opposition to the advances of women in schools, factories, offices and the clergy, predicting disastrous results because of women's "onward march." He believed that the Scripture gave no allowance for women to preach in either the Old or New Testaments. Furthermore, "The only true and allowable sphere of feminine work which the Scripture warrants is in the thrones of the hearth."¹⁰

Several articles by A. J. Gordon were printed in the *Evangelical Visitor* around the turn of the century. Gordon, a Baptist minister, was a premillennial dispensationalist who interpreted women in the pulpit as a sign of the end times. In his view women preachers were not the exception but the rule of the current dispensation.¹¹ His article, "Let Them Be Heard," filled six and one-half pages of two consecutive issues of the paper. After a scholarly treatment of the Apostle Paul's writings and utilization of the gifts of women, he stated, near the end of the article:

It cannot be denied that in every great spiritual awakening in the history of Protestantism the impulse for Christian women to pray and witness for Christ in the public assembly has been found irrepressible To many it has been both a relief and a surprise to discover how little authority there is in the Word for repressing the witness of woman in the public assembly, or for forbidding her to herald the gospel to the unsaved. If this be so, it may be well for the plaintiffs in this case to beware lest, in silencing the voice of consecrated women they may be resisting the Holy Ghost.¹²

Asa Bearss, a minister in the Bertie Brethren in Christ Church in Ontario, Canada, held a similar position. In "Women's Rights," he noted with dismay, men have taken advantage of the physical weakness of women to oppress them and to keep them in a secondary position. The body of the article showed his knowledge of history as he quoted Aristotle, told of the plight of women in Roman and Greek history, as well as in the New Testament era and the centuries after Christ. Bearss believed that Saint Paul was giving his own sentiments when he silenced women in 1 Corinthians 14: 34, 35. Of those verses, Bearss had this interesting commentary:

Now if good old Paul was a good Methodist, or a superintendent in any Sunday School in the present century, he would be mortally ashamed of the above. Indeed, all that was written derogatory to the true position of women by the apostle may be directly traced to the popular and all pervading sentiment of the times in which they lived. Yet it is astonishing to know that in these modern times right among us, are those that construe the above language of Paul to mean that our women in the Church must keep their mouths shut as regards praying and prophesying in religious exercise.

One cannot help but wonder how this article was received,

especially his poignant closing paragraph:

It is a popular delusion that American women have as many, if not the same privileges as men. The conservative man exclaims, "We worship them as angels," and thoughtless women of affluence, and less favored women in humbler position bidding for masculine applause, respond, "We have all the rights we want." I tell you we men have no rights to give woman, she possesses naturally the same rights that we do, [and] if she does not enjoy them some one [sic] is in the wrong.¹³

When I first learned of Rhoda E. Lee's opportunity to read papers at the 1894 and 1895 Brethren in Christ General Conferences,¹⁴ I was puzzled as to the circumstances that made such an event possible, but no longer. For even if only a small number of our leaders were sympathetic with articles such as Gordon's, Bearss's, Fohl's and Graybill's, her request may not have been as foreign as it may seem to be today.

The Period from 1900-1969

The index of the *Evangelical Visitor* reveals a significant drop in numbers of articles printed on the subject of women and public ministry after 1911. Between 1921 and 1940 one piece was printed--a news item explaining the rationale for allowing two Presbyterian women to be charged as elders to minister in a leper asylum. Although the articles after 1940 have not been individually catalogued, I looked up the few articles listed under the role of women in the church and found none that spoke directly to the issue until 1970. This period of silence was not unlike what was happening in most Evangelical denominations. Janette Hassey says in *No Time For Silence* that as material containing biblical exegesis that opened the way for women in public ministry went out of print, little or no effort was made to replace it. Furthermore,

. . . women found declining opportunities for leadership in Evangelical churches, schools, and agencies as institutionalization squelched earlier charismatic forms. In worship as well as in education, this routinization set in. In this shift toward regulated,

more formalized church services, prayers and speaking were no longer left to chance. Structured rather than spontaneous, Spirit-led worship tended to exclude women from public participation in worship.¹⁵

Records show that in the early 1900s, women were recognized as evangelists in the Brethren in Christ Church. In the 1907 General Conference minutes, four women are listed with their husbands, who also were evangelists. At another location in the minutes, Alma LaGrange is listed as an assistant in evangelistic work.¹⁶ In the July 12, 1909, issue of the *Evangelical Visitor*, Mary J. Long, wife of Avery T. Long, wrote in letter form of her ministry of speaking and preaching with her husband. She noted that some people had trouble seeing a woman in the pulpit beside her husband. But she affirmed a personal, specific call from God through words of Scripture in Jonah. Editor George Detwiler added at the end of the letter that he printed it with timidity because it could be misunderstood and seen as "airing private grievances."¹⁷

In 1908 and again in 1911, the question of how to interpret 1 Corinthians 14:34,35 and 1 Timothy 2:11,12 was addressed in the *Evangelical Visitor*. Editor Detwiler invited the readers to "give the desired information in an early issue of the *Visitor*." All the men and women except one who had their replies printed tended toward a more narrow and traditional view that women for the most part should remain silent in church. The exceptions affirmed that single women were permitted to speak in the church and any women who spoke should give a testimony. However, N. O. Stewart from Martinsburg, Pennsylvania, felt that God's spirit fell upon all flesh so all should prophesy and use their talents. She stated further that if women were required to wear the prayer covering, they should not be required to be silent in church. Since it was to be worn while praying and prophesying, she believed that then she should "speak forth the praise of God."¹⁸

During the years 1915-1918 the *Evangelical Visitor* printed three articles suggesting that not all progressive thought was lost. J. H. Engle in the March 22, 1915, issue asked a host of questions about the purpose and activities of church conferences. He wanted to know whether women should attend and whether they should not be sent as delegates and given the right to vote.¹⁹

Anna E. Kipe in a 1916 article gave an encouraging report on the "present opportunities for women":

The doors of opportunity are being opened on every hand. There never was an age in which the call for the pure, true noble woman rang so clear [sic]. Now we stand in an open space with no bounds or limits to the work which might and can and should be done by the devoted and God-fearing woman As the vision of future possibilities and opportunities looms up, let us strive to realize them [sic]. There may be difficulties and obstacles but nothing which cannot be overcome.²⁰

John Climenhaga's lecture given at a Bible Conference entitled "Man's Redeemed or Regenerated Condition" was printed in the church paper in 1918. Climenhaga maintained that in the Fall, the equality of man and woman was broken, but redemption reinstated them to their former condition. He referred to Galatians 3:28 as support for his belief that God declared men and women to be on equal standing; therefore, "shall women not be permitted to testify, speak or preach as the Spirit of Jehovah dictates?"²¹

The church, however, in 1919 took a different and an official position on women as preachers. A study committee (M. H. Oberholser, J. N. Engle, and H. L. Trump) stated that women could prophesy but Scripture forbade their preaching. The following resolution, as printed in the 1919 *General Conference Minutes*, was passed by Conference: "Resolved, that we do not consider it the right of the woman to stand on equality with the man as a preacher."²²

As noted before, little appeared in church publications on the subject of women in ministry from 1940-1970. *Notes and Queries in Brethren in Christ History* printed several articles reporting the contributions of women in former years, namely Rhoda E. Lee and Hettie Fernbaugh. Of Rhoda E. Lee, Carlton O. Wittlinger stated that "today there is little denominational awareness that the launching of the Brethren in Christ foreign missions was due, in no small measure, to the influence of a remarkable woman, Rhoda E. Lee." Of the paper she read to the 1895 General Conference, Wittlinger said that she "probed mercilessly into the conscience and lethargy of the church."²³

The 1968 issue of *Notes and Queries* printed a report of the Findings Committee on a recent Study Conference on the Doctrine

of the Church. The third item in the consensus section, which listed the guidelines for an acceptable pastor, stated, "God calls men within the Church for particular ministries." Under issues for further study was "ways and means of securing men for the ministry and seeing them through adequate training and preparation for this ministry."²⁴ Obviously little room was provided for women in such considerations.

The Period from 1970-1979

Thus far during the twentieth century, women were without question making significant contributions to the church in its mission programs, Christian Education efforts, and as contributing writers to the church publications; however, this was not on the level of public ministry. But in the 1970s came a revival of interest in the subject.

In the September 25, 1970, issue of the *Evangelical Visitor* appeared a short news article in the Contemporary Scene section entitled, "Woman's Role in Church Being Challenged." UPI reporter Louis Cassel was quoted as saying that the church practiced discrimination against women longer than any other Western society. News of the Lutheran Church in America authorizing the ordination of women to the ministry received this comment: "It remains to be seen just what effect women will have in the future role of the church."²⁵

James R. Shelley in an article in *Notes and Queries* entitled, "The Life and Thought of H. Frances Davidson," referred to articles Davidson wrote which revealed her belief that one should be tolerant of differing views and faithful to one's own calling and faith, espousing more than the position of one's family and church. Although Shelley exposed some of the negative views persons had of Davidson's personality and actions, he closed the six-page paper by claiming that her "consecrated and devoted Christian life should be a challenge to all future generations of the Brethren in Christ Church."²⁶

Notes and Queries in its October 1970 issue printed, "The

Women--God Bless Them." Although the author chose to say only that the article was "By a Brethren in Christ Woman," other sources name the author as Miriam Bowers. She wrote of a Brethren in Christ Church where an invitation was given to respond to a call of Christian ministry as a vocation. Among those standing were some young women. Bowers sought to answer her own question of what possible avenue of service a woman could follow in the Brethren in Christ Church. Her brief review of the contribution of women in the past revealed that "they may have been given more recognition at the turn of the century than is now accorded to them."²⁷ At the time of the writing, she stated that no women had served on a major denominational board within the past fifty years. She challenged the readers to consider the great potential of women in the past and the present, and that "perhaps the time has come for officials to give consideration to their position and to grant to women equal and fully recognized opportunities to serve Christ through His church."²⁸

As though to register a male response, Carlton O. Wittlinger authored a December 1970 *Evangelical Visitor* article entitled, "The Role of Women in the Church." He began by asking, "What should we make of the fact, for example, that the structures and decision-making processes of our church life are so overwhelmingly male dominated? Is this the outcome of a well-conceived theology of the roles of men and women, or is it the result of social acculturation?" After listing seven current situations that revealed how little women were utilized, he asked, "Should we not face squarely the possibility that the contemporary situation may be an affront to the dignity and waste of the talents of Brethren in Christ women?"²⁹

Lucille Sider Dayton in 1975 stressed in an *Evangelical Visitor* article "that the discussion is not new," for "evangelical Christians in the last century struggled deeply with many of the same issues that are surfacing today." She referred to Catherine Booth, Phoebe Palmer, and Francis Willard as examples of those who found that a woman's place, as a man's, "is not any set place." She questioned, "Is the Brethren in Christ Church encouraging women to be open to this variety of calls?" and asked, "Will the church force her to bury her talent, stay in her place, and miss God's best for her?"³⁰

An undated paper by Lucille Marr entitled "The Role of Women

in the Brethren in Christ Church in Historical Perspective" is filed in the Brethren in Christ Archives.³¹ Likely written in the mid-1970s, three articles also were printed in the *Evangelical Visitor* by Marr in late 1975 containing some of the same material found in the paper. Her research records interesting accounts of women in the past who found ways to serve, and noted the contemporary status of women delegates to General Conference. She points out that the impact of the Wesleyan Holiness movement allowed for greater involvement on the part of women, especially in the revivalistic movements. Also conversely, as the holiness doctrine became legislated, the freedom of women to participate in church structures was limited, and more narrowly defined.³²

Minutes of the July 3, 1975, joint meeting of the Board of Bishops and the Ministerial Credentials Board record that Roy Peterman was asked to do a theological study on the principles and problems in the credentialing and ordaining of women. Peterman's paper, entitled "The Role of Women In Our Churches," considered women in the New Testament, commented on Paul's teaching, and asked for a reconsideration of women's roles in today's Brethren in Christ Church. He further asserted that the Apostle Paul's teachings have been used to maintain the status quo. He called the church to "provide equal opportunities for all in the body of Christ to use their gifts for the benefit and building up of the church."³³

A positive note appears in the report of the Ministerial Credential Committee to General Conference in 1976. Instead of stating that their duty was to process applications of "men" who wish to enter the ministry, they indicated that they processed the papers of "those" who wished to enter the ministry. The board also reported two meetings after the 1974 Conference with the Board of Bishops to discuss mutual concerns, one of which was "women's role in ministerial and pastoral leadership . . ."³⁴

In the same year Debbie Sisco reported in the *Evangelical Visitor* on a recent conference at Lombard, Illinois, on women in ministry. After reviewing the concerns raised at this conference, she concluded with several hard questions:

Can we deny a woman who has sensed a call from God and has the appropriate gifts the privilege of pastoring a church? Some of us may have no personal objections to women serving as

pastors. But do we have the courage to help such women find a church in which to serve? We have trusted women to teach the Good News to children in their important, formative, growing up years. Can we not trust them to preach a credible gospel to adults as well?³⁵

Sisco's article led the editor to print a response letter from Martha Baker Cover. The letter stated a sadness that the article was printed, since there were plenty of opportunities for women to serve. It stated strongly that although women's way of serving was no less important than men's, their way of serving was not *like* men's.³⁶

In the March 10, 1977, issue of the *Evangelical Visitor*, John Zercher's editorial asked for ideas for graduate research projects that could benefit the church. To that request Ruth Zook, missionary to Japan, wrote and suggested a study "on the place of women in the ministry of the church." She called for something that was balanced and not defensive of the position of either men or women.³⁷ Jay McDermond replied to Ruth Zook's suggestion in a letter to the editor in the May 25 issue, suggesting that the subject was one whose time had come. He called for the church to make an official statement on the issue and suggested that the Peace and Social Concerns Committee should be commissioned to draft such a paper and present it at the 1978 General Conference.³⁸

That General Conference asked the Board of Administration to study the church's position regarding women and the pastoral ministry and take to the 1980 General Conference a statement with possible manual revision recommendations. The Board of Administration was to be in consultation with the Ministerial Credentials Board, the Peace and Social Concerns Committee, local congregations, and other resource groups.³⁹

Two books published in 1978 and released at the bicentennial General Conference at Grantham, Pennsylvania, highlighted the role of women in the church. As already indicated, Carlton O. Wittlinger for several years had been drawing attention to the contributions of women; now in his *Quest for Piety and Obedience* he asserted throughout the volume that women had been both largely lacking in opportunities to serve, and had, nevertheless, served well where they could, as in the missions movement (see "women" in the index for a suggestion of his intent to bring women into his account).

E. Morris Sider's *Nine Portraits* attempted to do much the same. Sider purposefully chose two of the nine biographies to be women--Sarah Bert and Frances Davidson--and in both cases undertook a study of the difficulties under which such women served the church (including their relationships with men leaders) and the work they accomplished, despite the odds against them.

The Period from 1980-1987

The 1980s started on an encouraging note for those in the denomination who hoped for a more equal utilization of the talents and gifts of all members. The Board of Administration appointed a Committee on Women and Pastoral Ministry, which met in November 1979 and April 1980. The committee asked the Board of Administration for the privilege of meeting with a representative from the Board of Bishops, the Board of Missions, the Board of Christian Education, and the Ministerial Credentials Board. These representatives met with the committee in their April 26, 1980, meeting, in which papers and reports were read in fulfillment of committee members' earlier assignments. Lynn Thrush presented his paper, "The Theology of Women in Pastoral Ministry," followed by Dorothy Gish and Winnie Thuma, who read papers in response.

As part of the committee's report of the April 1980 meeting, the following discussion and interchange items were listed: note the significance of what Christ did in his interchange with women; proceed with a low-key approach to the issue within the denomination; look for ways to educate at the ministerial and lay levels; allow change to take place slowly, so success in performance can affirm the ministry of women; and view team ministry and co-authority as having positive implications as well as complications.

The committee noted their willingness to make specific recommendations but saw worth in allowing educative processes to precede recommendations. Members considered they should move deliberately, using the papers of Thrush, Gish, and Thuma as

resource materials. They asked the Board of Administration about possible hearings at the 1980 General Conference, using the three papers at a pastor's seminar, and having articles printed for the *Evangelical Visitor*, including some of their research and findings.⁴⁰

For the General Conference, the Board of Administration's report included a "Supplementary Report Re: The Church's Position Regarding Women and the Pastoral Ministry." This supplementary report contained an account of the 1979 meeting of the Committee on Women and Pastoral Ministry and recommended that General Conference receive the report "as a progress report with a final report and recommendation(s) to come to the 1982 General Conference."⁴¹

On the more negative side of the issue was an article appearing in the July 10, 1980, issue of the *Evangelical Visitor* selected from the *Alliance Witness* and written by Rev. and Mrs. Paul Bubna, entitled "Evangelicals and Feminism." Traditionalist in their views, the Bubnas spoke strongly for keeping male and female roles distinct, and to show what happened when the distinction was not kept, quoted primarily radical feminists.⁴² All four letters that the editor printed in response to the article were opposed to the Bubna article; two of the respondents called for the editor to print more articles and letters on the subject. Later in the year (December 10, 1980 issue), in a letter to the editor, a reader responded in agreement with the Bubna article.⁴³

In response to a grassroots forum held at the 1980 General Conference, *Network*, a small paper somewhat in newsletter format, began publication, the first issue appearing in July of that year. Editors Laurie Frey and Wanda Thuma stated the purpose of *Network* to be the following: first, to provide a means of exchange of ideas among those concerned about roles of women in the Brethren in Christ Church; second, to become aware of others concerned about the issue and to provide a support system; third, to do consciousness-raising about the issue throughout the Brethren in Christ body of believers in preparation for the 1982 General Conference; and fourth, to examine alternate roles and practices for women in the Brethren in Christ Church.⁴⁴

After the first three monthly issues, the name of the paper was changed to *Alabaster Jar* for the October 1980 issue. The 1980 issues

included systematic scripture-study papers written by Sara Petrosky (a Messiah College student) and her interviews with E. Morris Sider and Alden Long. Both men, professors at the college and prominent in the denomination, expressed encouraging affirmation of women entering public ministry; they understood the Apostle Paul's teaching about women to be more cultural than commands for all ages.⁴⁵

Laurie Frey, in addition to serving as editor of *Network* and *Alabaster Jar* in 1980, also wrote a paper for her Comparative Social Institutions at Messiah College entitled "Women in the Church: A Comparative Study of Women in the New Testament and the Contemporary Christian Church." She provided insight on why the church as a whole has failed to recognize the equal worth of women and men. She offered reasons that keep society from being willing to change traditional roles, and stated that it is imperative for the church to "become mindful of woman. When they do, they open the doors to a wealth of creativity, compassion and intelligence."⁴⁶ A two-page article by Laurie Frey also appeared in the October 25, 1980, issue. In it she asked questions about the future roles for women in the Brethren in Christ Church and called on the church to cease restricting unique abilities by placing gender restrictions on its people.

During 1981, although the *Evangelical Visitor* published no articles on ministry roles and women, *Alabaster Jar* continued to be published monthly with a mailing list of approximately 150.⁴⁷ The June and July issues of *Alabaster Jar* printed Lynn Thrush's paper, "The Theology of Women in Pastoral Ministry" in its entirety. The following two issues contained the corresponding response papers by Dorothy Gish and Winifred Thuma. Each of the papers, deserving careful study by the church even in the last years of the 1980s, expressed a sensitive and balanced look at the issue, taking care not to violate the Scriptures.

Word of a Brethren in Christ Women's Resource list (contained in a larger Resource that included Mennonite women) first appeared in the October 1981 issue of *Alabaster Jar*. Throughout the next years, updates of the list were announced in the *Evangelical Visitor* with information on how to obtain it.

The issue of women on denominational boards and committees was by this time provoking some debate. In answer to Earl Herr's

question in the January 25, 1982, issue of the *Evangelical Visitor* about the biblical rationale for having boards and agencies with equal numbers of male and female members, Robert Keller replied that the church was not making a desperate attempt to achieve this goal, neither was it a trend of the church to do so. While he praised women for their contributions to the church and apologized to them for depriving them of opportunities to share their God-given talents, he made the following observation: "I personally believe there are roles of church leadership that should idealistically be left to men, but as a pastor, I think I hear God calling so often to the men of the church, 'Man, where are you?' and while the man is hiding from his responsibilities, women are often pressed into the unsolicited position of answering, 'Here am I, Lord, send me!'"⁴⁸

General Conference Minutes of 1982 made an unprecedented affirmation of women and ministry. Item 5 of the Recommendations of the Board of Administration "Re: Women and Ministry" reads as follows:

WHEREAS God has gifted men and women for service in the church through the pouring out of the Holy Spirit; and
 WHEREAS women and men were called to leadership roles in both the Old and New Testaments; and,
 WHEREAS the Christian church has been built up through the faithful service of women as well as men, in many spheres of service--missions, education, medicine, languages, etc., and
 WHEREAS the Brethren in Christ Church has specifically prospered through the service and leadership of the sisters, in both the past and present, with no evidence of General Conference rulings restricting the exercise of their gifts.

We therefore RECOMMEND:

- a. That General Conference affirm the ministry of women in the life and programs of the church; and,
- b. That the paper, "Theology of Women in Pastoral Ministry," prepared for the study process, be circulated to the brotherhood at large.
- c. That the General Conference authorize the Board of Administration to keep the matter of women in ministry before the church through on-going study and discussion.

ACTION: Recommendation adopted as amended.⁴⁹

The *Alabaster Jar* after the May/June 1982 issue became incorporated as one section of the *Peace and Justice Newsletter*. The

"Alabaster Jar" column from 1982 through the Winter 1985 issue focused primarily on women in ministry. The *Peace and Justice Newsletter* became *Shalom* with the Winter 1985 issue and carried the "Alabaster Jar" column. The column, however, became broader in scope, moving away from a primary focus on women in ministry. Meanwhile a revision in the *Manual of Doctrine of Government* of the Brethren in Christ Church (1984) eliminated all references to ministers and deacons being male only. In the same year, the Ministerial Credentials Board reported to General Conference its adoption of a statement allowing persons in chaplaincy ministry the privilege of reporting regularly to the bishop, and of becoming recipients of all other rights of active ministers in the church.⁵⁰ Elsewhere in the minutes of General Conference two women were named as having received a ministerial license in the past biennium (a third woman received a license but her name did not appear in the minutes).

In October 1984, "Phoebe's Journal" became a regular column in the *Evangelical Visitor*. The anonymous author recorded her struggle between the pull of motherhood and the pull to utilize other gifts she had. She regularly called for open-mindedness about roles of women and men. The March 1986 column, entitled "Releasing Women to Serve," specifically addressed the issue of women in ministry and called attention to the pragmatic problems most women face when agreeing to work on regional and denominational boards.

Articles by other authors on the subject of women in ministry were largely absent in the *Evangelical Visitor* after 1982 except for Brenda Brubaker's article in 1985. Her article, written for a class assignment in the Brethren in Christ Life and Thought course at Messiah College, called for the church to allow its women who were called and gifted to serve anywhere and in any position in which their talents are needed.⁵¹

The 1986 *General Conference Minutes* listed the first woman to a pastoral assignment,⁵² reported two women who completed the written exam for the Board for Ministry and Doctrine,⁵³ one woman who also completed the oral examination,⁵⁴ and one woman whose four-year license was renewed.⁵⁵ However, no women appeared on the approved list for ordination.

Of the twenty-eight workshops conducted at the 1986 General Conference, three were led by women.⁵⁶ None of the workshops, however, addressed the subject of women in ministry. The Conference, however, did elicit comments in the August 1986 issue of the *Evangelical Visitor* about being a woman at General Conference. Most of the comments written by Arlene Miller and "Phoebe" noted significant changes which showed more equal participation of women and men at the General Conference and on the various boards.

Personal Reflections

Work on this paper has been an enlightening experience for me, not void of a wide range of emotions. I was not prepared for the open-minded ideas expressed by writers in the early issues of the *Evangelical Visitor* prior to the twentieth century. My research in these last three years has revealed many authors of other denominations who exegeted Scripture in the late nineteenth century that freed women to serve as God called them. I wept when I learned that decades went by before Evangelicals would again uncover some of the earlier material and come to many of the same conclusions through their own study. My sadness was no less to discover similar circumstances within our own denomination. I realize that the more progressive thinking was likely confined to the Midwest and the West and thus did not reflect the thinking of the whole group. However, we followed their progressive ideas into developing Sunday schools, home missions, overseas missions, and higher education. Why did the church let its scriptural interpretation about women take on such a narrow view, while the interpretations of early writers were left to die?

My own interest in the Brethren in Christ position on the issue of women in ministry began in 1984. In August 1983, I saw an announcement in the *Evangelical Visitor* inviting interested persons to a "Women in Ministry" Conference in Harrisonburg, Virginia, in

May 1984. I attended this conference. It was a positive, consciousness-raising experience, and for the first time I met women who had followed their call from the Lord into pastoral and other public ministries. I received encouragement and a listening ear from others at the conference in whom I confided concerning my struggles over wanting to go to school but not knowing how to handle what I sensed as a call that seemed in opposition to Scripture.

Even though I had been a member of the Brethren in Christ Church for fourteen years, somehow all the action by the church during the 1970s and early 1980s which I have reported in this research paper had evaded me. I had attended two General Conferences (1971 and 1976) but I cannot recall if the 1978 decision to study the matter of women in ministry was reported in our congregation. I was not aware of *Network* or *Alabaster Jar* being published or that Lynn Thrush had written a paper on the subject which was studied by the denominational boards and distributed throughout the brotherhood. My first clue as to the church's position came as I read the portfolio for the 1984 General Conference and discovered the changes in wording for the *Manual of Doctrine and Government*, which eliminated all references to ministers and deacons as being male. It was a high moment for me when the final reading of those changes received the needed vote of approval.

As suggested by the Committee on Women and Pastoral Ministry in April 1980, a low-key approach within the denomination has been taken. That committee suggested that if change takes place slowly, then success in performance can affirm the ministry of women. I trust that we can see some successes in performance now that we have proceeded seven more years in our church life.

The area which concerns me most, however, is the educative processes. The General Conference in 1982 authorized the Board of Administration to keep the matter of women in ministry before the church through on-going study and discussion. It is becoming more evident that women, called to ministry with the needed education, will receive a green light from our bishops, our educational professors, our *Manual of Doctrine and Government*, and other leaders of denominational boards and committees. But the light changes to red at the local church board and congregational level. Some very basic

and simple ways of educating at the ministerial and lay levels are to have books available on the subject at the Regional and General Conferences and in the Christian Light Bookstores, and making available a bibliography of recommended books to our pastors and church librarians (this letter would be an inexpensive tool). And why not have a General Conference sermon to address the subject, or, at the very least, have one of the General Conference workshops designated for learning more about women in ministry?

A series of articles in the *Evangelical Visitor* could serve as an effective, educative tool, especially since more churches are involved in efforts to see that all their families receive the publication. I wonder what positive results could have been accomplished had Lynn Thrush's paper and the corresponding response papers been printed in the *Evangelical Visitor* after the 1982 recommendations of the Board of Administration were adopted at General Conference.

I was encouraged with the openness of the pastors with whom I took the 1987 core course on Brethren in Christ history. Many of them affirmed me in my educational pursuits and ministry goals. Pastors who are not opposed to seeing women in public speaking positions are likely allowing women in their congregations to serve in various ways, and that should continue. But is there not one church that would be ready to hire a woman as assistant pastor as a model of how it could work successfully? It seems to me that in order for us to know what positive implications or complications team ministry and co-authority will have, one or two churches will need to be willing to be the pioneers.

This issue will not go away and neither should it. If the Brethren in Christ Church doubles in the next decade or even in the next two decades, we shall need all the called and ministry-gifted persons we have. As they learn of the affirming action and words of Jesus and the Apostle Paul and hear encouragement from their pastors, family and friends, women will become dedicated leaders along with men who also are called of God. I believe the results will bring unprecedented blessings from the Lord upon the joint efforts of all His anointed ones.

Seventeen years ago I made an adult decision to become a faithful member of the Brethren in Christ Church. I, with other

women in the church, want to serve this denomination and do not want to pursue positions in other denominations where women have been ministering professionally for years. I also want to be a peacemaker. Therefore, I am willing to be patient and love my brothers and sisters who do not share my views. We need to listen and to love one another as is the tradition of our church, even though we may be on opposite sides of the issue.

Not every woman should pursue pastoral or other public ministry, as neither should every man. Undoubtedly, however, there are other women who, with me, have been unable to shake a call of God since childhood. Discovering that the principles of Scripture do not condemn our call is comparable to discovering wings that permit us to go into areas where before we could only longingly look from the outside.

So that we do not lose what has been gained as a church during these last two decades, this is a call for many Brethren in Christ women and men to work, study and grow together, maintaining an atmosphere of love in which God can use all of us to serve this present age.

NOTES

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² Janette Hassey, *No Time For Silence* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: The Academie Books, 1986), p. 120.

³ Henry N. Engle, "Prophesy," *Evangelical Visitor*, October 1, 1887, p. 23.

⁴ S. E. Graybill, "Propheying," *Evangelical Visitor*, February 1, 1899, p. 1.

⁵ "Women in the New Testament," *Evangelical Visitor*, February 15, 1893, p. 54.

⁶ John Fohl, "Let Your Women Keep Silence in the Churches," *Evangelical Visitor*, September 15, 1893, pp. 278, 279.

⁷ John Fohl, "Rights of Women," *Evangelical Visitor*, August 15, 1899, p. 302.

⁸ *Evangelical Visitor*, July 15, 1895, p. 215; January 9, 1895, p. 270; January 2, 1897, p. 34.

⁹ Charles Baker, "Teaching," *Evangelical Visitor*, February 15, 1895, pp. 54, 55, and "Women's Sphere," October 1, 1896, pp. 297-300.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 300.

¹¹ Hassey, *No Time for Silence*, p. 110.

¹² A. J. Gordon, "Let Them Be Heard," *Evangelical Visitor*, April 15, 1895, pp. 121-124, and May 5, 1895, pp. 130-133.

¹³ A. Bearss, "Women's Rights," *Evangelical Visitor*, December 1, 1895, pp. 354-357.

¹⁴ For Lee's activity at General Conference, see Carlton O. Wittlinger, *Quest for Piety and Obedience* (Nappanee, Ind.: Evangel Press, 1978), pp. 179-181.

¹⁵ Hassey, *No Time for Silence*, pp. 140-142.

¹⁶ *General Conference Minutes* (1907), pp. 23, 70.

¹⁷ Mary J. Long, "From Sister Long," *Evangelical Visitor*, July 12, 1909, pp. 12-13.

¹⁸ N. O. Stewart, "Letter to the Editor," *Evangelical Visitor*, April 3, 1911, p. 10.

¹⁹ J. H. Engle, *Evangelical Visitor*, March 22, 1915, pp. 31-32.

²⁰ Anna E. Kipe, "The Vision of Woman," *Evangelical Visitor*, June 26, 1916, pp. 12-14.

²¹ John Climenhaga, "Man's Redeemed or Regenerated Condition," *Evangelical Visitor*, April 22, 1918, pp. 5, 6.

²² *General Conference Minutes* (1919), p. 36.

²³ Carlton O. Wittlinger, "Rhoda E. Lee, Missionary Enthusiant," *Notes and Queries* (July 1961), 11, 15.

²⁴ *Notes and Queries* (October 1968), 43, 44.

²⁵ "Women's Role in the Church Being Challenged," *Evangelical Visitor*, September 25, 1970, p. 16.

²⁶ James R. Shelley, "The Life and Thought of H. Frances Davidson," *Notes and Queries* (October 1970), 42.

²⁷ Miriam Bowers, "The Women--God Bless Them," *Notes and Queries* (October 1970), 46,47.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 47.

²⁹ C. O. Wittlinger, "The Role of Women in the Church," *Evangelical Visitor*, December 10, 1970, p. 16.

- ³⁰ Lucille Sider Dayton, "Woman's Place . . .," *Evangelical Visitor*, June 25, 1975, p. 12.
- ³¹ Lucille Marr, "The Role of Women in the Brethren in Christ Church in Historical Perspective." Paper written in the mid-1970s.
- ³² Lucille Marr, "Sisters and Brothers," *Evangelical Visitor*, September 25, 1975, p. 6.
- ³³ Roy Peterman, "The Role of Women in Our Churches." Paper by Peterman, deposited in the Archives of the Brethren in Christ Church with Henry A. Ginder papers.
- ³⁴ *General Conference Minutes* (1976), pp. 141-142.
- ³⁵ Debbie Sisco, "Reflection and Questions," *Evangelical Visitor*, August 25, 1976, p. 6.
- ³⁶ Martha Baker Cover, "Letter to the Editor," *Evangelical Visitor*, September 25, 1976, p. 2.
- ³⁷ Ruth Zook, "Letter to the Editor," *Evangelical Visitor*, April 10, 1977, p. 2.
- ³⁸ Jay McDermond, "Letter to the Editor," *Evangelical Visitor*, May 25 1977, p. 2.
- ³⁹ *General Conference Minutes* (1978), p. 87.
- ⁴⁰ Progress Report to the BOA of the April 26, 1980 meeting of the Committee on Women and Pastoral Ministry. Archives of the Brethren in Christ Church.
- ⁴¹ *General Conference Minutes* (1980), pp. 38, 39.
- ⁴² Paul and Jean Bubna, "Evangelicals and Feminism," *Evangelical Visitor*, July 10, 1980, pp. 3-5.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, September 25, 1980, pp. 14, 15.
- ⁴⁴ *Network*, July, 1980, p. 1.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, September 1980, and *Alabaster Jar*, December 1980.
- ⁴⁶ Laurie Frey, "Women in the Church: A Comparative Study of Women in the New Testament Church and the Contemporary Christian Church." From a paper by Laurie Frey, deposited in the Archives of the Brethren in Christ Church, pp. 20, 21.
- ⁴⁷ *Alabaster Jar*, April 1981.
- ⁴⁸ Earl Herr, *Evangelical Visitor*, 1982, p. 14 and Robert Keller, "I Too Am Looking For Rationale," *ibid.*, March 10, 1982, p. 14.
- ⁴⁹ *General Conference Minutes* (1982), p. 85.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.* (1984), pp. 149, 150.
- ⁵¹ Brenda Brubaker, *Evangelical Visitor*, July 1985, p. 29.
- ⁵² *General Conference Minutes* (1986), p. 57.
- ⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

54 Ibid.

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God's Order Is Familial

*By William David Spencer and Aida Besancon Spencer**

People were starting to get disenchanted with Jesus. Certainly, he looked good back in Galilee when thousands were flocking to be healed and every wedding party had to have Jesus to be a big success. If you went out to hear him in the wilderness, you did not have to worry. Some child remembered to bring a lunch and everybody feasted. Sure, people were dropping their nets and following him about. The land was rich and the sea was full of fish, and you could always pick up again with life. But the closer he got in his long journey to bleak, desert-framed Jerusalem, so barren and harsh, that stark rock upon which many a prophet's message had floundered and sunk, the less plausible Jesus seemed to become.

Now the rich young ruler hears the sweet message but turns in sadness back to reality (Lk. 18:18-30). Now the scribes and Pharisees bait him and judge him against the strict codes of law. And now the disciples, too, begin to wonder. So, Jesus tells them a story, one about a poor woman who has nothing but dogged persistence to use against a crooked judge who has all the power switches on his side of the wall to flip on or flick off at will. Luke explains, "Jesus told them a parable, to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose

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heart": the parable of the persistent widow.¹ At the end of that story, Jesus promises his disciples, "God will prove that your faith in me was not vain. You can trust me But, when I, your child, the child of the human race, come, will I find faith on earth?" Essentially, "Can I trust you?" When Jesus comes back, will he find faith on earth?

We have one decade to go and we end this present century and begin another. Everywhere people are making predictions for the future. Years ago Francis Schaeffer wrote a book called *The Church at the End of the Twentieth Century*. Well, what should the church do at the end of the twentieth century? What should we be about? We think Luke 18:8 outlines a blueprint from which we should build our next decade, a platform we should construct on which we can stand and build the future. Our task at this conference is to explore from every aspect the biblical teaching on women's roles in ministry. Our task in this introduction is to set a theological tone, an attitude with which to approach the text. Do we want to see the "theological underpinnings" of women's participation in ministry? We might begin here with this verse with our human and Christian response to this challenge of Jesus.

How did Jesus do ministry? Jesus always worked as part of a team. Jesus did so because his work fleshed out for us a picture of the true nature of God. All good theology goes back to who God is, and this case with which we are dealing is a perfect example of the fact. Who is God revealed to us to be? The foundational revelation to the Christian church is that the God we worship is one God, somehow by nature plural, not three Gods, but one God in substance whose single nature is actually unified, a three-in-one plurality in unity. You see, the Godhead is a perfect team who is one. The great confession of Israel in Deuteronomy 6:4 reads, "Hear O Israel, the Lord [singular] our Gods [plural], the Lord [singular] is one." The concept of the Trinity is built right into the *shema* ("Hear"), Israel's great confession, waiting for Jesus to come and explain this mystery of the God who is one but at the same time three.

Humanity too is in a way plurality in unity in God's sight. In Genesis 1:26 the triune God says within Godself: "Let us make the human [singular] in our image, after our likeness; and let them [plural] have dominion . . ." So verse 27 states: "God [plural]

created the human [singular] in his [that is, God's][singular] image, in the image of God [plural] he [singular] created him [singular], male and female he [singular] created them [plural]," a shifting back and forth, back and forth between singularity and plurality of both God's and humans' designation. So, ultimately the single human, the Adam, is created plural. Thus humanity expresses God's image by male and female: two humans who become one creature in God's eyes in holy marriage (Gen. 2:24). (This is a point on which Walter Wangerin bases his marriage manual *As for Me and My House*--that marriage makes a new single living creature in God's eyes.)

Therefore, you can see why ministry for God through Jesus was an extension of God's relationships to earth. The Holy Trinity extended its relationship of love on to us through one member, God walking among us. So, Jesus established saving relationships with faithful disciples, and God through those disciples extended those relationships over the centuries until we here joined the family of Christ. Thus, all the diverse group of Jesus' disciples--Jews, Greeks, Africans, Latin Americans, the Swedish, the Polish, the Chinese, the Finns, the Dutch, the Norwegians, the Filipinos--all of us become one ministering united body, of which Christ is the Head.

All of us are Christ's Team. Therefore, in essence, *all ministry is team ministry*. No one really ministers alone. At the very least, team ministry is the *mighty God* working through us. After all, we don't save anyone! The Holy Spirit does but deems to work through us.

These days God does not normally choose to work alone through visible supernatural manifestations on a regular basis, dropping like the Shekinah glory right into our midst, but God chooses to work through the church. All single people are part of a ministering body. All married people are part of an extended family. No Christian is really alone. *We have no Lone Rangers*. We may refuse to recognize the rest of the body of Christ, or some half of the body of Christ, but this does not mean that God does not understand us and our part as at one with theirs or as dependent on theirs or unified with theirs. Christianity is a corporate religion. It is a citizenry in a nation: the new Israel, also known as the reign of God. Christianity is only individualistic to the extent of being born into that reign, swearing

personal allegiance and becoming a citizen. After that act of enrollment, that act of enlistment, then as the gospel song says, "I am just another soldier in the army of God." Our job is to discover our particular contribution, our particular gift, our function in the body of Christ.

Now, how do we do that? In the afterword to *Beyond the Curse*² we list ways you can facilitate working cooperatively with other Christians: mutual respect, building each other up, developing a sense of community, helping others find and develop their gifts, and modeling how to work cooperatively.

The problem is that the church has gotten into the Star Syndrome. Pastors become personalities like T. V. hosts! In fact, some pastors actually do become T. V. hosts or radio hosts. Real parish ministry is to T. V. religion as ballet is to belly dancing. (The actual spiritual thought and action agents--the vanguard--the front line is the parish pastor, but the stars get the glitter.) As a result, star-struck pastors start developing all the problems with immorality and ego-tripping and power abuse of the T. V. and rock stars. And not just television pastors but pastors everywhere are getting into the power abuse problem. Stardom and its fallout are epidemic whether we become "Christian family celebrities," or "Christian social action specialists," or proponents of any other such truly worthwhile topics. The temptation is insidious. The accumulation and abuse of power is perhaps the foremost problem in today's church.

Jessica Hahn is a perfect example. Here is a young girl traditionally trained to serve the pastor every day and night at the church: typing bulletins, bringing coffee, running errands. She wasn't growing in God, but she was growing in obedience as a go-fer. So, servicing the pastor in yet one more way as a woman was what she'd been trained for. Then she transferred naturally to Hugh Hefner, another daddy-in-control. What she was trained to do she was still doing. Only the content has changed--the style, the medium, is the same.

Are we in the church training people to grow in the fruits of the Spirit--in love, patience, gentleness, joy, kindness, self-control, peace, goodness? Or, are we simply training them to a beast-like obedience? The gift pastors look for the most in their people

sometimes seems to be the gift of attendance. Here's my question: What do the T. V. evangelists encourage in people? Any of these fruits? Do they make them grow in love? joy? peace? patience? No! What do they call for? Commitment and zeal. Yes, but the Nazis had commitment and zeal. So does the Ku Klux Klan, and they have religion as well.

Now ask yourself: what does my church encourage people to grow in? Does it help Christians develop their gifts? Does it help us grow in the fruits of the Spirit? Does it help us reach maturity, to become ourselves leaders? Or does it keep us followers, religious voyeurs, milk drinkers to applaud pastors?

If we only had but one thing we were permitted to share with you, we would remind you of Luke 18:8. When Jesus returns to earth, will anything we do in his name be recognizable as Christianity? There's only one star in Christianity: Jesus Christ! Everybody else is part of the road crew, enlisting local support through conversions and training. God wants a smoothly operating team. Honor for us comes from God for doing well our parts in God's overall schema. We are working toward the goal of having the great One God say to us: "Well done, good and faithful servant [that is, one of God's servers]." We want always to be on the watch to avoid the pitfalls.

Most insidious of all is what happens to good people, and even good Christians, because of our present understanding of traditional roles. Particularly damaging is our view of work as not team-oriented but as individualistic. When work isolates you from your spouse, you begin to share your joys, defeats, and victories with your co-worker or with your secretary. He or she becomes your helpmeet. You may go home and tell your spouse about your day, but you share that day with others. Soon they become more familiar to you than your family. Platonically (at least at first) they become your actual one flesh. We are appalled to see many people go into work on holidays. Yes, that's their true home. Many of us can't do anything about this problem on the job. The secular world locks us into its rules.

But we can do something about it in the church! The church must not be a fragmenter of families. Ministry must not be the third

party that separates spouses! Gordon Macdonald provided us a full and sober warning. Christianity is a familial religion. Make it less than that and we stand at serious risk! We need to recapture that unity in our plurality that characterizes the nature of God in the nature of our ministries. If God gave the earth to the dominion of the plural human, how do we now in Christ's name fragment that human and assign blind power to one half and blind obedience to the other? Our Lord showed us by example that all ministry in the body of Christ is team ministry.

How can all ministry be team ministry if women are not allowed to do every kind of ministry? How can we be co-workers if women and men can not always work together? Are women encouraged to be authoritative leaders in the New Testament? We think that we have in the New Testament conclusive proof that women held and were approved in positions considered authoritative in the first-century church, and women were given gifts from the Spirit for positions to which we now ordain people.

Paul tells the church at Corinth in I Corinthians 12:27-30: "But you are [the] body of Christ and a member of a part.³ And God appointed (placed/arranged) in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, then healers, helpers, administrators [directors], speakers in various kinds of tongues. All aren't apostles, are they? All aren't prophets, are they? All aren't teachers, are they? All aren't miracle workers, are they? All don't have gifts of healing, do they? All don't speak in tongue/languages, do they? All don't translate, do they?"

What distinguishes an apostle, prophet and teacher? When we hear the words "first, second, third . . .," we envision these terms as referring to positions with the highest authority, honor, and status. Paul may simply have been using the terms "first, second, third" to refer to the order of foundational priority. The apostle's testimony to the resurrection is the cornerstone of faith. The prophet says, "Thus says the Holy Spirit." The teacher explains. If there is no apostle to witness personally to the resurrection, how can people then go on to teach? What is authority anyway? As we fulfill our spiritual gift, we have authority, legitimate power, delegated from God. We can find a female example of the top three positions of authority (or

priority): apostle, prophet, teacher. If we do so, can we not reasonably conclude that women held and were approved in positions considered authoritative in the first-century church?

Do we have a female apostle? What was an apostle? An apostle was someone who had seen Jesus (I Cor. 9:1) or, more specifically, someone who had accompanied the original twelve from the time John baptized until Jesus ascended (Acts 14:14), as is Silvanus (I Thess. 1:1; 2:6) and James the Lord's brother (Gal. 1:19). With this definition of "apostle," apostles would include the 500 "brethren" in I Corinthians 15:5-9. Among that 500 could be included Mary Magdalene; Joanna; Mary the mother of Jesus; Mary the mother of James, the son of Alphaeus; Salome the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee. All these women were "apostles." They were witnesses to Jesus' life and resurrection and they were sent with a commission: "Go quickly and tell Jesus' disciples that he has risen from the dead" (Mat. 28:7; Mk. 16:7; Lk. 24:10).

Is any woman called an apostle? Junia in Romans 16:7 is called an "apostle." Paul ends his letter to the Romans by affirming Andronicus and Junia as "my fellow citizens and my fellow prisoners, who are prominent among the apostles, they also came before me in Christ." Junia is a common Latin woman's name. (Junius is the male counterpart; as Prisca is the feminine of Priscus, Julia is the feminine of Julius.) Scholars have posited that Junia came from Junias, which was a shortened form of Junianus (a male's name). To date, not one single Latin or Greek inscription has "Junias" for a man. Why? Latin diminutives (nicknames) were formed by lengthening, not shortening, a name. For example, Priscilla is a diminutive of Prisca. (Junianus is a child's nickname for Junius.) How did early commentators understand Junia? Did they think "Junia" was a man's name? Chrysostom in the 300s wrote (*Homily on the Epistle of St. Paul the Apostle to the Romans 31*): "Oh! How great is the devotion of this woman, that she should be even counted worthy of the appellation of apostle!"

How about women prophets? What is a prophet? A prophet is someone who receives and speaks forth a message from God. (Is authority not inherent in such a position?) According to I Corinthians 14:3, a prophet speaks to people during worship for their

edification, encouragement, and consolation so that all can learn (*manthano*, I Cor. 14:31). As opposed to someone who speaks in an angelic language, a prophet uses his/her mind (I Cor. 13:1; 14:14). Everyone preaches the good news, but some are prophets. The prophet is what we would call the preacher. Then it was the preachers.

Instead of teaching, we see the early church prophecy as more like our preaching because both prophet and preacher "put God's words in their own words." Paul says the prophet *katecheo*, in other words, "instructs, teaches" (I Cor. 14:18-19). Instead, a teacher appeals to the intellect more than to the will. Silas is an example of a male prophet. In the Old Testament, Miriam (Ex. 15:20; Micah 6:4), Huldah (2 Kings 22:14-20) and the wife of Isaiah (Is. 8:3) are prophets. Deborah is called a prophet and a judge (Judg. 4:4). Joel in 2:28 proclaimed that daughters will prophesy in the future, and so they did. Anna is called a "prophetess" (Lk. 2:36). Phillip's four daughters were active prophets (Acts 21:8-9).

There are fewer examples of women teachers in the New Testament. (However, remember that prophets precede teachers in importance, status, necessity, or authority.) For example, in the Old Testament the wise teacher is personified by a woman (Prov. 8). The wise man or woman was a "distinct class" parallel with princes, priests, prophets (Is. 19:11-12; Jer. 18:18). The wise woman from Tekoa confronts David directly and through parable, as did Nathan the prophet (2 Sam. 12; 14). The wise woman at Abel convicts and executes David's political rebel (2 Sam. 20:16). In the New Testament, in Acts 18:26, we are told that "Having heard Apollos, Priscilla and Aquila took him aside and more accurately expounded to him the way of God." Is this teaching? The word which we translate "expound," *ektitheimai*, means "to set forth, declare, expound, to exhibit publicly, to place outside, to explain by means of abstraction." The word does not connote a simple explanation, rather a public declaration and exposition. We often do not pay much attention to the "old women" at Crete mentioned by Paul in Titus 2:3. However, the word "elder" is in the word family *presbutis*. We could have translated the sentence, "Teach" "the women elders" rather than "Teach" "older women." They also are called "teachers" (*didaskalos*)

(the same word as in Tim. 2:12), "teachers of the good." Consider that the difference between bishops (*episkopes*) and deacons or ministers (*diakonos*) in I Timothy 3:1-8 is that bishops must be able teachers.

So, we know of women apostles, prophets, and teachers. Women had and were approved in positions which "equip the saints for the work of ministry" (Eph. 4:11-12), the Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian definition of an ordained "minister." However, our list has not ended. We also have in the New Testament examples of women who were overseers of church communities, functionally the head or senior "pastors" of today.

John addresses his second letter to the "elect lady" and "her children." What is a "lady"? Now, it refers to someone with manners or it replaces "ma'm." *Kuria* is the feminine of lord/master (*kurios*). "Elect" is the chosen one, in other words, "the woman chosen to be master." Here we have a woman supervising a church to whom the apostle John writes. What monumental data! However, scholars can water this down too. A. E. Brooke in his International Critical Commentary on the Johannine Epistles says about the term "lady": "Perhaps it would be better to regard its use as rather playful, or not to be taken too seriously."⁴ Why must this use of "master" be playful?

Or, Bible students can also say II John was written to a church and not to an individual. But if "elect lady" is a church, then who are "her children"? Metaphorically, the church either is "a chosen lady" or "children." Was II John written then to an individual or to a group? The answer has to be both. John wrote the letter to a woman who was the person in authority over a congregation. "Her children" is the congregation, the same metaphor John uses in his first letter. An individual receiver is implied in the singular metaphor *kuria*. A congregation is implied by the type of directions: "Do not even greet him or receive into your house" anyone who believes Jesus did not come in the flesh (vv. 7,10). (All churches met in houses then.) And, they do not have to be deceived (v. 8). Moreover, from the last verse we discover that there was another such woman who was also an overseer over another church community!

"Elect persons" was also used by early church father Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 150): they were presbyters, bishops, ministers or

deacons, and widows (*Pedagogue* III.12). Joan Morris in *The Lady Was a Bishop* never found an example where *kuria* is a metaphor for a congregation. II John has a similar heading to III John, clearly addressed to Gaius, an individual: "The presbyter to beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth." "The presbyter to elect lady and to her children, whom I love in truth." Almost all Christian assemblies met in women's houses--Chloe (I Cor. 1:11), Lydia (Acts 16:40), Mary the mother of John Mark (Acts 12:12), Nympha (Col. 4:15), or in couples' homes--Prisca and Aquila (Rom. 16:3-5; I Cor. 16:19), Philemon, Apphia, Archippus (Philem. 1-2). Therefore, that "the elect lady" was a woman overseeing a church in her home would not be at all unusual or unlikely.

Phoebe in Romans 16:1-2 as "our sister" is clearly a woman. Paul calls her "a minister" and a "ruler-leader": "a minister of the church, the one in Cenchreae." The Greek has no "deaconess" (JB, RSV). The NIV, NAS, and KJV have "servant." However, when the same word refers to individual men doing God's work, the KJV always translates the word "minister" (Paul--Eph. 3:7; Col.1:23,25; Timothy--I Tim. 4:6; Epaphras--Col. 1:7; Tychicus--Eph. 6:21). An official position seems likely as well, since Phoebe is *diakonos* of a *specific church*: "the one in Cenchreae."

Phoebe is not only called a "minister," but Paul also calls and affirms her as a ruler. Phoebe should be *assisted* (*paristemi*) in anything she requires, for "she herself has been a *prostatis* (leader) over many and even of myself" (16:2). Paul uses two different words for help. *Paristemi* signifies "to place *beside* or *near*," to help by presenting. The Romans are asked to place themselves at Phoebe's disposal and thus "help" her. *Proistemi* signifies "to place *before* or *over*," to help by ruling. Phoebe is "a woman set over others." The noun *prostates* occurs only here in the New Testament. According to Liddell's and Scott's *Greek English Lexicon*, it is "a leader or chief, ruler, president, guardian." The word does occur in the Old Testament as a chief officer for kings (I Chron. 27:31; 29:6; II Chron. 8:10; 24:11). In the Apocrypha it is used for the governor of Judea (1 Esd. 2:12) and the chief of the sanctuary (Ecclus. 45:24). Josephus, a contemporary of Paul, uses *prostates* for the leader of a nation, tribe, region, or leader of all, God. Moses and Joseph are

called *prostates* of the people, as are Herod Agrippa and Hyrcanus. Solomon was made *prostates* of the temple by David. Caesar is the *prostates* of the world. In the later church, *prostates* refers to civil rulers, ecclesiastical rulers, and bishops.

The verb form, *proistemi*, does occur in the New Testament. Paul exhorts the Thessalonians "to pay proper respect to the ones working among you and *chosen as your leaders* in [the] Lord and instructing you and regard them very highly indeed in love because of their work" (I Thess. 5:12-13). Paul uses the same word to describe bishop, deacon or minister, and elder (I Tim. 3:4-5, 12; 5:17). What then did Paul mean when he called Phoebe a *prostatis* in Romans 16? Paul writes that Phoebe has been a "leader of many and even of myself!" Phoebe is praised by Paul as a responsible leader in authority over a man in contrast to women, such as those at Ephesus who were using their authority to destroy men.⁵

Because of this evidence, even as early as 1924 Helen Barrett Montgomery had good grammatical reasons for her translation *New Testament in Modern English* (translated in honor of the American Baptist 1924 centennial celebration): "I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a *minister* of the church at Cenchreae . . . assist her . . . For she herself has been made *an overseer* to many people, including myself." As far as we know, no other Christian translation calls Phoebe a "minister" or an "overseer" (KJV, NAS--"servant"; NKJV--"succorer"/helper; RSV, JB--"deaconess"⁶; Phillips--helper; NEB--"holds office in the congregation"; TEV--"good friend"; Living Bible--"a dear Christian woman . . . who has helped many in their needs").

Paul also described women as co-workers. For example, in Philippians 4:2-3, Euodia and Syntyche were women who "labored side by side with me in gospel." *Sunergos* is a co-worker, a person of the same trade or colleague when used with the genitive case. Paul does not use the dative case, which signifies a helper. Paul further defines co-workers at the end of I Corinthians. He writes in 16:16: "Be subject to such [as Stephana's household]" (Stephana is usually a woman's name)⁷ and "to every co-worker and worker." They were the first converts in Asia and they devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints. Paul adds in verse 18: "Give recognition to such

persons."

Co-workers were persons to whom churches were subject. Co-worker is also used for Prisca and Aquila (they had a church in their home, Rom. 16:3), Timothy (Rom. 16:21), Paul and Apollos (I Cor. 3:9), Titus (II Cor. 8:23), Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25), Aristarchus, John Mark, Jesus Justus (Col. 4:10-11), Epaphras, Luke Demas (Philem. 24), and Philemon (Philem. 1). Co-workers and ministers are synonyms. For example, in I Thessalonians 3:2 some manuscripts list "minister" as an alternate reading for "co-worker." Co-workers include apostles (Paul), prophets (Silas), evangelists (Timothy), pastors and teachers (Paul, Priscilla?). All these gifts equip people for ministry. A "co-worker" in the New Testament is more than "another person working"; rather it is someone whom Paul considers a colleague placed in a position of authority similar to his own. Women are certainly included in such a title.

We began this essay by explaining that all ministry in the body of Christ is team ministry because of our status as Christians, humans, and created beings. The body of Christ is a family, brothers and sisters. "Human" is a plurality of male and female, as well as a unity. God, who created us, is One and a Trinity. Since we are made in God's image, we are made to work as part of a team of equals.

God is pleased if we might be a Dorcas, sewing clothes for widows, or a Lydia, a business woman offering our home for a house church. But when God gives to women gifts of apostleship, prophecy, teaching, overseeing, and ministering, God wants those gifts as well to be used. "Co-worker" in the New Testament probably is a technical term for someone in a position of authority, but as well, it is a perfect term to capture Jesus' concept of ministry. Even though most of us are Gentiles, we should not be "like the Gentiles," "lording it over" or "exercising authority *over*" one another (Mk. 10:42). Rather, God's family is a working team of equals who are experts in some spiritual area but deficient in other areas. We need to respect one another. The great among us are servants.

Will Jesus find faith on earth? Will Jesus find *Jesus* on earth? In other words, when we look at one another, we should be looking at Christ. Paul says in Galatians 3:27: "for whoever *in Christ* is baptized, wears *Christ*." In baptism we descend into the water of

Christ, we ascend up dyed, as it were, purple, the color of royalty. Everyone who is baptized in Christ "wears" Christ. Therefore we should see Christ in one another. How can Christ be limited? How can Christ or Christ's authentic followers want Christ to be oppressed? Is this "faith"?

If there are those in the church and in the world who do not recognize now our regal robe, Mary, the mother of Jesus, says: God will "put down the mighty from thrones, and exalt the humble, fill the hungry with good things, and the rich will be sent away empty," because God "who is powerful has done great things" for us, and "holy is God's name. And God's mercy is on those who continue in awe of God from generation to generation" (Lk. 1:49-50; 52-53).

NOTES

¹ Aida Besancon Spencer, *Prayer Life of Jesus: Short of Agony, Revelation of Love* (Boston: University of America Press, 1990), chapter 3.

² Aida Besancon Spencer, *Beyond the Curse: Women Called to Ministry* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1985), pp. 169-177.

³ The oral presentation has been developed into chapter four of *Beyond the Curse*, pp. 96-130. More documentation can be found there.

⁴ A. E. Brooke, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Johannine Epistles*, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1912), p. 167.

⁵ See "God's Order is Truth." For further information see "Eve at Ephesus: Should Women be Ordained as Pastors according to the First Letter of Timothy?" *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* (Fall 1974), 215-222; *Beyond the Curse*, ch. 3.

⁶ However, the 1990 revision of the Revised Standard Version (NRSV) might improve the translation.

⁷ However, Stephanos could be an abbreviation for *Stephanos*.

God's Order is Love

By Aida Besancon Spencer

The disciples asked Jesus: What will be the sign of "the close of the age"? Jesus answered: "You will hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not alarmed; for this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places: all this is but the beginning of the birth-pangs" (Mat. 24:6-8).

If you listen to the news regularly, deep inside you may very well think our time looks like the close of the age. Incredible revolutions are occurring in the communist countries. Thousands of people are shot as they fight for democracy. In the war in Panama, homes are destroyed. Day after day we have been told about the whereabouts and the standing of Noriega. Fictional accounts of drug wars in Mexico are quickly produced. Film after film is produced where couples who are only passionate for one another fulfill their passion in ways appropriate only to marriage and life-long vows. Weekly you may receive postcards advertising lost children. Abuse of children and women has become a daily affair. The Department of Justice says that one out of four women will be sexually abused by the age of eighteen. Some of our son's teachers check the sixth-grade students daily for physical evidences of harm. When our son fell off his bike, he knew the teacher would ask him what happened. He had one enormous black eye. So he covered his eye with his arm. She asked, "What's wrong with your arm?" When he lowered his arm, she asked, "*What's wrong with your eye?*"

These are fearful times. Studies have shown that people who watch a lot of television especially are fearful about their

environment. Our neighbor's children watched a horror film and, at the end, came running out with a butcher knife (in case they were attacked)!

What has this done to the church? My own view is that some people in the church have also reacted in fear. They have come running out on the streets with knives to look for the robbers and killers. And who are those robbers and killers? Some have said that women have been robbing their families by working and killing their own souls by leading. Medieval teachings about the hierarchy¹ in the home (husband-wife-children), hierarchy in the Trinity (Father-Son-Spirit), and hierarchy in the church (pastor [male]-elders [male]-members [male and female]) have been spreading in conferences and now they are making an impact on evangelical denominations (the Evangelical Free Church, Southern Baptist and even Assemblies of God) which never before restricted women.²

But Jesus said: "See that you are not alarmed" (Mat. 24:6) and "the one who endures to the end will be saved" (Mat. 24:13). The Brethren in Christ have decided to affirm women in ministry (1982). You describe yourself as "in the world, but not of the world." You are a family, brothers and sisters in Christ. Stand fast in your freedom. Now that you have decided to affirm women in ministry, follow up on that resolution with action. If you do nothing, in effect you support the status quo, which is to keep women in the background. Make sure that your sisters in Christ do not become enslaved and enchained and unrecognized.

The ancient church decided that subordination in the Trinity is blasphemy. This is the *Blasphemy* of Sirmium of 357:

There is no doubt that the Father is greater than the Son in honour, renown and deity and in the very name of the Father, for the Son himself testifies 'He that sent me is greater than I' (Jn. XIV.28). And every one knows that this is catholic doctrine, that there are two persons of the Father and the Son; and that the Father is greater, the Son subject together with all the things that the Father has subjected to himself. That the Father has not a beginning, is invisible, immortal and impassible; that the Son has been born from the Father, God from God, light from light . . . that from the Virgin Mary he . . . the Son of God our Lord and God . . . took man, by means of which he shared in suffering.³

The definitive Council of Chalcedon (451), which Protestants and Roman Catholics affirm, reiterated that the Father is "greater" because of the Son's temporary subordination in the *incarnation*, not because of a permanent hierarchy in the Trinity.

I think that the apostle Paul has been greatly misunderstood. Let us look at 1 Corinthians 11 to study what Paul is trying to say. However, before we study any passage, we need to remember that the Word of God is our guide for faith and living. It is "inspired by God" (2 Tim. 3:16) but it is understandable to humans. In order to understand one another we must read and listen to what we say in light of our context. You can not quote half a sentence or half a paragraph and know the whole thought. Do you ever wonder about the movie reviews: "The story line is . . . outstanding" or "the characterization was incredible . . ."? Could the writer have said: "*The story line is boring*. The only thing *outstanding* about the film was the price!" or "Even *the characterization was incredible* in its ineptness! Where was the director? Off on a vacation?" We also need to study the meaning of words in their times. "He was bad, really bad" appears as a compliment today in many teenage love songs. But the writer is *not* saying that he was evil. No, he is sophisticated, attractive, the "cool" of the sixties. Especially when we look at 1 Corinthians 11, we need to read Paul's words in the context of the whole letter and in the context of the culture.

Please read 1 Corinthians 10:23-11:16 (NIV). What is a consistent principle in this passage? Paul wants to bring all people to salvation: "Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, just as I try to please all in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved" (1 Cor. 10:32-33). Paul's main point throughout 1 Corinthians is to explain to the Corinthians that love or service to others for the sake of the gospel is greater than any other principle, such as knowledge or right. Consequently, he concludes his letter: "Let all that you do be done in love" (1 Cor. 16:14).

In this context, what does Paul mean by 1 Corinthians 11:3: "I wish you to know that of every male, the head is Christ, but head of a female is the male, but head of Christ is the God" (literally from the Greek original)? In better English: "Now I want you to realize

that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and head of Christ is God" (NIV).

One application of this verse is clear. This passage can not mean that women can not or should not participate in leadership or worship. Paul *assumes* that women can pray and prophesy: "every woman praying or prophesying" (v. 5) and "a woman to pray to God" (v. 13). The Corinthian women were exercising their spiritual gifts in public. (See 1 Cor. 12:10, 28-29.) The prophet had much authority and importance in the early church. God appointed "second prophets." Prophets receive and speak forth God's message. Prophets speak to people during worship for their upbuilding, encouragement, and consolation, according to 1 Corinthians 14:3. Is not that role similar to our contemporary preacher's role?

Instead, Paul applies verse 3 to the type of attire that women and men can wear. Women are to pray "covered" and men "uncovered" or "against the head." A "covered" head could simply be long hair caught up on top of the head or some kind of veil. Paul defines for us what it is equal to: "It is one and the same to having oneself shaved" (v. 5), "if a woman does not cover herself, let her have her hair cut" (v. 6), it is "shameful to a woman the (act of) having one's hair cut or having oneself shaved" (v. 6).

When you women do *not* wear a hat, do you think it is the same as having your hair cut? Certainly if I go outside without a hat, I feel cold, but neither I nor have I heard others say, "You might as well get all your hair shaved off"! If an "unveiled" head is not "one and the same" as "having oneself shaved," then you have a clue that Paul's readers had a different cultural significance to covering and to shearing than we do. Does that mean this passage does *not* apply to us? *No*. It means that we need to apply it to a *similar* situation today. But first we need to understand what covering and shaving might mean then.

Cut hair could be shameful in the first century. (In contrast, in ancient Israel only prostitutes wore veils, Gen. 38:14-15.) A Jewish woman who went out with her hair "unbound" could be divorced without having her dowry returned (mishnah Ketuboth 7:6). Why? Unbound hair was a sign of an adulteress (or a mourner) (Num. 5:18). Even the first-century Roman historian and rhetorician

Valerius Maximus said: "One of the first causes of divorce was a married woman daring to go out of doors with nothing on her head."⁴ Slaves' hair was usually cropped.⁵ Prostitutes were often slaves. Priestesses who were temple prostitutes might shave their heads.

Catherine Kroeger notes that specifically in the Dionysiac cult: "Men wore veils and long hair as signs of their dedication to the god, while women used the unveiling and shorn hair to indicate their devotion." Dionysos was himself called "male-female" and "sham man." In the cults of Cybele and Artemis, "males voluntarily castrated themselves and assumed women's garments."⁶ Ancient taverns, as at Corinth, would often have the face of Dionysos on the tiles. Some of the Corinthians may very well have been male prostitutes and homosexual offenders (1 Cor. 6:9). In their freedom in Christ but still employing their cultural practices, the Corinthians were dressing to look like adulterers and cultic prostitutes. Did this practice help people to be "saved"? Paul thinks not. The Corinthians were using knowledge and right as license (e.g. 1 Cor. 1:5,10; 8).

Why did Paul cite 11:3 as a basis for his application? Does not "head" mean boss, the one who makes decisions, the one who speaks in public? "Head" in verse 3 is clearly a metaphor. It is a figure of speech. A metaphor is an implicit comparison between two things of unlike nature that yet have something in common so that one or more properties of the first are attributed to the second.⁷ In other words, the human head is somewhat like something else. To us "head" usually stands for the brain, the place where one thinks (although in reality one "feels" emotions as well in the brain). In the first century, *arche* or "beginning" was the word to describe the person in authority as in Zacchaeus, a "chief tax collector" (*architelones*), or Caiaphas, a "chief priest" (*archiereus*) (Lk. 19:2; Mat. 26:3).

In contrast, for the Greeks the head was the source of life,⁸ as in our "head waters of the river." For example, Isaiah 43:4 reads: "Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you, I will give men in exchange for you, and people in exchange for your *head*" ("life," NIV, RSV). This significance comes out clearly in Colossians 2:19: "The Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, *grows* with a growth that is from God (RSV)." Medically, the head or brain is

involved in growth. A baby without a brain (anencephaloid) can not stay alive. If "head" is interpreted as source of life in 1 Corinthians 11, Paul's words become consistent. Woman was made from man (v. 8) and, "as the woman [was made] from man, in this manner also the man by means of the woman" (v. 12). A woman is the "glory of man" (v. 7) because Eve was created from the side of Adam (Gen. 2:22). To be the "glory" of someone else is to be a descendant within the same species, as in 1 Corinthians 15:40-41: "The glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars" (RSV).

Yes, man is the head or source of life for woman in so far as the first woman was created from the first man's body. And, as well, woman is the head or source of life for man in so far as either Jesus, the Savior, received life through Mary or as every human being receives life through its mother.

To translate 11:3 into our literal equivalent: "But I wish you to know that of every man the source is the Christ, but the source of a woman is the man, but the source of the Christ is the God." Paul does not use a hierarchical order here going from God to Christ to man to woman. (Rather, he moves from man to Christ to woman to man to Christ to God.) (Man-woman-Christ might be in chronological order.) The source of Adam, the one who formed Adam, apparently was the second person of the Trinity, the Christ ("Let us make Adam in *our* image" Gen. 1:26). The source of Eve was Adam. God is the source of the Christ either because the Holy Spirit made possible the conception of Jesus in the womb (Mat. 1:20; John 5:25-29) or because God appointed Jesus as king and priest and resurrected Jesus from the dead. "Today I have begotten thee" (Ps. 2:7) refers to appointment to a role usually given to a sovereign's heir. When God appointed David as king, God "begot" David because David received the rights of the first-born child, to be a king. The author of Hebrews explains that Psalm 2:7 was also fulfilled when Jesus ascended to the right hand of majesty and became high priest forever (Heb. 1:5; 5:5). Paul adds that Psalm 2:7 was also fulfilled when Jesus resurrected from the dead (Acts 13:33). "You are my son" means "you are my descendant and rightful ruler over all

I own."

The application was this: show respect for the one to whom you owe life. Women, do not dress as prostitutes. How does that reflect on the men (especially the husbands)? Men, accept your masculinity. Rejecting your masculinity is an insult to your Creator, Christ. The example for both is Christ who aimed to please God in heaven in all his actions on earth. The Son glorified the Father and the Father glorified the Son.

In summary, let us look at the passage now in sequence, using my literal translation throughout. Even though many of our translations begin the paragraph at 11:2, for a meaningful context you should begin reading at least at 10:32: "Also become inoffensive (or faultless) to Jews and Gentiles and to the church of God, as I also please all in all, not seeking my own advantage but the [advantage] of many, in order that they may be saved." Paul's basis for his actions is Christ: "Become my imitators, as I also [become an imitator] of Christ" (11:1). Paul begins the topic of the chapter by affirming the Corinthians in their past obedience: "But I praise you that in every way you remind yourselves of me and to the degree that I have handed down the traditions you hold fast" (11:2).

Paul develops the idea of Christ as model in the next verse. He sets down a principle which encourages respect for the one from whom one derives life or the one who gives life: "But I wish you to know that of every man the head is the Christ, but the head of a woman is the man, but the head of Christ is (the) God" (11:3). To say that Paul here speaks of the rights of authority would directly contradict the message of 1 Corinthians of the priority of love. Paul even says in 8:9: "But see lest your *authority* becomes a stumbling block to the weak." Paul groups together authority and freedom to do as one wants with knowledge (1 Cor. 8:10).

Now Paul goes on to his application: "Every man while praying or prophesying against having a head (having his head covered) dishonors his head; but every woman while praying or prophesying with the head unveiled dishonors her head; for it is one and the same to having oneself shaved" (11:4-5). Paul begins writing about the men. He assumes and does not question the practice for men and women to pray and prophesy. He explains though that while they

exercise their spiritual gifts they should not dishonor their head or source. He explains what it means to have the head covered or uncovered in this verse and the following verses: unveiled is the same as shaved: "For if a woman does not cover herself, let her also have her hair cut; but if [it is] shameful to a woman the (act of) having one's hair cut or having oneself shaved, let her cover herself" (11:6).

Paul returns again to the idea of the one from whom one gets life. This time he uses different words: "For a man on the one hand is not obligated to cover his head, being (the) image and glory of God; but the woman is (the) glory of man" (11:7). Paul here never says a woman is *not* the image of God, which would contradict the teaching in Genesis 1:26-27 and 5:1-2. As we have seen, humanity or Adam is one unity, the species Human, made of two kinds, male and female: "God created the Adam in his image, in the image of God he created him." "Adam," "him," and "male and female" are synonymous phrases. Paul says that Adam, the male, from the beginning (Greek *huparcho*) is the glory of God, whereas the woman is the glory of the male. The being created from or by another is its glory, a descendant in a species. Men should boast about women in the same way as Christians should boast of one another to the Lord Jesus: "For you are our glory and joy" (1 Thess. 2:20).

Paul continues: "For man is not out of a woman, but a woman out of a man; for also a man was not created because of the woman, but a woman because of a man" (11:8-9). Again Paul reiterates the idea that the head is source of life. In Genesis, Eve was created to help Adam "have dominion" over the earth (Gen. 1:26,28). The "helper fit for him" (Gen. 2:18) was to be someone equal to Adam who could share the task of caring for the earth and share authority.⁹ Today we think of a "helpmate" as someone who simply cares for the husband, but chapters one and two of Genesis do not define the word in this way.

"Because of this the woman is obligated to have authority on the head for the sake of the angels/messengers" (11:10). This verse is very hard to understand. Paul does not use the word for "veil" here. Rather, he uses "authority." Probably Paul intends to say here that the covered head is a sign of the woman's right or authority to pray and prophesy in public so that the messengers, such as the "brethren"

in 2 Corinthians 8:23 and Philippians 2:25, who visited the church did not misinterpret the Corinthian freedom.

Paul does not want to leave the church thinking that only women should help and respect men, that the men should not help and respect women. He adds: "However, neither a woman apart from a man nor a man apart from a woman in (the) Lord; for just as the woman from the man, in this manner also the man through (or by means of) the woman; but all things from (the) God" (11:11-12). The preposition "from" (*ek*) indicates that the woman came out of the first man. Similarly, the man comes "through" (*dia*) the agency of the woman. This can refer either to childbirth or to salvation coming to all because of Mary's obedience to God. Nevertheless, the Corinthians should remember that ultimately God is the source for all people.

"Among yourselves judge these things; is it fitting an unveiled woman to God to pray? Also does not *nature* herself teach you that a man on the one hand if he lets his hair grow long it is a disgrace to him, but a woman if she lets her hair grow long it is a glory to her? Since the hair in place of a covering was given to her" (11:13-15). Paul uses the same root word for "nature" in Romans 1:26-27: "Women exchanged *natural* relations for *unnatural*, and the men likewise gave up *natural* relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameful acts with men and receiving in their own persons the due penalty for their error" (RSV). In both cases nature refers to the "natural form or constitution of a person as the result of growth."¹⁰ Nature teaches that men's masculinity is good and a reason for self-esteem, as is women's moral femininity. The hair here seems to be the covering itself (possibly instead of a prayer shawl).

"But if someone thinks to be quarrelsome, we do not have such a custom, nor the churches of God" (11:16). Paul has commended the church of Corinth because the men and women are praying and prophesying. Technically, because of their freedom in Christ, the men and women should be able to dress as they choose. However, in addition to Paul's reasonings on respecting others and acting to help all to be saved, he adds the further reason of custom for watching one's attire: No other church had the practice of male

Christians dressing like women and female Christians dressing like adulterers or cultic prostitutes.

How can we apply this passage today? The basic principle is always true. Freedom in Christ or truth or knowledge by themselves are never more important than the love which cares to bring people to salvation. Because as Christians we desire to bring all of us to full maturity in Christ, women should not dress in ways that bring shame to a husband, and men should not dress in ways that clearly degrade their masculinity, thus bringing shame to God.

Yes, we are to be "in the world, but not of the world." Jesus said that his disciples are still "in the world" (John 17:11). They are not "of the world" because they are one. They love one another. Restricting women from leadership roles has nothing to do with not being of the world. Our American culture now has a very strong anti-feminine strain which you can see reflected in the abuse of women. For example, the police ran a program at our son's middle school on some of the cable music shows. The Parents Music Resource Center studied the MTV cable program to which 29 million people subscribe. They found five major themes in certain hard rock groups which included graphic violence and fascination with sexual violence. My husband, Bill, who attended the special program, noticed how women continually were treated as objects (not as people--subjects--to be respected). These videos portrayed much violence against women.

Be not "of the world" because you assume that women and men are sisters and brothers in Christ who together pray and prophesy. Be not "of the world" because you love one another and you do all you can to help those who might be oppressed become active and recognized members of the church. Even if you feel *fear* after hearing of the many disasters in today's life, act out in *love*, remembering that Jesus said, "See that you are not alarmed."

Let the Brethren in Christ become a denomination of reconciliation, reconciling men and women to one another, an example of what a loving, life-giving family should be.

NOTES

¹ Subordination or chain of being is an ancient idea, popularized in medieval times by Thomas Aquinas, with its roots in certain Greek thinkers, the neo-Platonists. See Letha Scanzoni, "The Great Chain of Being and the Chain of Command," *The Reformed Journal* (October 1976), 14-18; Arthur I. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1948).

² The Assemblies of God has historically championed the cause of women's ministry; however, the proportion of credentialed ministers has declined. In 1987 almost one-half of all women ministers were sixty-five years of age or older. See R. C. Cunningham, *Advance* (February 1987), 4-6. The Evangelical Free Church also ordained women. Since the spring of 1988, women no longer can be ordained or be "pastor-teachers." They can be licensed as associate pastors, evangelists, and chaplains. The Southern Baptist national convention in 1987 made a resolution that women should not be ordained (which has financially and through group pressure made an effect). The Church of God has licensed women to preach but not oversee the sacraments or conduct business in church. In the 1930s, 30%-40% of all their ministers were women. Since World War II, Church of God women ministers have declined to about 7%.

³ Henry Bettenson, ed., *Documents of the Christian Church* (2 ed.; New York: Oxford University, 1967), p. 43.

⁴ Russell C. Prohl, *Woman in the Church: A Restudy of Woman's Place in Building the Kingdom* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), p. 60.

⁵ Sarah B. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity* (New York: Schocken, 1975), p. 83.

⁶ Catherine Clark Kroeger, "The Apostle Paul and the Greco-Roman Cults of Women," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* (March 1987), 37; Richard and Catherine Clark Kroeger, "Sexual Identity in Corinth: Paul Faces a Crisis," *The Reformed Journal* (December 1978), 11-15.

⁷ Aida Besancon Spencer, *Paul's Literary Style: A Stylistic and Historical Comparison of II Corinthians 11: 16-12:13, Romans 8:9-39, and Philippians 3:2-4:13*, An Evangelical Theological Society Monograph (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1984), 294.

⁸ See Catherine Clark Kroeger, "Appendix III. The Classical Concept of *Head* as "Source," in Gretchen Gaebelein Hull, *Equal to*

Serve: Women and Men in the Church and Home, A Critical Questions Book (Old Tappan: Revell, 1987), pp. 267-283; C. C. Kroeger, "An Illustration of the Greek Notion of "Head" as "Source," *Priscilla Papers* (August 1987), 4-6; "What Does *Kephale* Mean in the New Testament?" *Women, Authority, and the Bible*, ed. Alvera Mickelson (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1986), pp. 97-132.

⁹ See Aida Besancon Spencer, *Beyond the Curse: Women Called to Ministry* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1985), chapter 1.

¹⁰ Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (9th ed.; Oxford Clarendon Press, 1940), p. 1964.

God's Order Is Truth

By *Aida Besancon Spencer*

Paul commanded Timothy: "No longer drink water, but make use of a little wine on account of your stomach and your frequent ailments" (1 Tim. 5:23). What do we do with this verse? With the increasing problem of alcoholism, we do not want to encourage people to drink, yet we want to take the Bible seriously. If this verse is God's living word, then it has to have some application today. The passage has several possible interpretations. First, "wine" back then is now our grape juice. Then, does that mean we should all drink grape juice regularly? Second, wine was some kind of fermented grape juice. Then, should we all drink a little wine? What if we have been alcoholics and even a small amount of wine is harmful?

Why do I raise these questions? I think not every scripture verse may necessarily apply to every situation and to every person at every time, yet, every verse must have some application at some time today if it is indeed God's word. Timothy may have been having trouble with impure water and/or anemia. Therefore, he needed grape juice with some alcohol. So too anyone today having trouble with impure water and/or anemia may take bottled water or soda in certain countries, or take wine. God gave us teaching in historical situations so that we can use those teachings in *similar* historical situations.

1 Timothy 2:11-15 also has several possible interpretations. Some people say the passage applied to a certain culture back then, but it does not apply today. However, that view would make the passage irrelevant and a historical curiosity. Other people say the passage applies to every woman today as it did then. I am going to suggest

It applies to the same situation and to the same type of people today, but it does not apply to *every* woman.

Before we study what 1 Timothy 2:11-15 has to say about the ordination of women to the pastorate, we need to ask two questions. First, what is the meaning and significance of ordination? Second, does ordination bestow spiritual authority? Then we can go on to ask, should women be ordained? Ordination is the "placing of hands." The hand is a biblical and ancient symbol of strength and might. Even today we talk about "put a heavy hand," "heavy-handed methods," or "iron fist in the velvet glove." Placing hands is basically a *sign* of the transfer of power.

The placing of hands is *symbolic*. For example, Simon's problem in Acts 8:18-19 was that he did not realize the symbolic nature of ordination. When Simon saw Peter and John place hands on persons who were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus and he saw them receive the Holy Spirit, he too wanted the same power. However, he is rebuked. His heart needs to be right, not his hands (Acts 8:20-24). The laying of hands represents *what God has already commanded*, as in Numbers 27:18-23. The Lord told Moses, take Joshua, a person in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand upon him. Or in Acts 13:1-3, at the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers already prophesying and already teaching. Then, while people worshipped, the Holy Spirit said: "Separate now to me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have summoned them." Then having fasted and having prayed and having placed their hands on them, they sent them off. "Ordination" is the laying on of hands and of prayer. It represents the church's symbolic assent to God's command. God commands to a specific calling.

The biblical question is *not*, should women have hands placed on them, in other words, "be ordained," but rather, does the Bible teach us that women should preach, teach, and have authority? Then, the church will symbolically assent to and pray for what God has already commanded.

In the previous essay I wrote of the many examples of women in positions of apostle, prophet, teacher, and church overseer. Paul himself commended Phoebe, Prisca, Euodia, Syntyche, and Junia as

women having authority. How about 1 Timothy 2? Does the early church practice contradict Paul's teaching? In 1 Timothy 2, Paul never mentions a woman not preaching nor pastoring. Rather, he only talks about teaching (and possibly having authority). Verses 11-15 read: "Let a woman in silence learn in all submission; but I am not allowing a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam first was formed, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman having been deceived had become in transgression. But she will be saved through the child-bearing, if they may continue in faith and love and holiness with self-control."¹

Before we analyze 1 Timothy 2:11-15, let us begin by learning about the setting Paul addresses at Ephesus. What is the situation at Ephesus? Why might Paul have had to make such a command? In Acts 20:29 Paul tells the elders: "After my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them" (RSV). 1 Timothy is a letter of advice to Timothy concerning the church at Ephesus because it suffered from wrong teachings. For example: Paul had urged Timothy "to remain at Ephesus to charge certain persons not to teach any *different doctrine*, not to occupy themselves with myths and endless genealogies which promote speculations rather than the divine training that is in faith" (1:3 RSV); "Certain persons by swerving from these have wandered away into vain discussion, desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make assertions" (1:6-7 RSV); "Whatever else is contrary to sound *doctrine*" (1:10 RSV); if Paul is delayed people may know "how one ought to behave in the household of God, . . . the pillar and bulwark of the *truth*" (3:15 RSV); "the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by giving heed to deceitful spirits and *doctrines* of demons" (4:1 RSV); a good minister is "nourished on the words of the faith and of the *good doctrine* which you have followed" (4:6 RSV); "And old women's myths" (4:7); "Take heed to yourself and to your *teaching*: hold to that, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers" (4:16 RSV); "If any one teaches otherwise and does not agree with the *sound words* of our

Lord Jesus Christ and the *teaching* which accords with godliness" (6:3 RSV); "O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you. Avoid the godless chatter and contradictions of what is *falsely called knowledge*" (6:20 RSV). The word we translate "doctrine" or "teaching" is *didaskalia*. Two-thirds of all its New Testament occurrences are in 1 and 2 Timothy.

Clearly, some kind of unorthodox teaching was occurring at Ephesus, which consequently means there was also some kind of unorthodox learning. The same verb "learn" as in 1 Timothy 2:11 occurs in 2 Timothy 3:6-7. Paul commands Timothy to avoid people who hold the form of religion but deny its power: "For among them are those worming their way into households and capturing women, being weighed down with sins, being led by various desires, always *learning*, and never being able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth." Why can they not arrive at a knowledge of the truth? Because they are weighed down with sins and they are learning from false teachers: "lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, inhuman, implacable, slanderers, profligates, fierce, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding the form of religion but denying the power of it" (2 Tim. 3:2-5a RSV). Similarly in 2 Timothy 4:3-4: "For the time is coming when people will not endure *sound teaching*, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings, and will turn away from *listening to the truth* and wander into myths" (RSV).

The persons who do the deceiving are referred to by generic terms in 1 and 2 Timothy: "humans" (*anthropos* 2 Tim. 3:8), "these ones" (*houtos* 2 Timothy 3:5-6), and "some" (*tis* 1 Timothy 1:6). At Ephesus women were *at least* learning unorthodox doctrines and possibly also teaching unorthodox doctrines.² Thus, unorthodox teaching and learning were involved in the particular problems at Ephesus and orthodox teaching and learning were necessary for these problems' reversal.

Now, with a broad view of Paul's purpose in writing 1 Timothy, let us look more particularly at the more immediate context of 2:11-15. In 2:4 God our Savior desires "all people (*anthropos*) to be saved

and to come to a *knowledge of the truth*." The exact same phrase ("to a knowledge of the truth") occurs in 2 Timothy 3:7, referring to "women." How can all people come to a knowledge of the truth? People can come to a knowledge of the truth in three ways: by prayer, life-style while praying, and education.

First, people can come to a knowledge of the truth by *praying for all people*, even those in high positions so Christians may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way. In 2:2 "peaceable" is in the same word family as "silent" in verses 11-12. Paul re-emphasizes his appointment as a preacher, apostle and teacher (2:7) immediately before he plunges on to give specific directions to men and women in verses 8-15. Paul may have needed to re-emphasize (1:1) his position because of his radical commands.

Second, people can come to a knowledge of the truth if Christians watch their life-styles. *Do we live a "peaceable life?"* (vss. 8-10). Men should pray without anger or quarreling (2:8). Women should pray without flaunting their wealth or wearing immoral apparel (2:9-10). Paul's overriding concern is that all will come to learn the truth. Anger, quarreling, and costly attire do not promote a proper understanding of Christianity.

The third way to help people come to a knowledge of the truth is explained in verses 11 and following. If the principle problem at Ephesus is unorthodox teachings and women apparently were susceptible to them, then we can understand why Paul is particularly concerned for women to be correctly taught (v. 11). How can people come to a knowledge of the truth if they are learning from deceitful persons? Moreover, Paul may have needed to command the women to learn because the orthodox men at Ephesus resisted teaching them. Whether Jew or Gentile, they may not have seen much value in educating women. When they found the women accepting and propagating destructive ideas, they might have again fallen into belief that women were "light-minded" (some rabbis said this) or open to deception.

Verses 11-12 are one sentence in Greek and therefore should not be separated: "Let a woman in silence learn [through instruction]

in all obedience or submission [obviously to the proper authorities]; but I am not allowing a woman to teach, or to domineer over a man, but to be in silence." Paul does not write "she may learn" or "allow her to learn." Rather, he uses the *imperative* "Let her learn." She must learn. "Learn" (*manthano*) means to learn, especially by study, as in a rabbinical school. For example, the temple leaders said about Jesus: "How is it that this one has learning, when *he has never studied*?" (John 7:15)

When Paul commanded a woman learn, by study, "in silence" he was being quite radical for his time. Although God commands in the Old Testament all people, including women, to hear the law and to learn to fear God (Deut. 31:12), Jewish women were *exempted* from learning the law. The mishnah (a collection of Jewish rabbis' teachings before A. D. 200) reads: Men are liable and women are exempt from "all affirmative precepts limited to time" (m. Kiddushin 1:7). In other words, women were exempt from laws which necessitated their leaving the home for any time period. One Rabbi said to R. Hiyya: "Whereby do women earn merit? By making their children go to the synagogue to learn Scripture and their husbands to Beth Hamidrash (School of Rabbis) to learn Mishnah, and waiting for their husbands till they return from the Beth Hamidrash" (b. Berakoth 17a). The men came to *learn*, the women came to *hear* (not study fully) (b. Hagigah 3a). Women were exempt from learning the Torah because their role as homemaker was considered primary.

Yet, Paul is Jewish too, a "zealous student of R. Gamaliel" (Acts 22:3). Imagine, he is commanding his parishioners not merely that women hear the truth, but then learn and study it! He is saying, women are not exempt from the truth, and they are required to learn it.

Possibly, one reason we glide over Paul's radical command in verse 11 is because he states that women "in silence . . . in all obedience" must learn. To us in a United States culture, to learn in silence connotes a condescending attitude toward learning such as we might lamentably address to children: "Shut up and listen to what the teacher says!" However, what would "learning in silence," even "silence," signify to a Rabbinic Jew such as Paul? Simon, the son of

Rabban Gamaliel, says: "All my days I grew up among the sages, and I have found nothing better for a person than *silence*. Study is not the most important thing, but *deed*; whoever indulges in too many words brings about sin" (m. Aboth 1:17). Rabbi Abbahu urges a father to find a wife for his unmarried son by going "after the peaceful," literally, silence. Further, he informs R. Jose: "As the Palestinians make a test: when two quarrel, they see which becomes silent first and say, 'This one is of superior birth'" (b. Kiddushin 71b). Only wise people of superior birth were to learn "in silence."

Positive connotations for silence are evident not only in Rabbinic culture but also in the Old Testament. The rabbis have alluded to several Old Testament passages and they echo as well a passage such as Proverbs 17:27-28: "The person who restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a person of understanding. Even a fool who keeps silent is considered wise; when he closes his lips, he is deemed intelligent." Because we have an un-biblical view of silence (and expect a negative view of women), we come to the Bible and miss its radical demands.

The post-New Testament church also had a positive view of silence. Ignatius, for example, who died in A. D. 108, wrote to Smyrna: "He who has the word of Jesus for a true possession can also hear his *silence*, that he may be perfect, that he may act through his speech, and be understood through his silence" (xv. 2). Ignatius describes silence as a quality for a *leader*: a bishop and teacher.

In summary, Paul assumed two radical presuppositions about women. Rather than simply to hear, they were to learn as the men, and their roles as homemakers did not fulfill the ultimate priority for which they were created. The most radical action Paul could command was to order the men to teach the women at Ephesus the Christian "law."

1 Timothy 2:12-14 reads: "But to teach I am not allowing a woman, not to have authority over a man, but to be in silence." Paul writes in this sentence: "I am not allowing or permitting." The Greek present indicative primarily denotes action as *continuous*. English has no distinction between "let her learn" and "I do not permit." If anything, the "I don't permit" sounds stronger. However, "let her

learn" in reality is the command. "I do not permit" is not a command. Rather, it is a present action.

What is Paul not allowing a woman to do? "To teach" is emphasized by having the first position in the sentence. *Didasko* is what a *teacher* does. Emphasis is on someone *qualified* to exercise the influence. The primary effect is on the *intellect*. The same verb is used in Matthew 28:19 in the great commission: Make disciples of all nations by (1) baptizing them and (2) *teaching* them to observe all Jesus commanded. Is it possible the great commission does not apply to women?

Why is "learning" a command, but "permit" is not? I think the "but" (*de*) which separates verses 11 and 12 is significant, since normally *de* is an adversative particle signifying "but, however, yet, on the other hand." Paul was saying, "I command a woman *learn*, however, I am not permitting her to teach." The "but" brings out the fact that these two directives are contradictory. If anyone is taught, eventually they will teach. Although the women at Ephesus had to learn, they were not yet ready to teach. The same principle may be found in Hebrews 5:12: "For though *by this time* you ought to be teachers, you need some one to teach you again the first principles of God's word" (RSV). Paul wanted to restrain the women at Ephesus from teaching the men until they themselves were well instructed.

The woman also was not to *domineer* over a man. *Authenteo*, "to have authority," is only used here in the New Testament. The definitive Greek English Lexicon by Liddell and Scott defines *authenteo* as (1) to have *full* power or authority over and (2) to commit a murder. For example, Josephus used the noun form in *War of the Jews* 2 (XII.5) to render "assassins"--murderers of Galilean Jews on their way to a festival in Jerusalem. The writer of the Wisdom of Solomon modifies parents with *authenteo*, parents wishing to kill defenseless souls by their own hands (12.6). Moffatt translates this word "dictate to." In other words, *authenteo* is a domination which kills. Domineering over a man here then opposes being in silence.

Paul wants women to become part of the entire educational process: one of silence--quietness and obedience--to the teacher,

rather than autocratic authority challenging the teacher. Thus, the word *authenteo* does not simply mean have *authority* (as the Greek *exousia*) but to *domineer*, to have *absolute* power. "In silence" begins and ends the sentence (vv. 11-12). This is Paul's emphasis. To be in silence is the opposite of autocracy or domination.

Verses 13-14 begin with *gar*, a conjunction which expresses cause, inference or continuation or explanation. "For" here signifies the rationale for Paul's argument. Verses 13-14 are one sentence. Many people stop after "for Adam first was formed, then Eve," but do not include the full sentence, ". . . and Adam was not deceived, but the woman having been deceived in transgression she had become."

Therefore, a woman is to learn and not teach, not simply since Adam was formed first. Recalling again Genesis 2-3, Paul is correct in reminding us that *Adam was created first*. *Plasso* or "form" literally refers to the forming of objects from soft substances and, metaphorically, to forming by education and training. The ancients did not believe that priority in time necessarily involves superiority. Philo explains in his treatise on Genesis that the principle of order is to begin with what is most inferior and end with what is most excellent (On the Creation of World XXII). Paul also is correct in reminding us that *Eve was the first to become a transgressor*. She herself admitted it: "The serpent beguiled me, and I ate." *Although* Adam was created *first*, Eve was deceived *before* Adam was. Adam had the advantage of education, even as the men at Ephesus had the advantage of education. However, Paul adds, the woman (Eve) "became in transgression" because of her deception, therefore implying she had not been *created* a transgressor. "Had become" is in the perfect tense. The perfect refers to a past action which affects the present state. Women are not easily deceived. Rather, because Eve was deceived, she entered a state of transgression.

Paul is not necessarily looking at creation's hierarchy, rather at creation's *example*. Adam's and Eve's actions at creation are an *analogy* for the people's actions at Ephesus. An "analogy" is "a controlled comparison of one thing with another in some aspect under certain circumstances." The women at Ephesus were reminiscent of the woman in Eden--Eve. The Ephesian women were

learning and teaching a body of heretical beliefs to others, in an autocratic manner, and submitted to unorthodox teachers. Eve, too, had in her time been deceived into believing certain "unorthodox" teachings. Unorthodox is "different" and therefore wrong: "If she touched the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, she would become like God yet she would not die" (Gen. 3:3-4). She authoritatively passed on her teachings to Adam. Eating the fruit symbolized their "belief." Unfortunately, he learned. The entire state of humans and nature was affected by their actions: enslavement to sin and death. Eve *became* a transgressor. Her deception affected her later state. So too, if the women at Ephesus continue in allowing and learning deception, they, too, will become transgressors. And as earth became fallen, so too the church at Ephesus would fall.

Where did Paul get his direction? From Jesus. When Jesus tells Martha (in Lk. 10:38-42) that *Mary* has selected the good share and, moreover, that share will not be taken away from her, we often forget to clarify, what was *Mary's* choice. *Mary's* choice was to learn as a rabbinical student, whereas *Martha* chose homemaking *over* learning.³ Jesus, unlike the other rabbis, thought not only that a woman was *not* exempt from learning as a rabbinical student, but also that she does *best* to learn God's law; in addition, Jesus would not allow *anyone* to take away that learning process!

Genesis does not teach that Adam's earlier creation signified that women were not to rule. Rather, God commands Adam *and* Eve, both of them, to subdue the earth and rule over the birds and all moving animals (Gen. 1:26). Both are commanded jointly to rule, work, and have authority. Moreover, Adam's lack of ability to do so himself is proven by his need for a helper. And not just any "helper" but literally "a helper as if in *front* of him." "Neged," "front," is also used of leaders rulers, princes, and kings, as for example, David and Solomon (1 Sam. 9:16, 13:14; 1 Kings 1:35). Eve is the helper, literally, who rules over the one she helps.⁴

In the early church, Paul was slowing down the process which was leading to a genuine full and equal participation between women and men. Before people are "liberated" in Christ, they need to recognize and understand the nature of that liberation. Otherwise,

they might strive after a pseudo-liberation which would terminate as slavery. Instruction in the faith has to precede a living out of that faith. Women were not required to learn the Torah. Jesus changed this tradition. Paul, following Jesus, also changed this tradition. Women were not prepared to withstand unorthodox learning. Women certainly could have desired to be teachers of the law without understanding what they were saying (1 Tim. 1:7).

Paul ends 1 Timothy 2 with: "but she will be saved through the child-bearing, if they may continue in faith and love and holiness with self-control" (v. 15). Some people interpret this passage to mean that a woman can not be saved if she does not have children. Grammatically and theologically that interpretation is not possible.⁵ Others say that Christian women will not die in childbirth. "Through the child-bearing" signifies that the child-bearing is the *intermediate* agent. Why does Paul not simply say "child-bearing"? The use of the singular article may suggest that "*the* child-bearing" refers to the one most significant child-bearing for Christians. It was through Eve that transgression entered the earth. It was through another woman, Mary, that salvation came. Paul is declaring, so that no one should misunderstand, that the woman can be *saved*. She is not beyond redemption.

The reference is vague. However, the Bible has other vague references. Genesis 3:15 is considered the protoevangelium, cited as early as the second century by Irenaeus (*Against Heresies* V 21.1; V 40.3). Even as early as Irenaeus, Mary and Eve are compared. In Genesis 3:15, the woman's seed will bruise the serpent's head. Paul could be referring back to Genesis 3:15, to the child who fulfilled that final victory over Satan. Paul also argues in Galatians over the importance of "offspring" as opposed to "offsprings" (3:16,29; 4:4). God's Son was "born of a woman." In Romans 5:12 sin entered the world through "one person."

Who is "they"? In the context, would not "they" include the student and teacher? If the women at Ephesus were properly instructed, the fruit for both the student and her teacher would be salvation: "if they continue in faith and love and holiness with self-control." Paul's statement is in sharp contrast to the high point of the

Sabbath tractate in the Mishnah: "Because of three transgressions women die in the hour of child-birth because they have not been careful regarding menstruation, and because of the *challah* (round cake), and because of the lighting of the Sabbath lamp" (2:6). Paul, in contrast, declares that FAITH, LOVE, AND HOLINESS are what bring eternal salvation, not only to women but also to men.

Now, we can return to the general principle Paul expounds in 1 Timothy 2:4. God desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. How does Paul suggest we fulfill that principle? (1) *Pray* for all people; (2) live a *peaceable life* of prayer (the men not arguing; the women adorning themselves appropriately); (3) those without training (in this case women) *learn* in respect from those who are trained (in this case men) the knowledge of God.

In 1 Timothy 2:11-14, Paul employed an analogy between Eve and the women at Ephesus who were both easily misled. When women anywhere, including Ephesus, grow beyond a resemblance to Eve in this respect, then the analogy no longer is valid. Ultimately Paul was teaching equality through Christ who humbles ALL. The difficulty has been that women everywhere have been compared with the women at Ephesus. Are women to be students who never graduate? Paul himself did not think *all women* should be compared with Eve. He assumed women could be prophets at Corinth and he extols the apostle Junia, the teacher Priscilla, overseer Phoebe, and co-workers Euodia, Syntyche, and Prisca. To be like the New Testament church is not exactly what we want. (Do we want to talk about endless genealogies and myths?) No. We need to follow the *principles* Paul was employing and the *practices*, if we are in a similar situation as that of the group to which he writes.

A young man once told me about his background. He told me that his ancestors prior to his grandfather were in the mining business. His great-grandfather was the one who recognized that this was an oppressive system under which to work. Even though he himself could no longer leave the mines, he made it possible for his son to learn and to become a carpenter. And for the son, carpentry signified liberation and freedom from the dangers of mining. The next son remained in the business because it was all he knew. It was

a decision from habit and routine, one about which he gave little thought. Yet when the fourth generation, the young man with whom I spoke, was forced to enter the carpentry trade, for him carpentry had come to symbolize oppression. The norm which the great-grandfather wished to foster was not carpentry but freedom. It was misunderstood to be carpentry. Likewise, the norm which Paul wished to foster was liberation. For the first century women at Ephesus, learning the knowledge of God's truth from the appropriate persons was liberating. If anything, the development of Paul's work at Ephesus should culminate in the authoritative leadership of schooled orthodox women today.

NOTES

¹ See *Beyond the Curse: Women Called to Ministry* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1985), ch. 3.

² For a summary of the wrong teachings see *Beyond the Curse*, p. 83.

³ See *Beyond the Curse*, pp. 57-61.

⁴ See *Beyond the Curse*, ch. 1.

⁵ "Because of" child-bearing is possible only if Paul would have used an accusative case. See *Beyond the Curse*, p. 92.

A Case Study in Biblical Interpretation: Women in Ministry

*By Arthur M. Climenhaga**

Introduction

In coming to this workshop/case study, there are certain affirmations or understandings which I state as basic to our approach.¹

First of all, I am committed to the full inspiration of the Scriptures. I personally subscribe to the inerrancy position in my definition of biblical inspiration. Whether all of us subscribe to that terminological position or not, I take it that all of us will agree that we are committed to the Scriptures as our norm for guidance on all issues, and particularly to the basic issue in this workshop today, viz. women in ministry.²

Second, we need to state the hermeneutical principle to be followed in this workshop setting. The question arises as to whether we understand certain Scriptures in what I shall term a "literalistic/separatistic" way or in what we may term a "principled" way, that is, seeking to understand what the Apostle Paul was addressing within his original context. To follow the first method,

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which it seems to me is what many have done or do, is to bring certain Scriptures into conflict with other Scriptures. I cannot accept such a divisive hermeneutical principle in light of my adherence to the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures. Thus where I seem to see a potential conflict, I am driven back to take a second look at the setting of the Scripture(s) involved to see what principle may be there and what the basis for such a hermeneutical approach may be.

With these basic understandings we come to our case study and the question of women in ministry.³

The Basic Question of Study

Certain selected Scriptures have been and are being quoted as giving conclusive evidence that the Bible forbids the authorization of women in ministry. Let us note them as follows: I Corinthians 14:33-37; I Timothy 2:11-15; I Timothy 3:2,12. There are those who believe these scripture passages settle the issue of women in ministry--or at least the ordination of women. However, as we read the passages carefully, not one speaks to the issue of women in the ministry or even ordination. Such passages can only be used in that way if one uses the attempted sequence, viz. if women are not allowed to speak in the Corinthian church and Paul for some reason doesn't allow women to teach, then certainly women can't be in ministry and certainly not ordained. That comes dangerously close to what we call a "logical non-sequitur," i.e., jumping to a conclusion without the necessary sequence of logical steps to arrive at the same.

Therefore, as we now address ourselves to the question of women in ministry, there are three things we must do: first, note the total context in the Scriptures in relation to women in ministry; second, see what happens if we follow what we termed the "literalistic" hermeneutic; third, investigate what happens when we follow a "contextual" or "principled" hermeneutic.

First of all, then, honest hermeneutics demand consistency in the use of all Scriptures. Thus we note Paul speaking of women

prophesying and praying in I Corinthians 11:5.⁴ Again he speaks in Romans 16:1 of Phoebe, a "deacon" of the church at Cenchrea.⁵ Further on in Romans 16 he speaks in his greetings of Priscilla and Aquila, putting Priscilla first (v. 3)⁶; of Andronicus and Junia (v. 7)⁷ who were of note among the apostles; of Tryphena and Tryphosa, women who worked hard in the Lord. In Philippians 4:2,3, he speaks of Euodias and Syntyche as fellow laborers in the Lord. To the Colossians, Paul writes of Nympha and the church in her house (4:16). In other New Testament areas one remembers the risen Lord commissioning women to go and tell the disciples of His resurrection, or the four daughters of Philip who had the gift of prophesying (Acts 21:9). We also see the Old Testament background in the records of Deborah, the judge/prophetess (Judges 4 and 5) and Huldah, the prophetess (II Kings 22:14-20). Such a context must speak to us in relation to women in ministry.

A Literalistic Approach and Its Problems

Let us see what happens then if we follow a literalistic interpretation of the three passages above under review. How would such a view affect what we do today in church life?

For one thing, we would have to forbid women from speaking publicly in church, for a literalistic understanding of I Corinthians 14 seems to say that women are to be silent in the church. Under such circumstances, women could not be Sunday school teachers or even speak in any other way. But the Brethren in Christ have never taken such a position.

Again, if I Timothy 2:11-15 were taken in the literalistic sense, we would have to forbid women from accepting any position in which they would teach even in church institutions. This would not only exclude them from Sunday school teaching but from other positions, such as teaching at Niagara Christian College (a denominationally-owned institution) or Messiah College (a covenant-related institution denominationally) if male students were there. And one wonders if

such prohibition would not extend also to acting as administrators or supervisors in such institutions.

Further, if we take I Timothy 3:2 and 12 literally, we would have to require all chosen for such positions to be the husband of one wife. Unmarried individuals could never serve as bishops/overseers/elders or as deacons under such prohibitions. And yet as Brethren in Christ we have had such serving in our own historical setting.

A Call for Honesty in Our Hermeneutics

What is this saying to us? It says that we have chosen not to interpret these passages in a literalistic way. Instead we have tried to understand them in the biblical and cultural context in which they were written.

To be honest in our biblical interpretation we must be consistent in our use of the Scriptures. Either we must forbid all positions of teaching and supervising to women or recognize that these passages cannot be made to speak directly against women in ministry.

The same approach must be used to evaluate other arguments adduced from the Scriptures against the ordination of women. For example, some have argued that since Jesus chose only male apostles, he intended ministers to be males for all time, and that He would have chosen women apostles had he intended women to function as ministers. But the absurdity of such an argument can be seen in Jesus' ministry as He broke down the barriers between Jews and Gentiles. Thus He flouted conventional customs by interacting with Gentiles (e. g., Samaritan woman at the well; Syro-Phoenician woman; centurion whose servant was sick). Yet all the apostles were Jews. If we follow the line of logic posited above, we would have to say that ministers for all time should be Jews. That is a *reductio ad absurdum*!

**A Hermeneutical Approach on the Basis of
the Principle Involved**

What happens then when we take the passages noted and seek to understand the New Testament teaching from the viewpoint of the principle(s) involved? And on the question of women in ministry what would such an approach say?

For one thing, it would mean that specific passages so often used to argue against women in ministry and even the ordination of women should be understood as specific instructions to specific circumstances. For example, in light of Paul's obvious intention not to silence women in worship in I Corinthians 11:1-16,⁸ we can conclude that the Apostle's concern in I Corinthians 14 had to do with the exercise of gifts in the order of worship. He focuses on tongues and gives evidence of concern for a misuse of the gift. The connection between that concern and the statement that women are to keep silence can lead to the possibility that Paul's command was relevant to Corinthian women getting out of order both in the exercise of gifts and in disturbing the spirit of worship.

In a similar way, Paul's sharp statement in I Timothy 2, if taken in a contextual/principle way, appears to address a situation in which teaching activities by certain women have been in contradistinction to Paul's authoritative teachings and may even have brought disrepute on the church. But such advice/ commands should not be taken to controvert his allowance from women to pray and prophecy within the church. Also when it comes to I Timothy 3:2, Paul is not speaking to whether or not women should be pastors or whether single males may be ordained or not. He actually is forbidding the position of an overseer to those who have more than one wife.

Other Relevant Considerations

Other considerations are as follows:

1. In Galatians 3:28 we see Paul stating the principle that in Christ there is neither male nor female. Certainly this does not infer that distinctions between male and female should be disregarded. But it does mean that spiritually there are no longer any distinctions between male and female, as had definitely been the case in Judaism. All are equal in Christ. Any attempt to deny not only salvation but also spiritual gifts to either men or women goes directly against the grain of this great principle.

2. While the priesthood in the Old Testament was completely closed to women, we find the New Testament moving in a definite direction towards the participation of women in ministry. In fact, as we see in I Peter 2:5, the New Testament sets forth the profound truth of the priesthood of all believers. Thus we see the amazing changes in a short period of time which resulted in such moves as Paul taking on co-workers such as Priscilla, Phoebe, Tryphena, Tryphosa, Euodias (Eudia), Syntyche, and others almost too numerous to mention.

3. Let us think in terms of an analogy in reply to the question, Can women be in the Christian ministry? In certain cases it appears to be quite apparent that God intended the church to continue in a developing movement after New Testament times that would be consonant with and based upon revealed principles. A specific issue, for example, is that of slavery. Paul states in Galatians 3:28 a principle, "There is neither slave nor free in Christ." Yet we do not find him specifically forbidding the practice of slavery at that time. But the principle of the abolishment of slavery worked in the history of the church and the times. We would agree, would we not, that God intended movement in the direction to which the New Testament principle pointed--no slavery at all?⁹

4. Let us in the same way apply the principle concept to the issue of "women in the Christian ministry." Is it consistent with New Testament principles to have women in the Christian ministry today, even to ordain them? As we look at both the Scriptures in their total

context and then at the ensuing evidence, I believe we will affirm that God does want us to open the doors of ministry to all of His own. As we look at the cultural milieu in which we live, we need to make this scriptural principle a reality, bringing our sisters into full participation in Christian ministry, including ordination. Why do we say this? I suggest three reasons as follows:¹⁰

First, we see in the Scripture the spiritual oneness of male and female in Christ, the priesthood of all believers, and ask, Does that not lead in the direction of full participation of male and female in ministry?

Second, we see our sisters sensing God's call in their hearts leading them to preparation for ministry. We see them equipped with spiritual gifts, enabling them to do the tasks of pastoral ministry.

Third, we have seen God blessing the ministry of women. In my lifetime I recall, to name but a few, the ministry of an Anna Kraybill Engle in our Thomas, Oklahoma, church; of Maggie Sollenberger in the San Francisco Life Line Mission; of Sarah Bert in the Chicago Mission; of Frances Davidson in Africa and at Messiah College; of Katie Smith Buckwalter in India and home missions. I personally have seen and felt the ministry of most of these women at some point in my life and have also seen the larger fields of their endeavors as they brought men and women to Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

With a reordered understanding of the Scripture so commonly used against women in ministry and teaching, I take a look at the larger scriptural context. I think of the position in which Peter and his fellow Christians found themselves when they went to preach to Cornelius and his household. They were shocked as they witnessed the Spirit being outpoured on Gentiles just as He was on Jews, and that without the rites of circumcision. Even though they had not understood that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile, and Peter

had had but a glimmer of it with the vision of all kinds of beasts let down from heaven, yet when they saw the evidence of the Spirit falling on the Gentiles, Peter cried out, "Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have (Acts 10:47)."

As Brethren in Christ we are not called on to believe that there is any new grace or qualification added even in an act of ordination, but rather that this is public recognition of divine calling to ministry in the gospel of Jesus Christ In the Petrine vein we may be constrained to say, "How can we men keep women from being ordained when they have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?"

NOTES

¹ I acknowledge very material help in preparation for this workshop presentation from John C. Brunt, "Ordination of Women: A Hermeneutical Question," *Ministry* (September 1988), 12-14. Brunt is Dean of the School of Theology at Walla Walla College in Washington. Naturally, there are several variant viewpoints between the author's basic Seventh-Day Adventist approach and my firm commitment to the Brethren in Christ and general evangelical approach. However, the author's general viewpoint and wrestling with the hermeneutical question involved is consonant with my own wrestlings. I have reformed the concepts in my own terms and made them relevant to the Brethren in Christ setting. Thus any direct quotation used has a notation as to its source in Dr. Brunt's article.

² Full consideration of the nuances involved in development of inerrancy and inspiration of the Scriptures is another matter and not necessarily germane to the workshop consideration. However, I have emphasized my adherence to the inerrancy viewpoint of scriptural inspiration lest some would be tempted to assert that anyone who can come to a viewpoint allowing for women in ministry must be weak in his/her concept of inspiration.

³ I have chosen the terminology, "women in ministry" rather than "ordination of women" at this point deliberately, although I will later on use both expressions in the workshop development. If one can settle the issue of women in Christian ministry, I believe the question

of ordination becomes moot.

⁴ In introducing this reference, we realize that there is a larger context in I Corinthians 11:1-16 dealing with order in creation and the symbolic form for expression of the same. This area is another hermeneutical problem. I addressed the same in a Master's thesis, "The Doctrine of the Veiling," and at that time in all academic and spiritual honesty came to certain conclusions. I now realize I did this in the cultural context of the western world. Contacts with other cultures make one realize the need for fresh hermeneutical wrestling with the passage. For example, many African peoples whose hair style does not fit the expressions in the Corinthian passage; Japanese culture which says that a woman who keeps her head covered exhibits prostitute tendencies. In that light, one looks for the abiding principle in the passage and seeks its hermeneutical application in a modern world. That is another study in its own right, beyond the compass of this workshop study.

⁵ Note the Greek word is "deacon," not "servant" (KJV) or "deaconess" (NIV). Why have modern translators avoided the word "deacon"? Is there a certain chauvinism involved?

⁶ See also II Timothy 4:19.

⁷ Note here that in the Greek text the name is Junia, a feminine form of the name, not Junias, as the NIV translates it. One wonders if the feminine form 'Junia' was a man or a woman. Due to the uncertainty, this particular reference is not as clear as others in reference to women serving in Christian ministry.

⁸ As Dr. Brunt states, "That Paul does not intend to silence women in worship is obvious from I Corinthians 11. He permits them to both pray and prophesy in church as long as they are appropriately attired (which in the cultural context of Corinth means wearing veils). Since Paul uses the term "prophesying" to include what we would call preaching--the speaking for God within the worship service--this passage proves that Paul did not really intend to silence women in church" (see page 13).

⁹ Ibid., 14.

¹⁰ Again I acknowledge my indebtedness to Dr. Brunt's article, p. 14, for these concepts following, which I have restated in my own words.

Helping the Church to Accept Women in Leadership

*By Luke L. Keefer, Jr.**

The formation of the title for this workshop raises immediate questions. Do the churches need help? Do they want help? Assuming both questions receive affirmative answers, other questions remain: what kind of help will prove salutary and who is most likely to provide it? These questions underlie our task together, and while my remarks do not work with them directly in outline form, they do relate to the issues I will present.

An Historical Context for the Role of Brethren in Christ Women in the Church

In the first century of the Brethren in Christ Church, the denomination was basically a "house-church" phenomenon. I use that term advisably because it describes many aspects of the church at that time. There is no evidence of women acting in leadership roles at any level of the church. Nor did they appear to have any leadership roles in corporate gatherings for worship or church council meetings. Given the worship style of the period, they apparently were given

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vocal privileges in testimony meetings and possibly in prayer. Their major functions were hospitality, Christian nurture in the family (especially of young children), and roles as wives of deacons or ministers. This involved assisting women at baptisms and communion services. Some accompanied their husbands in church visitation or counseling, especially if a woman was the subject of the contact.

Significant changes in women's roles began about the point that the denomination entered its second century. They were natural results of new church structures and methods. Sunday schools, revival meetings, tent evangelism, home missions, foreign missions, church education institutions, and benevolent institutions provided new roles for women. Ladies entered significant new roles of ministry as teachers, missionaries, "evangelists," authors, and social care personnel. Often these services were restricted to children and women, but that line was hard to draw and harder to observe. Especially in overseas settings women evangelized, pastored, and taught men as well as women and children, though the mission board made sure missionary men were soon in all administrative roles. In North America capable ladies were instructing men in college classes. Anna Engle, who rates as one of the better teachers I have had along my educational odyssey, was always sensitive about this fact. She was particularly concerned about this when older pastors of the denomination were students in her classes. I suspect Francis Davidson would not have agonized over such a situation in the way Anna Engle did.

We all know about the fiery speeches of Rhoda Lee at General Conferences in the 1890s, which moved the denomination to enter foreign mission work, although she was not an official member of Conference. There were ladies on the mission board in the second decade of the twentieth century, an experiment that ended after a few years. One wonders whether it ceased because board personnel were members of General Conference and women were not yet functioning in Conference membership roles. At any rate, I can remember the sense of amazement we all felt in the 1950s when congregations began electing women as delegates to General Conference. By the 1960s they were serving on General Conference boards, and now they participate in large numbers at all levels of church conferences. They

increasingly serve on boards and committees, but not proportionate to their membership in the denomination. One factor in this imbalance is that most committees strive for a balance between ministers and non-ministers in their composition, and few women are currently in credentialed ministry in the church.

This quick sketch leaves out many details. My purpose in giving it is to remind ourselves that significant changes have occurred in the last century and that both the pace has quickened and the scope enlarged within the last three decades. For some, though probably not many, this means that it is already a non-issue. Women in leadership at all levels is an accomplished fact. Others rejoice in these developments but feel that much more must be done, since women are not proportionately represented in all roles of leadership and/or do not find every role yet available to them--pastoral ministry in general and the bishopric in particular. The fact that some congregations and areas of the church are more reluctant to involve women in leadership is a source of concern to some people.

The historical overview leads to two issues: how to assess the extent of change, and how to evaluate methods for achieving further change. In regard to the first issue (the extent of involving women in church leadership), some say it's already gone too far, others that it is keeping pace with change in general, and some that it is far from being satisfactory at present. In respect to the second issue (methods for involving women in leadership), a few feel the church has conformed to secular feminist pressure, others that remarkable change has occurred on its own without making it a particular issue, and some that we need definite commitments to achieve full participation of women in all aspects of church life.

We shall have occasion to refer back to this hasty sketch when other issues come under discussion throughout this session. For our history not only influences where we are at present but also has pointers, I believe, to guide our future in regard to this question.

I want now to address our common task as a church in regard to women in leadership. And I think it is best to approach it, as much as possible, without a "we-they" attitude. Some people experience greater distress than others in discussing the issue, but we all do better if none of us assumes we have solved the matter and

others have only to learn from us what to do.

What are the barriers to women in leadership that we wrestle with in one form or another? I see them as falling in three areas: first, biblical/theological questions, second, practical/ecclesiological questions, and third, women's personal reflections in regard to changing roles. The rest of my presentation will be comments upon these issues, hopefully in such a way that it will stimulate your participation in the discussion that will follow.

Biblical/Theological Questions

We are a biblical people. That is not intended to be an exclusive claim, for all Christians make that claim. What we mean when we say this is that the Bible plays a more authoritative role with us, and similar groups, than it does for others. We tend not to weight tradition, reason, experience, and contemporary methods of interpretation of the Bible the way some other Christians do. Another way of putting that is to say that we believe the biblical word has a stronger gravitational pull upon our modern world than our world does upon the biblical one. By way of analogy the biblical world is the "sun" and our world is the planet "earth." Both exert a gravitational pull upon the other, but the one is primary and the other secondary.

Historically, we have made heroic attempts to line up our practice with the biblical world. Our efforts in some respects have not been so extensive in recent decades. We have come to admit, what our forebears seem not always to have been conscious of, that the "earth" exerts some force of its own. Our current culture does pull the biblical message our way somewhat. But it has been a painful admission and a scary one. How much should the Bible be interpreted from our cultural perspectives? Isn't there a danger that we could confuse the role of the "sun" and the "earth," thus switching primary and secondary authorities? Haven't we known some Christians who have done that, and the Bible then becomes a mere

echo of their culture or their personal preference? These are healthy questions, reflecting a salutary fear.

When we approach the issue of women's roles in the church as a biblical/ theological question, several tensions are encountered. The Bible took shape in and was addressed to a patriarchal culture. At least western culture in our day is quite different from that context. If that were the only tension, we might resolve issues rather easily, but deeper tensions are also involved. Some statements about women's roles in the home and in the church appear to have more universal application; that is, they are not directly tied to a biblical world culture. For example, many Christians have concluded that 1 Corinthians 11 does not require women to be veiled, even in public worship. Yet, they still insist that it does teach that women are subject to men at home and in the church. And Ephesians 5 is seen as enforcing this relationship in marriage. Where this conviction is deep-seated, a hermeneutic of cultural adaptation will not prove to be decisive.

The deepest issue of all is the unresolved tension within the biblical text itself. Of all the apostolic writers, Paul seems to have utilized women in ministry more than any other New Testament leader. His instruction concerning veiling in I Corinthians 11 acknowledges their right to participate actively in various roles in public worship. He insisted that in Christ there is "neither male nor female" (Gal. 3:28). Yet he penned two of the strongest prohibitions against women's ministry in the church (I Cor. 14:34, 35; I Tim. 2:11-15). A lot of very unsatisfactory exegesis has occurred over the years in trying to resolve this biblical tension in favor of one side of the question or the other.

I am not going to pursue the textual questions themselves. I raise them only to make several observations. First, since we are so strongly committed to the biblical revelation, we will not feel good about any attempted resolution of the role of women in the church that seems to slight biblical authority. I think that means we will be cautious about using differences in culture as our primary way to resolve the tension in the Bible itself on this issue. It is very tempting to use this hermeneutical principle, but I believe we hesitate to respond to it because we instinctively realize that other moral issues

could then be undercut by the same hermeneutical tool.

Secondly, a biblical case can be made for different sides of this issue. Brotherhood means that we respect both the integrity of the people who hold the views and the cases they make for them. It is in everyone's interest to keep the dialogue going. We should not push quickly for position statements and conference rulings. We are not involved in a contest of biblical interpretation in which only one party can be declared the winner. Increased roles of women in the church cannot be bought at the high price of diminished confidence in Scripture or the loss of respect for some in the church by others--and usually this means that the party that loses is suspicious of the one that wins.

I do not believe that this means that one blesses the status quo nor that we are resigned to a "no-win" impasse. What I am saying is that the resolution of interpretative tensions will not come easily nor soon. Love and patience are as important to biblical interpretation as are hermeneutical tools and a commitment to truth. We are committed to a group consensus about women in leadership. The end result is worth a difficult and prolonged effort. It might take us longer to get where some feel we should be, but I believe that when we get there more people will feel good about women's roles in the church. And that will mean that women will experience more profitable ministry, with less resistance and greater support than some groups which have seemed to impose women in leadership by church rulings and dramatic test cases.

Practical/Ecclesiological Questions

In church matters, as in so many social institutions, the unwritten customs are as strong a factor as are written procedures. In our denomination most of the historic restrictions against women's roles of leadership have been of the unwritten variety. There is very little in General Conference rulings or official procedures (*Manual of Doctrine and Government* and the *Ministers' Manual*) that restricts

women's involvement, except for the frequent use of masculine pronouns. That, however, is a telling exception, for it indicates denominational assumptions. And such assumptions precluded women's participation, even though no official action was taken to say they could not be involved in various levels of church life.

Another observation has relevance to this matter. Both periods of our history where dramatic changes in regard to women in leadership/ministry took place--and I speak in regard to 1885-1915 and 1960-1990--have occurred at times when roles for women were changing in the larger society in North America. It would be naive to assume that this had no effect upon the church. Yet, I would strongly contend, especially in regard to the first of these periods, that the strong stimulus to involve women came from within the church. New ministry opportunities before the denomination called for their gifts.

Now, I think it is important to reflect upon these matters. Historically, a larger place for women in the church has been a matter of changing assumptions rather than challenging or changing official church statements. On one hand this is fortunate, for it has spared us the polarization that results from test cases and the processes of reversing official policy. On the other hand, unwritten assumptions are resilient things in the thought life of a group. They tend not to change just because a new practice has been introduced to the group behavior. Passive resistance can prove to be a formidable obstacle to a new role in the group life, such as women in new leadership functions.

If we are going to achieve the maximum level of women's participation in the life of the church, then I think we must give our attention to the assumptions against such participation and address them in a manner which elicits positive responses. I anticipate our discussion time in our workshop in this regard, for we might probe this point for creative ideas.

I would only note three things that occur to me. One, a larger role for women in the larger society has created a climate to accept expanded roles for women in the church. Secondly, new roles of ministry in the church create leadership roles for women. To this point a large percentage of women in ministry, for example, have

been employed as Christian education directors and ministers of counseling, roles that have only been staff options in the church in very recent decades. It is probably easier to involve women in leadership in newly created ministries than ones where a tradition of male leadership has been established.

Thirdly, and I think most importantly, women in leadership at all levels of the church have been their own best advertisement of their potential to serve Christ and the church. And this is more potent at changing assumptions than anything I know. We tend to be more pragmatic than our stated principles allow. When confronted by a good example that refutes our assumptions, we make allowances for exempt cases. When the cases multiply to general observations, we revise our assumptions. Finally, we feel constrained to revise the rational framework that justified the prior assumptions. But if one had confronted our rational framework at the beginning, our defense of it would likely have precluded an openness to consider the evidence of cases. Perhaps this has much to suggest to us in regard to the topic at hand.

There remains one particular issue in this regard that I think we must address. Women in credentialed ministry is one specific aspect of the larger question we are addressing. Since 1976, more than a dozen women have been credentialed for ministry in our church. And the number of candidates is increasing with the years, seminary students being one indication of the trend. Yet, the issue of women in the church reaches its most emotional resistance at this point. This is reflected not by General Conference action which calls to task the Board for Ministry and Doctrine for credentialing women, but in the difficulty to find congregations who will receive them into their employ. Given our polity of ministerial placement, where congregational preference is determinative, this will be a practical issue for some time.

Some patterns have emerged. Women are more readily accepted in multi-staff congregations than in one-pastor congregations. They have been recognized for ministry more readily in roles that seemed more "feminine" (i.e., directors of Christian education and counseling, especially for women and children). The process recently has taken an interesting turn. It seems women ministers get stronger

affirmation if they first fill a staff role in the congregation and then move on to credentials. In other words, congregations are more influenced by the performance an individual demonstrates than by the title she bears.

I think there is material here for reflection, although I am not inclined to suggest hard conclusions. I would hazard sharing a hunch, however. I believe the acceptance of women in all kinds of church roles will be the climate that makes acceptance of women in credentialed ministry more favorable. To adopt a strategy that interchanges these factors, I feel, would be a fundamental error. To be more explicit, I believe to make women in credentialed ministry a focal point for effort will not achieve the goal desired for women in other roles in the life of the church. The placement of horse and cart in this process, I maintain, is crucial.

The Personal Reflections of Women About Leadership Roles in the Church

I would not presume to speak for most of the women in the church. I know what some of them say; I know less what many of them think and feel. It is in this area that gatherings like this one are important, for they provide forums for women to address the issues that concern them from their own perspectives. And I think it is a matter of plural reference (perspectives). There is no one woman's position on this topic, just as there is probably no one male perspective on this or other issues.

There are two areas that I wish to comment on in this section of my paper. Both apply to the issue of women in credentialed ministry, but there are likely implications for other roles within the church as well.

The first is the issue of women with family responsibilities, especially where minor children are involved. Whether or not we wish to discuss this matter, the fact is that the conflict of ministry and family has been part of the debate on this topic for more than a

century. Saying that this should be no more a problem for women in ministry than a problem for men is true in many respects, but it does not get rid of the problem. Apart from the issue of cultural expectations (which have justifiable if not absolute appeal), there are biblical and philosophical issues involved. The biblical world of family roles does not harmonize easily with current western expectations. And the philosophical question whether equal worth demands identical roles as a natural corollary has more than rhetorical merit.

At a time when the family is in real peril in our society, we can not afford to treat any family concern as a non-issue. Here women are as apt to be concerned as any person who is party to the discussion. They are likely to agonize over the tension between time spent with family and time given to ministry more than their male counterparts. Particularly is this true if ladies have not begun a family or have small children at the point that they consider a call to ministry. No two situations will be identical, and we must be discerning as a body as we help women decide their role with integrity so as to deal with dual demands.

The second issue is the expectation of women in ministry. Like all minority groups, ladies must exceed the performance level of male ministers in order to gain acceptance. There are two sides to this expectation formula. The people's acceptance of women in ministry is tied to higher performance demands. Women who sense this might feel an inordinate pressure to please everyone and do everything. The other aspect is that the female candidate might impose unrealistic expectations upon herself in terms of being a successful minister. These pressures imposed from without and within can be counterproductive. Certainly they can diminish the joy of ministry. If we want to increase the extent of women in ministry, we must be aware of this problem. We will have to do a better job than I have done thus far in affirming women in ministry, as well as any who fill leadership roles hitherto filled only by men.

Conclusion

I am thankful for the opportunity that this conference provides us to discuss the questions related to women in leadership in the church. Women have served in leadership roles in the past, are doing so in expanding ways at present, and will do even more in the future. If our progress to this point has not been dramatic, it has at least been substantial. Significant questions still remain, largely over the rate of change and over the ultimate extent of women's leadership roles in the church. We have the privilege to engage these issues together over these days. We also have the responsibility to sojourn with all people in the church. Our "herd" approach to questions might mean that we move more slowly than some others, but I think it has the advantages of avoiding many dangers and a greater acceptance of destination when we arrive. I find comfort in the way our heritage equips us to deal with this concern for women in leadership in the church.

Servant Leadership

*By Dorothy Sherk**

The servant model of leadership is the only one accepted and validated by Jesus. "I am among you as one who serves," he says (Lk. 22:27) and He calls on all who would lead in Christian service to follow the same path. Yet arrogance, though an abomination to the Lord in both men and women, is too often accepted as the norm for Christian leaders; hence, when women attempt to fill leadership roles in the church, their motivation is perceived as a bid for self-glory and control. Opportunities for women in church life have often been stifled by the assumption that (a) they want to renege on motherhood and household responsibilities, or (b) they see themselves in competition with men and feel that they must make a statement for womankind in the mode advocated by militant secular feminism.

Women with a heart for service, however, have no desire to shrug off God-given duties in the home or elsewhere, nor do they see the role of men diminished by an increase of opportunity for women. After all, the kingdom of God operates on cooperation, not competition, and the needs are so great that the Lord's vineyard will never be over-staffed.

But before we pursue the theme of women as servant leaders, we must define leadership and its relationship to servanthood. Often we think of a leader as the top person in a hierarchy, carrying a very

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visible type of authority. But anyone who has influence is leading to the extent to which his attitudes and character affect the behavior and the decision of others. According to this definition, almost everyone has given some leadership at one time or another, for none of us are at the bottom of the heap all the time.

The difference is that some leadership is up-front, and some is not. It is a fact that many God-fearing women through the centuries of Christian history have exerted a great influence which was unthreatening to men because it was not perceived as exercising leadership. Charlotte Elliott, for instance, shares with Billy Graham any human credit for the many souls won to Christ as they proceed down the aisles to the hymn "Just As I Am." Abraham Lincoln receives honor as the leader who signed the paper prohibiting slavery, but it was Harriet Beecher Stowe, perhaps more than anyone else, who stirred the public conscience through her book, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Whoever first stated that "the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world" might have been trying to hand a placebo to women, or perhaps he really meant it. The fact remains that women have always found ways of affecting the destiny of the world, and always will. The negative side of the behind-the-scenes approach is that women have too often stooped to manipulation in their frustration at not being given recognition for their strengths.

The spirit of servanthood, however, rules out such base and unworthy tactics. David McKenna points out that "servanthood is a leadership style which relies upon the power of self-giving without self-glory. Such power is possible only through the Holy Spirit".¹ Again, he quotes Henri Nouwen as identifying Christian leadership as "downward mobility ending on a cross."² Crossbearing is not often seen as an integral part of Christian leadership. Instead, we tend to evaluate the leader in terms of success, control, management skills, and visibility. When we do this, we are buying into the world's values. "No wonder," says McKenna, "Christianity is considered politically and economically powerful, but morally and spiritually marginal in our society."³

Christian leaders, of course, are not necessarily abandoning servanthood because they happen to be visible and successful. They serve without being servile, and they display a dignity and a quiet self-

respect based on an understanding of their great worth in the sight of God. Since they know that the work is the Lord's, they are not so likely to be caught up in the frantic merry-go-round of activities sparked by a hidden desire for self-promotion. They can go with the ebb as well as the flow, knowing that God Himself sometimes rests from His creative activities. They are involved in decision-making, but they do not use the steam-roller approach. The empire-builders dream their personal dreams, winning a following through their charisma and persuasive powers. But alas! when the leader falls, the empire collapses because his followers had never claimed personal ownership of the vision. They were following the man rather than the dream. Images with feet of clay rear their heads inside the church as well as in the world.

Servant leaders also dream dreams, but they search their hearts to know whether they can visualize the fulfillment of their vision without themselves in the center. Once they are assured that it is the Kingdom of God they are seeking, they work for consensus among God's people. They know that consensus-building requires time and patience, and that when it is achieved, no one will likely remember who instigated the thought in the first place. But they are working for the Kingdom, not personal recognition, and are willing, if need be, to wait for reward until the Judgment Day. Often it has been women who sparked the vision which was then promoted by their husbands, brothers, or fathers. At such a time, while tempted to nurse hurts, it is wise to remember Nouwen's admonition that Christian leaders are downwardly mobile, ending at the Cross.

Such self-effacement, of course, does not justify anyone for knowingly taking the credit that belongs to someone else. Generally, however, in consensus-building, no one generates all of the vision. Rather, in a true community open to the Spirit of God, the vision builds as each makes a contribution. Every member becomes a leader in the extent to which his influence is expressed, and although special leadership skills will be noticed and utilized, the project will outlive its initiators because it is the expression of a community willing to listen to God.

How does all this apply to women in leadership? As we have seen, women have always been able to exercise behind-the-scene

influence. Ordination and pastoral roles are at the heart of present-day controversy. Joan D. Flikkema lists women's ministries in the church as low, middle, or high-risk activities.⁴ Although prayer is often stated to be the greatest power in the world, and although power-wielding women are often considered dangerous, no one seems to be threatened by the prayer ministry of women. Bible and theological study for person enrichment wins general approval, although she may move on to the high-risk area if she seeks to enter seminary. More and more denominations are encouraging women to be active in teaching and counselling ministries as well as on boards and committees. Such activities may be classified as putting women at medium risk. Preaching and pastoring are listed as high risks, especially in those churches where the pastor is an authoritarian figure, creating all of the vision and making all of the decisions.

A recent book, entitled *Daughters of the Church*, outlines significant contributions of women all the way from the Virgin Mary to Kathryn Kuhlman. In their summary, the authors state that while women have had significant ministries from the very inception of the church, it seems that men began to restrict the activities of women when they lost the concept of ministry as servanthood and began to understand it as the possession of rank and authority. They say, "Questions about authority in the church, and particularly about the ministry of women, might be resolved more biblically if attention were given to the fact that 'ministry' means serving."⁵

An interesting example of an up-front nineteenth-century servant-leader who greatly influenced the Brethren in Christ Church is Phoebe Palmer,⁶ the wife of a New York physician, who was intensely interested in John Wesley's doctrine of Sanctification. She began a Tuesday morning group for prayer and Bible Study, teaching that heart purity need not be a life-long process as Wesley seemed to believe, but that when an individual laid all on the altar, the Holy Spirit at that moment brought about a total heart cleansing for those who desired it. So powerful was her teaching ministry that many ministers and even several Methodist bishops came to sit under it. Eventually, her husband laid aside his practice to enter full-time evangelism. As a team, they traveled in the United States, Canada,

and Great Britain. She refused to consider herself a preacher--she merely "exhorted" in connection with her husband's sermons. It was Phoebe, however, whom people came to hear. If ordination had been offered to her, she would have refused to accept, but she is credited with leading thousands to Christ and establishing the American holiness movement which proved so attractive to many denominations.

Small wonder, then, that Rhoda Lee, of the same era, felt free to stand on the floor of Conference and shame the Brethren in Christ into starting a foreign mission program.⁷ It seems as though women speakers were often accepted and even appreciated as long as they were not trying to usurp authority.

Women have frequently found their niche by serving in positions that the male leaders of the church were not vying for. In home and foreign missions and in ministry to the poor and needy, women have always been in the vanguard. Women around the turn of the century outnumbered men two to one in foreign missions, carrying on ministries which would have been considered inappropriate at home. Frances Davidson⁸ was the first of many single Brethren in Christ women who found an appropriate avenue for using their gifts in Africa and India. There they could preach, teach, plan, and administer without posing a threat to the home church. But sooner or later, the church had to recognize that structures against women were more cultural than biblical when it was deemed more appropriate for a woman to preach to a black man than to a white one. The point, however, is that these women did not go into mission primarily as an escape valve for their frustrations, but as an expression of their love for Jesus and those He came to save.

Many other intrepid and gifted Brethren in Christ women, though less well-known, have served with equal devotion. Two Canadian women come to mind at this point. Annie Winger,⁹ who first went to Africa in 1921, was unimpressive in her public appearance. Bertie Church always gave over its Sunday morning pulpit to a furloughing missionary. Annie's discourses were rather dull, though mercifully short, and because of this, I assumed as a child that she was probably a second-rate missionary. One of her fellow-workers (a man, at that!) assured me that she was one of the

most successful persons on the field because she had no problem bridging the cultural gap and sitting with the native women where they sat. Because she accepted them fully as equals, they were able to understand and accept the gospel which she preached. She was what McKenna calls an "incarnational"¹⁰ leader, expressing the humble, serving attitude of Jesus.

Idellus Sider, from Wainfleet, Ontario, gave many years of service in home missions, eleven of them spent at Houghton, Ontario. A poverty life-style was expected of such people, as well as twenty-four hour days spent cheerfully for the physical and spiritual welfare of others. Idellus's diary¹¹ indicates that she was seamstress, gardener, consoler, exhorter; an excerpt from her diary, March 1, 1937, states: "A lovely day. We washed, ironed, made Sr. Murphy's bonnet, did some calling, butchered 2 hogs and threshed, with other people's problems to solve in addition. Am going to bed early this eve."

Women like Idellus lived in the mission house, subsisting on what food they could raise on the premises as well as on what people brought in. They were cheerful, uncomplaining and optimistic, asking for nothing more than the joy of walking in the footsteps of Jesus. Service, whether in slums or jungles, is not without its hazards. Sometimes men, as an expression of chivalry, have sought to protect women from the rougher side of life. But servant women have chalked up an enviable record for fortitude and success in tough situations. Salvation Army lassies, identified by their distinctive garb, invaded dens of iniquity which even policemen feared to enter. This kind of vulnerability serves to authenticate the sincerity of those leaders who use power only to affirm the personhood of others.

Service, however, does not need to be dramatic in order to be convincing. In 1978, the Westheights Brethren in Christ Church in Kitchener, Ontario, was planted as the result of a women's Bible study group. The women did not think of themselves as leaders or as church planters. They simply had a concern for their unchurched neighbors. But the Spirit of the Lord had taken over in a quiet but unmistakably forceful way. The converted ladies began to travel out to the Rosebank Church in the country, and almost packed it out. It was then that the minister, the Bishop, and others, perceived that it

might be the time to start a church in the city. The "founding mothers," along with other women, shared with men the responsibilities of planning and setting up the new congregation. It didn't occur to any of us to call a woman pastor. Women and men now share happily in the ongoing work of the church with mutual trust and respect. Currently, a large percentage of members and adherents are carrying some sort of responsibility within the congregation. More attention is paid to gifts and callings than to gender. A group of people with well-developed leadership skills could conceivably get into each other's way, but this is not happening because the spirit of servanthood prevails.

Brethren in Christ women have, in the past, utilized their leadership skills in the spirit of servanthood. They have taught and trained children by word and example; they have ministered to the needs of a suffering world by serving as missionaries or by making their homes a haven for the needy; they have on occasion been influential through writing and speaking; they have been intercessors, rejoicing that this door of opportunity has not been closed to them. As ordination becomes an option, there will surely be women who will respond, not to win visible power, but to use their gifts to the glory of God and the building of the Kingdom.

NOTES

¹ David L. McKenna, *Power to Follow Grace to Lead* (Waco, Texas: World Publishing, 1989), p. 188.

² *Ibid.*, p. 193.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 192.

⁴ Alvera Mickelsen, ed., *Women, Authority and the Bible* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity Press, 1986), pp. 262-265.

⁵ Ruth A. Tucker and Walter L. Liefeld, *Daughters of the Church* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1987), p. 441.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 261-264.

⁷ Carlton Wittlinger, *Quest for Piety and Obedience: The Story of the Brethren in Christ* (Nappanee, Ind.: Evangel Press, 1978), pp.

179-181.

⁸ E. Morris Sider, *Nine Portraits* (Nappanee, Ind.: Evangel Press, 1978), pp. 159-212.

⁹ Engle, Anna, Climenhaga, John, and Buckwalter, Leoda, *There is no Difference* (Nappanee, Ind.: E.V. Publishing House, 1950), p. 371.

¹⁰ McKenna, *Power to Follow*, p. 16.

¹¹ E. Morris Sider and Alonzo Vannatter, *Fruit from Woods and Sands* (Nappanee, Ind.: Evangel Press, 1978), pp. 69-71.

The Church of God is People: The Case for Inclusive Language

By Harriet Bicksler*

The 1984 Brethren in Christ hymnbook, *Hymns for Praise and Worship*, contains the hymn, "The Church of God is People." I like the title, but every time we sing it in church I almost choke on the last line of each stanza: (1) "Where *men* are found at worship, the church of God is there"; (2) "Where *men* show real compassion, the church is there indeed"; (3) "Where Christians seek their *brothers*, the church of God abides" (emphasis mine). If "the church of God is people," what happened to the women?

A familiar praise hymn contains the line, "Father love is reigning o'er us, *brother* love binds *man to man*." Yet another hymn says that "in Christ there is no East or West . . . all Christly souls are one in him throughout the whole wide earth." Ironically, however, the third stanza reads: "Join hands, then *brothers* of the faith, whate'er your race may be; who serves my Father as a *son* is surely kin to me" (emphasis mine). I cringe as women are eliminated from "the whole wide earth."

I know that in these and other hymns, not to mention most other forms of English, women are not *intended* to be excluded by what is sometimes referred to as the gender-neutral masculine. The grammatical rules and traditions that call for "he/man" language are so deeply ingrained in us that breaking them almost feels

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immoral--especially if we are serious and careful users of English. When feminists have called attention to a "male bias" in the language, others have often been quick to dismiss the issue on various grounds: (1) since exclusion is not intended, there is no issue; (2) it's a trivial issue and there are other more important ones demanding our attention; (3) the grammatical structure of the English language requires "he/man" language, and when you try to eliminate it you destroy the rhythm and integrity of the language.

For many women and men, however, the issue of inclusive language is not trivial. My own pilgrimage has been from accepting without question the generic masculine as inherent in the English language, to feeling mildly uneasy, to being very uncomfortable when I am in settings where there is little or no effort to use language inclusively. I have sought validation for my growing frustration with exclusive language by reading and listening to others who have experienced similar journeys.¹

In her book, *Inclusive Language in the Church*, Nancy Hardesty begins, "Many people consider the issue of inclusive language trivial or cosmetic, yet it goes to the very heart of the gospel."² She echoes my own experience: "Once the issue has been raised, we become increasingly sensitized."³ Sharon Neuffer Emswiler legitimizes the pain of "women who have begun to discover that for centuries they have been forced to receive their identity from men rather than from God."⁴ She goes on to describe her feelings of suffocation as she has sat through worship services which seem to deny her existence as a woman.⁵

A father and professor of worship tells how his thinking changed. At a farewell service for his missionary daughter, their pastor chose the missionary hymn, "O Zion, Haste, Thy Mission High Fulfilling," which includes the line, "Give of your sons to bear the message glorious." Watkins observes, "With my head I knew the hymn included her, but at the deeper level of my heart I wanted the hymn to proclaim that it was my daughter who had gone to publish glad tidings of peace, of Jesus, of redemption and release."⁶

Writing from the context of the Roman Catholic church, Juliana Casey pointedly summarizes the experience of many women:

Women simply do not exist in much of our language. All men, after all, were created equal, and all men were redeemed. Mankind has evolved to this point in time and everyone knows the importance of one man, one vote. The lawyer, he, the doctor, he, the executive, he, and the priest, he, all belong to the same brotherhood and share the same fellowship. The brethren pray to Him, while the working man earns his daily bread.^{7]}

Casey notes that "women's rising consciousness has recognized the pervasive and nearly universal use of language to make one half of the world invisible."⁸ A brochure, "Language, Thought and Social Justice," published by the National Council of Churches of Christ, illustrates how consciousness is raised: when viewing a particular black and white drawing, some people see a vase, others see two profiles, while others alternately see both images. "Once you can see both configurations," the brochure comments, "the original state of seeing only one image is no longer possible. Similarly, once you become aware of the limitations sex-exclusive language creates, the inclusive language issue takes on greater importance."⁹

These writers suggest some of the effects of "he/man" language, which are amplified by Dale Spender in her well-documented book, *Man Made Language*:¹⁰ (1) people tend to *think* male when they hear or read "he/man" language (she and others cite studies showing this); (2) women are always required to think again to determine whether they are indeed included, whereas men always know they're included; (3) women are made to be outsiders, and "they must constantly seek confirmation that they are included in the *human* species";¹¹ (4) there are frequently clashes of images: one can say, "man is the only primate that commits rape," but it clearly doesn't work as well to say "man being a mammal breastfeeds his young."

To those who continue to argue that the use of the generic masculine is not intended to have the above effects, and in fact is required by the laws of English grammar, there are a number of answers. For me, as a careful student of English with a long-time interest in words and language, it was an eye-opening and serendipitous experience to discover recently the history of the gender-neutral masculine. I discovered that instead of being inherent in the language, the generic masculine was in fact manipulated into

it by the men in charge at the time. Dale Spender outlines the process by which this happened.

According to Spender, in 1553, Thomas Wilson, writing for an upper class well-educated male audience in England, "insisted that it was more *natural* to place the man *before* the woman."¹² About a century later, in 1646, another male *grammarian*, Joshua Poole, decided that it was "not only natural that the male should take 'pride of place' it was also *proper* because . . . the male gender was the *worthier* gender."¹³

Another century later, John Kirkby wrote his "Eighty-Eight Grammatical Rules," Rule 21 of which "stated that the male gender was *more comprehensive* than the female."¹⁴ The next century firmly entrenched these principles with the 1850 Act of Parliament which legally insisted that *he* stood for *she*. Spender ends this historical summary by noting, "To my knowledge there had never been an influential female *grammarian* and there were certainly no female members of Parliament to vote against the 1850 Act,"¹⁵

Apparently, then, a rule which most of us accepted without question as we learned to use the language correctly was rooted in a sexist interpretation: "The *grammarians* developed rules of language which coincided with their patriarchal view of society. Today, as a new understanding of the relationship between men and women is emerging, it is only natural that the very language we use should begin to reflect this new understanding."¹⁶

Purist *grammarians* continue to appeal to rules established a century and a half ago, while at the same time it is clear that usage standards have shifted significantly. A comparison of the King James Version of the Bible (early seventeenth century) with the New International Version (mid-twentieth century) quickly shows, for example, that usage changes, and that what communicated clearly in 1611 no longer communicates as well in 1990. Language is dynamic rather than static. Other examples range from the way we speak about black Americans to the plethora of new words that have entered the language because of modern technology.

It is also clear that language shapes our ideas and reflects our attitudes. Most of us have long since abandoned the childish ditty,

"Sticks and stones will break my bones, but words will never hurt me," because it is simply untrue. Words can hurt deeply; how many remember things off-handedly said to us as children that continue to affect the way we view ourselves as adults? We avoid careless use of the Lord's name or other forms of profanity because we believe that our language does indeed reflect our inner attitudes. To me there is logic in the assumption that the use of the generic masculine both reflects and shapes attitudes toward women. Language is not neutral.

The issue of inclusive language goes further than eliminating the generic masculine from everyday speech and writing. For many women, the issue also includes "God-talk" and the language of Scripture. Most evangelicals would readily agree that God is neither male nor female, yet we almost exclusively refer to God in male terms. Numerous scholars have pointed out the wide assortment of other images for God in the Bible, including feminine ones.¹⁷ Others note that one effect of imaging God as male is a subconscious equating of males with God, which in turn perpetuates patriarchy and male dominance.¹⁸

Some, however, are concerned with the trend to eliminate male-oriented references to God, substitute feminine pronouns for God, or refer to God as "Mother," "Goddess," or by other designations.¹⁹ It is not my intent here to advocate for this kind of overhauling of Scripture, because I think there may be broader theological issues at stake and I don't know enough about all the implications. I do believe, however, that it is important to work intentionally at enlarging our concept of God. Looking for and including a variety of images of God in our private and corporate worship will help to lessen our tendency to view God as exclusively male.

The use of "he/man" language in many translations of Scripture is also a means by which women are made invisible. Reading Romans 14 or 1 John 2:9-11, or even Galatians 3:26-4:7 (that manifesto of all biblical feminists) from the point of view of a woman who has been sensitized to the issue of inclusive language illustrates the scope of the problem. Nancy Hardesty describes the process of biblical translation and points out that while a different word was used in the original Greek for human/person/people/humanity than

for an adult male, both are often translated into English as "men" or "man."²⁰ She suggests a number of reference books that can give the average layperson a basic understanding of some of the issues and tools to use to find out what was actually said in the original language.²¹

The above ideas for enlarging the way we image God and for seeing the actual inclusiveness of Scripture are a good accompaniment to making our everyday speech and writing inclusive. There are many ways we can achieve the latter. The first, and perhaps the most obvious, is to become conscious of ways that our own language habits exclude and to be willing to accept correction (or gentle reminders) from others. The humility required by such behavior goes a long way (for me, at least) toward healing the painful feelings of having been made invisible. If we are aware of our ingrained habits and have the desire to change them, learning to write and speak inclusively is not so difficult.

Most of the time, "he/man" language (masculine pronouns, words like mankind, brotherhood, chairman, brethren) can be avoided by recasting the sentence in the plural or by using substitute words or phrases. To help speakers and writers think of alternatives, there are a number of guides available.²² In fact, some colleges and seminaries have even published handbooks for writing inclusively which they require their students to follow in their assignments. If this kind of writing and speaking is done consistently and carefully, it is likely that no one will notice the changes (except perhaps those women who have been looking for change). However, if there is some awkwardness, perhaps it is acceptable as small compensation to women for years of not being fully present in the language.

The goal should not be a legalistic one of eliminating certain words from our vocabulary; instead, as Hardesty says, we ought to "expand and enrich our vocabularies rather than further [restrict] them."²³ Surely the English language is versatile enough and we have enough creativity to accommodate new ways of speaking and writing that are both ear-pleasing and fully inclusive. It is also important to be aware of other ways in which our language excludes or demeans women (for example, assuming that the church cooks will be women

while the communion servers will be men, or highlighting the physical attractiveness of a woman and the professional competence of a man).

Inclusive language is not a minor issue or one which is primarily for the fringe element of the feminist movement. It is an issue for all Christians who are concerned about justice and about the inclusiveness of the gospel itself. In the past, I have been frustrated on the one hand with men who make grand pronouncements against the need for inclusive language (easy for them to say, I think to myself), and I have felt betrayed on the other hand by women who dismiss the issue as trivial. Deep within myself, I decided that this was an important issue, although for awhile I couldn't quite identify why. As I read and thought about the issue, I've come to agree with Nancy Hardesty's analysis: "Inclusive language is simply a concrete expression of what we say we believe theologically: that all human beings are made in God's image, that salvation is free to all through the work of Christ on the cross, that in Christ all Christians are one body, one family."²⁴

I will know that we as Brethren in Christ are genuinely sensitive to this issue when, for one thing, we have done something about the irony implicit in the language of such hymns as "The Church of God is People" and "In Christ There is No East or West." I believe that our efforts (imperfect though they may be) to include *everyone* in our speech, writing and worship will help to shape a future in which no one is left out simply by the utterance of a few words. We are also acting in the spirit of Jesus who met people's needs for affirmation of their worth even when it went against established cultural and religious rules and traditions.

NOTES

¹ In a paper of this length, I am not able to cover the subject of inclusive language as thoroughly as I would like. The sources

referred to in the text and footnotes provide excellent additional information and bibliographies.

² Nancy Hardesty, *Inclusive Language in the Church* (Atlanta, Ga.: John Knox Press, 1987), p. 1.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁴ Sharon Neuffer Emswiler and Thomas Neuffer Emswiler, *Women and Worship: A Guide to Nonsexist Hymns, Prayers, and Liturgies*, rev. ed. (San Francisco, Calif.: Harper and Row, 1984), p. xiii.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 1-6.

⁶ Keith Watkins, *Faithful and Fair: Transcending Sexist Language in Worship* (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1981), p. 16.

⁷ Juliana Casey, *Where is God Now? Nuclear Terror, Feminism and the Search for God* (Kansas City, Mo.: Sheed and Ward, 1987), p. 75.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ "Language, Thought and Social Justice," by the Task Force on Educational Strategies for an Inclusive Church (New York: National Council of Churches of Christ, 1986), p. 1.

¹⁰ Dale Spender, *Man Made Language* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), pp. 154-157.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 147.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

¹⁶ "Language, Thought and Social Justice," p. 1.

¹⁷ Some good sources on "God-talk" are: Faith McBurney Martin, *Call Me Blessed: The Emerging Christian Woman* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), pp. 98-105; Aida Besancon Spencer, *Beyond the Curse: Women Called to Ministry* (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1985), pp. 121-131; Emswiler, *Women and Worship*, pp. 27-83; Watkins, *Faithful and Fair*, pp. 30-47; Hardesty, *Inclusive Language in the Church*, pp. 18-38.

¹⁸ See Anne Wilson Schaef, *Women's Reality: An Emerging Female System in a White Male Society* (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), pp. 161-164.

¹⁹ See Donald G. Bloesch, *The Battle for the Trinity: The Debate Over Inclusive God-Language* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Servant

Publications, 1985), pp. 43-55.

²⁰ Hardesty, *Inclusive Language*, p. 80.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 88-90.

²² The brochure, "Language, Thought and Social Justice," referred to earlier, lists a number of available guidebooks.

²³ Hardesty, *Inclusive Language*, p. 14.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

How to Develop Your Own Support System

*By Lenora H. Stern**

Have you had the experience of feeling overwhelmed with what you believe God is calling you to do? Do you feel isolated as a woman in a leadership role? Do you question how you, as a leader, ought to relate to your male colleagues, or men and women whom you will lead? Are you serving successfully in a secular leadership position, and, having been asked to use these skills in the church, you begin to question leadership styles? Are you struggling to balance professional and family responsibilities?

These concerns are common among an increasing number of Christian women in today's world. As women are offered opportunities to accept new and exciting leadership roles, it is important that we approach this development in a deliberate and thoughtful manner, rather than just letting it happen. This article reflects the writer's journey during the 1970s and 1980s; from this journey one framework may be articulated for a process for growth for women assuming leadership roles in the church.

Having spent eighteen years working in the secular setting as nurse educator, team supervisor, county government planner, mental health system manager, I had developed most of my philosophy, values, and practice of leadership and management from on-the-job training, seminars, current literature, and professional conferences.

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I also had accompanied my husband through the graduate school process where he achieved a doctorate in administration. I studied personality styles and management theory, participated in organizational change theory application, co-initiated with a male colleague a support group for "restless young bureaucrats." *At the same time*, I tried to keep before me the question: As a Christian, is my management and leadership practice congruent with what I believe reflects a spiritually alive Christian?

During these eighteen years, a major value I held was that my interactional style with colleagues was based on equality and partnership as competent employees--rather than on whether or not the manager or leader was a male or female. In the spring of 1983, I began to sense that God was asking me to focus on "women in leadership roles," which seemed so antithetical to my focus on "competency based relationships" in the work world. I finally worked through acceptance of this new focus, but for what end I did not know. A few days later, after committing myself to serve in whatever God could use me, I received a call from the Board of Administration Nominating Committee of the Brethren in Christ Church asking that I consent to having my name placed in nomination for a denominational board. Within six months, I was chairperson of the newly formed Board for Brotherhood Concerns and a member of the Board of Administration. During the following two years, I had two strong feelings in which I consistently experienced exhilaration and an overwhelming sense that God had gone too far in what he expected of me!

In the fall of 1983, I made an intentional choice to develop a personal support system which would provide a foundation for me as I fulfilled the new leadership responsibilities. The process which I developed is summarized below:

A. Define a set of developmental assumptions.

It is important to have clearly stated values which can be used to support one's personal growth journey--our "inner tapes." I selected four values:

1. To make things happen in my life, I must take risks.
2. I am in charge of my life. I have the power to decide what to do and how to take action. The final decision to act is

mine.

3. God does not expect more of me than I am capable of doing.
4. I will allow myself to have a five percent margin of error--in other words, it's all right to make mistakes.

B. Choose a leadership style to model.

To make an intentional choice about the leadership style one wants most to emulate takes concentrated study. Leadership concepts and skills are very complex and it's challenging to go through a process of identifying one's personality type, examining leadership styles and the interaction between the two.

I began a personal study of leadership roles and behaviors portrayed in men's and women's lives in the Bible--Esther, Lydia, Mary the Mother of Jesus, Jesus, Daniel, Paul. In addition, I searched for Christian literature on leadership and management practice. I reviewed again the current best sellers in the field of management.

The servant leader is the leadership style which I have chosen to emulate. In *Management: A Biblical Approach*, Myron Rush states that the servant leader is one who takes the following as a frame of reference: What can I do to meet your need in order for you to become the best possible person, to realize your potential?¹ Further, Robert Greenleaf in his book *Servant Leadership* clearly articulates that, ". . . the new moral principle is emerging which holds that the only authority deserving one's allegiance is that which is freely and knowingly granted by the led to the leader in response to, and in proportion to, the clearly evident servant stature of the leader."² Through this study, I discovered that the skills I was developing in my secular work in the "empowerment of others" were exactly those needed in this leadership style. Leadership, in addition to envisioning the way, is the process of influencing one or more people in a positive way so that the tasks defined by the mission, goals, and objectives of the organization are accomplished.³ "Serving people through meeting their needs" in order that they can be effective in their work in accomplishing the organizational goals is truly a remarkable challenge.

C. Establish a support group.

Leaders do not grow or learn in isolation, therefore as one moves

into leadership roles, it is important to seek support from others and to articulate clearly the support which is needed.

1. Define the purpose for the support group.
2. Select four to eight people who have the gifts, wisdom, insights and spiritual development which one values and believes can apply in one's new leadership responsibilities.
3. Select individuals who have a range of experience and represent various ages.
4. In order for the support group to have reciprocal value to those one invites out of personal need, define mutual goals with the group.
5. Define time limitations--frequency and length of meetings, and over what time the group will meet.
6. Decide who will chair the group and whether or not there will be a formal or informal agenda.

The group I initiated included eight women, all of whom I knew but few to whom I had ever spoken more than "Hi." We met on Saturday morning once a month, September through May; we had breakfast together in our homes. We rotated meeting places and chairmanship of our discussions. We met over a period of four years. Our purpose in meeting was to examine the complex blend of behaviors, attitudes and values which women leaders need to model and to describe those which we would emulate based on scriptural study, in contrast to those of secular feminism. We prepared the informal agenda for the following meeting as a summarizing exercise at the end of each meeting.

D. Select a mentor.

A mentor is an individual who shares wisdom and insights from life's experiences in an inspirational counseling relationship. Mentors share useful information about areas least familiar to the individual in a new leadership role and provide networking contacts.

My mentor, the senior pastor of our church, provided my orientation to the denomination as an organization, the "culture of the professional clergy," and the challenge to my spiritual development and study of servant leadership. We met monthly for an hour for breakfast or lunch; I prepared by questions or case study scenarios ahead of time. Sometimes, we would role play optional approaches

which I could use in a specific situation. Eight years later, we do meet but on an as-needed basis.

E. Make a commitment to daily personal devotions.

To keep a balance in one's personal development and to keep closely attuned to the direction God wants one to pursue, it is important to immerse oneself in the Scriptures and daily seek wisdom from God. There are many pitfalls and "ego traps" inherent in leadership positions which can sidetrack and make leaders less effective; therefore, use personal devotional time, mentors, and support groups to provide the balancing influences.

F. Plan a reading program.

Identify the areas of expertise in which one requires more information, and set a goal for reading in these areas.

G. Join a professional organization or association.

Professional associations can provide the added stimulation and motivation when the leader needs to be re-energized.

H. Affirm the team effort of the family.

As a member of a family, it is important to frequently acknowledge the efforts that each member makes in order that another family member can go through life-stretching experiences. At the same time, other members in the family may need additional encouragement in their own achievements and growth. The intentional choice to develop a team approach within the family does much to increase the synergistic nature of the family.

I. Be true to oneself.

As one has opportunities to be involved in leadership roles, continue to articulate personal values, beliefs, strengths and goals. These characteristics and beliefs provide the foundation for one's behavior and future planning. During the past several years, I have developed the following "continuum of interactional/behavioral characteristics of women"; I believe they impact positively or negatively on leadership effectiveness, especially so when a woman leader interacts with male colleagues or those she leads. I share these with you for your reflection.

POSITIVE		NEGATIVE	
gentle	nurturant	distant	whining
soft	affirming	cool	nagging
loving	respectful	laissez-faire	nasty
yielding	accepting	bossy	aggressive
expressive	humorous	strident	emasculating
inquiring	assertive		
forthright	instrumental		

The journey as a woman into new leadership roles, the tailoring of an individualized support system, and the use of the range of positive behaviors in serving others is most challenging and very rewarding. Your choices determine the course you take and the quality of the journey.

NOTES

¹ Myron D. Rush, *Management: A Biblical Approach* (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1983), p.11.

² Robert K. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership* (New York: Paulist Press, 1977), p. 10.

³ Lois Borland Hart, *Moving Up! Women and Leadership* (New York: AMACOM, 1980), p. 16.

Changing Roles in a Marriage Relationship

By Glen E. and Wanda L. Heise*

Glen. I remember Wanda's excitement sometime near Christmas 1981, at my parents' house in Ohio, at being nominated a deacon. I remember feeling uncomfortable with the idea that a woman should be a deacon. Finally I told her so. I felt that although the idea was unpopular, man's headship over woman was an important part of God's plan for the church and the home. Wanda's excitement changed to tears as she realized what she may have already feared--I really didn't support her desire to accept the congregation's call to be a deacon. She felt she was gifted in relating to and helping other people. She wanted to accept the congregation's invitation. We had several long, uncomfortable talks during that vacation, and the only agreement we came to was that we would study the issue.

Growing up, I was the son of my parents--my father a physician, deacon, Sunday school teacher, friend and confidante of the pastor; and my mother his wife, mother of his children, homemaker, friend of our pastor's wife. Men were the decision-makers and doers of great deeds in the church and in the world outside. Women were their helpers and support.

My understanding of God's will for men and women was fairly simple. Hadn't God told Eve, "Your husband will rule over you"?

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And Paul had said, "Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ." There was a flicker of doubt in my mind about the absolute way in which these passages had been interpreted. Wanda and I had laughed at the traditional bride's promise "to obey," and had not used the traditional vows at our wedding. But in practical terms, I couldn't imagine a committee of two ever making a decision if there was disagreement unless one of the committee had a deciding vote. And in marriage, God intended the husband to have the deciding vote.

When Wanda and I got married, my schooling was finished, and she was still in nursing school. I worked and she went to school. She cooked and kept house; I helped. When I had an accident, she comforted me. When she was away at a student nurse's convention, I was anxious and depressed. When she came home, she consoled me. I found out later, when we discussed those first years together, that Wanda perceived keeping me happy (no matter what it took) was an important part of her role.

Two years after we married, we were off to Nicaragua--in pursuit of my dream and commitment to be a foreign missionary. In language school I studied Spanish full-time--even asking to speak nothing but Spanish between ourselves. Wanda started full-time, but then continued part-time after giving birth to our oldest daughter, Angie. Later, I became mission treasurer, community developer, interim pastor. Wanda took care of Angie, me, and our house. And worked some in the mission's clinics. And bore and gave birth to Jenny. Then we came home to the United States, for me to go to medical school, while Wanda parented, more and more alone.

For her to become a deacon, something would have to change.

When we returned to Pennsylvania after our Christmas vacation, our pastor recommended the book *Chauvinist or Feminist: Paul's View of Women* by Richard and Joyce Boldrey. As I read it, I came to believe that one could be intellectually honest and still believe that God's design for the church included the possibility of women serving as deacons or pastors. I still wasn't sure that I thought placing women in leadership positions was a good idea. But I felt that as a reasonable Christian I had to be open to the idea.

So Wanda became a deacon. She was also involved in regional

conference activities, and became a member of the Atlantic Conference Board of Administration. Along the way she became a friend and confidante of the pastor and of others in the church. And I was hurting.

February of 1988 found me frequently pacing the streets of Harrisburg late at night, insane with anxiety, anger, and jealousy--all focused on Wanda. I couldn't tolerate the thought of her having friendships with other men--no matter that she was open with me about her friendships, whether with women or men.

I'm not sure why it was that my craziness broke through in February 1988. But in the months since, I've begun to suspect that a lot of my resistance to Wanda's assuming leadership positions had more to do with my hang-ups than with theology. Certainly my competitive self became angry when Wanda became deacon and I realized that as long as she was deacon, I wouldn't be. My self-image and expectations were jarred when I, a physician like my father, realized that I wasn't going to be a deacon and confidante of the pastor as he had been; instead Wanda was going to be those things. And the insecurities that raged when she had gone to the student nurses' convention during our first year of marriage had again been fanned to full flame by my fear of losing her to other interests and other people.

With the help of friends and a therapist, these issues have become clearer. And as I've begun to see them, I've begun to be able to confront them. More and more, I feel a sense of gratitude that Wanda does have tremendous gifts of relating to people, and a sense of pleasure and pride that she had chosen to use those gifts for others. I'm working on recognizing what my own gifts are, and becoming willing to use them, without competing for recognition or position.

Our marriage is growing. There are more and more good times, borne of mutual respect and love, and fewer bad times. Our girls have a more realistic picture of what it means to work at a marriage relationship than Wanda and I did when we got married. I believe that because of Wanda's willingness to serve others, even in positions of leadership, Angie and Jenny feel a sense of freedom and wholeness in God's sight that many girls do not experience.

I'm glad I'm married to a church leader! (Usually!)

Wanda. My experiences in church work began very early. I grew up as the oldest of three daughters in a pastor's family. But the theological issues didn't begin to impact me until I left that situation and felt unable to be deeply involved in church work because I was a woman. During our three years in Nicaragua with my husband Glen, I recall feeling good about some of my ideas and contributions to the ministry team there. However, the issue of my serving in the church became focused when I was asked to be deacon at the Harrisburg church in the early 1980s. I did enjoy my contacts with people and felt gifted in listening, counseling, and caring. Could God mean for me not to use in a formal church setting what came so naturally to me?

My own mind was open and relieved to hear the Boldreys' premise in *Chauvinist or Feminist: Paul's View of Women*--that there were understandings of Scripture in which application of consistent biblical principles lifted women from their position as second-class citizens in the church. I was encouraged to learn more of Phoebe and Priscilla and Paul's respect for them. I was given this book to read by my pastor as I struggled to understand my response to the church's invitation to serve.

But as I began to feel affirmed as a woman whose gifts could be used, I found Glen was having difficulty also with theological issues. As he struggled with his traditional views, I began to again feel trapped, suffocated, and helpless. How could I serve in the church in a position of leadership when my husband was not supportive of my action? I turned down the nomination, for me a painful choice.

The year following allowed more time for dialogue with Glen as we tried to understand each other, our commitments and our hang ups. Glen was away much of the time as he completed med school. I was home and involved with church activities as I parented our two young daughters, but I was often depressed and lonely.

Again an invitation came from my church to serve as deacon about a year after the first. Glen was ready to support me so I accepted and became a deacon. Theologically, or shall I say, logically, the decision was made, but emotionally I found our

relationship in turmoil because of my choice. To Glen it seemed that my "being with" other people felt like rejection of him. He felt left behind in the work of the church and in my relationships with the pastor and other deacons. I struggled to continue being a good caretaker in the home and not feel angry and guilty when he didn't understand my priorities which included other people as well.

During the past eight years my opportunities to serve the church have increased. Currently, I am serving as Atlantic Conference Secretary, deacon and chair of the Lay Care Commission at our church. The relationship issue continues but I have also focused on some personal concerns because of my changing roles and expectations. I find myself feeling guilty when I am not doing "enough" cooking and cleaning--even when I logically see the benefits of others in the family carrying these responsibilities. I also find myself feeling guilty and responsible for the discomfort which all of this produces for Glen. As he and I discuss this, I am beginning to accept the fact that when my change is not designed to cause him pain, I can not be responsible for the discomfort which he may feel. He has helped me to see that. But at the same time, learning to hold his pain and not feel angry and defensive if it is directed at me, continues to be my struggle.

Finding a balance in my active life hasn't been easy either. As the opportunities increase, I find myself stressed by trying to do too much. Doors have opened in my marriage and in the church and denomination, and I am also in school and want to be a good--no, excellent--wife and mother. Another unsettling factor is the fluid nature of our roles as they change. No longer are we talking about theological issues. They were settled long ago. It has become a more practical matter of who has time to take out the trash or even who will be home to feed the pets. But the emotional issues also continue to be fluid as we both have had to learn a lot more about who we are and why we feel the way we do. We find ourselves learning how to deal with conflict and anger with each other, models for which we lacked. All of the uncertainty and unpredictability of our feelings and reactions still make us uncomfortable. We have not arrived.

But there have been benefits along the way. Our understanding of each other has been deepened. Glen and I have had to learn

better how to communicate. Through counseling I am learning to know myself and consequently am a happier and more pleasant person with whom to live. I also feel a stronger commitment to our marriage as I respect and love my husband who has been willing to struggle by my side with our issues. Our daughters have seen a model for parents disagreeing; the model is far from perfect, but better than no model. Most days I can honestly say that the changing of roles because of ministry has been more of a blessing in my life than a burden.

*By Shirlee and Lawrence Yoder**

Shirlee. When I was growing up, I had the distinct feeling that I could do anything that God called me to. I credit my parents for giving me that kind of self confidence. A close friend of mine--ten years older than I--was a missionary teacher. I tended to idolize her and take her as a role model for what I might like to do. In addition, since the church that I attended (the Brethren in Christ Church in Ashland, Ohio) was small, it utilized the gifts of the young people, especially on Sunday nights. So I had plenty of opportunity to use my leadership and musical gifts in the congregation. Besides, my family traveled and gave musical programs, which I sometimes narrated, on the radio and in church. All of that was a good foundation for what I am doing now in church leadership, especially occasional worship-leading and preaching.

In the early years of our marriage I felt bound by the vows that I had made in the wedding ceremony to obey Lawrence. Those were vows that we wrote together. My position was that I would support Lawrence in whatever ministry he would be involved and I saw myself

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as subordinate to Lawrence. That meant that if Lawrence went to seminary, as he immediately did, I would shoulder major responsibility for breadwinning, household tasks, and his general well-being to free him to study. I also felt that I should try to keep in touch with his world by taking a course with him each semester at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries in Elkhart, Indiana. (Of course all of this was B. C.--before children.)

I was also very committed to the pastorate which we accepted at Union Grove Brethren in Christ Church during Lawrence's last year of seminary. My commitment was to be a good role model not only for the young women in the congregation, but also for the youth. And I involved myself in teaching Sunday school and in directing the youth activity along with Lawrence. At no time did I ever think of myself in a pastoral role during those years. My career and my first and foremost love was teaching, and I devoted my time to the young people I taught in Elkhart public schools. To me this was a mission field where I communicated my own values to my students.

Lawrence. I remember when I was a teenager that my father (a pastor) invited a woman minister to preach several sermons in our church. I think she was a Pentecostal, although I do not remember her sermons having a particularly Pentecostal flavor. A seed was planted in my mind about the possibility of women being in ministry through that event.

In a wedding sermon I wrote a few years after Shirlee and I were married (in 1966) I spoke about the husband being the person who would represent the family beyond the home. The next wedding I preached for was in Indonesia. On the basis of the meaning of the word *EZER* (traditionally translated "help meet") in Genesis 2, I preached about the wife and husband being partners, that in fact the word *EZER* in the Bible is most often used of God, and that therefore there was no basis in the passage for the idea that the wife was to be subordinate to the husband.

Some of my thoughts about husband-wife relationships were changing. We were being exposed to a church which encouraged women in ministry. Both Shirlee and I were teaching in the

Mennonite seminary there. About twenty-five percent of our students were women preparing for church leadership positions. One of the two pastors of our local church was a woman. She was one of the best preachers in the conference. Neither of the Mennonite conferences that we worked with there had any restrictions on women entering church ministries. This situation was reflective of a society in which women played many important public roles, despite that more than ninety percent of the population were Muslims. At the core of the Javanese world view (as in the Stoicism so widely influential in first-century Graeco-Roman culture and the creation accounts of Genesis 1 and 2) is the idea that all people and both genders are of equal worth. So in Java, local village markets are run primarily by women. A woman was principal of the local Mennonite high school. Another woman was principal of the local Christian religion teachers' training school. And so on.

Shirlee. One of the significant role models for me while we lived in Indonesia was a Dutch woman trained in Old Testament who taught in the seminary and taught Bible in the church's many small groups. My primary role at the seminary was in teaching English as a second language. However, I was also asked to lead Bible studies and speak at women's retreats. I had very little seminary training (one course a semester at Elkhart), and I felt unprepared to do that kind of work. But my friend, Aukje, was an inspiration for me to explore Bible teaching.

In many ways Indonesia was the crucible for the reformation of our relationship to each other and our views about the place of women in Christian ministry and church leadership. Our experience there was in many ways a trial by fire, the kind of thing that would either make or break our marriage. In some of those traumatic experiences, I felt at odds with Lawrence's decisions as MCC administrator. But I felt that I needed to support him. Only years later could I share my true feelings with him.

There were times of great anxiety for me during those years. When I was at home with two small children and he was gone on trips, I had no idea if he was dead or alive because there was no

means of communication. Those experiences strengthened my faith and forced me to think about what I might be able to communicate to others through personal sharing. In times of physical injury and illness Lawrence and I were forced to rely as never before on our faith in God. In those times we also discovered how utterly dependent we were on each other.

Lawrence. For me, major personnel and program crises left me with practically no support but Shirlee's. She had her regular teaching at the seminary and other assignments, and I had my teaching, research, and administrative work. But we were becoming one at levels we had never known before.

Out of these experiences we both felt a need to do graduate study in the field of cross-cultural mission. Part of my original assignment in Indonesia was to do research on the more than century-long history of the Mennonite churches in Java. The best place to do graduate study in that field, from the point of view of the resources available, was clearly The Netherlands.

But while we were still in Indonesia a friend from Fuller Seminary School of World Mission visited us and got Shirlee started on one of the school's in-service study courses. It was clear for us by this time that Shirlee's further study had a high priority. Gradually it became clear to us that Fuller was the place most suited for both of us to do graduate programs.

This time we had three sons to care for. Financially our study enterprise was a test of faith unlike any we had ventured into before. We took a number of courses together. We shared to some degree child care responsibility. Both of us worked to earn some money. Shirlee completed a Master of Arts in Cross-cultural Studies with a concentration in family studies. I completed a Master of Theology in Missiology and finished the course work in a Ph. D. program.

Shirlee. When we arrived in Pasadena to go to Fuller Seminary, I already had an idea about the kind of study I wanted to do. As we began to take courses, that idea was confirmed. My interest was two-

pronged: missiology and psychology. My academic advisor listened carefully to my request for a degree focused in those two fields. She said, "We do not now have a degree incorporating both of those fields. But as soon as we have two more students requesting it, I will write up the degree program. I believe the institution exists for the student, and not vice versa." Within a month that new degree option materialized.

Just as my parents in my childhood encouraged me to be who I could become, so my professors at Fuller provided the encouragement I needed to develop my innate abilities for ministry. Especially in the counseling courses, my eyes were opened to the needs of all kinds of people, but especially women. Perhaps during those courses I began to think about the role a female might play on a pastoral team--for male and female complementarity in ministry.

My study goal involved the integration of theology and psychology, which unknowingly became a foundation for the position I now hold as minister of pastoral care at Park View Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg.

Lawrence. Something else happened to Shirlee there at Fuller that was painful to me. Perhaps up to that point in our life together I presumed too much on her compliant, gentle spirit. What I experienced in our relationship while we were at Fuller was an increased assertiveness on her part. People were talking about assertiveness training in counseling courses and so on, and it seemed to me that she decided to start asserting herself in ways she hadn't before, that she would not take some of the kind of stuff she had taken before. What was painful to me was her apparent decision to just do it, or take it, rather than talk about it. I didn't know how to handle that. We have since talked about this and have arrived at some mutual understandings as to what was going on there.

At the end of it all, however, *my* work placement determined where we would move. I accepted an invitation to join the faculty of Eastern Mennonite Seminary. Moving to Harrisonburg, we had no idea what kind of opportunities would be available for Shirlee.

Shirlee. Before in our life together there was always a place for me, but now there was nothing. I felt at loose ends professionally. I did some substitute teaching and then the college asked me to teach two courses. That was very attractive, challenging, and fulfilling to me. But eventually because of financial strictures, the college withdrew its offer of a job for me in the following academic year. In the interim I secured a position at Eastern Mennonite High School teaching part-time.

From the beginning of our time in Harrisonburg, we attended Park View Mennonite Church because it was close by and offered excellent programs for our children. In 1985 our church conducted an associate pastor search. The person who candidated for the position did not receive sufficient votes to be called. That put the search back to base one, and the congregation determined to look within itself for persons to fill different parts of the position. The chairman of the elders contacted Lawrence and me to see if we were interested. Since Lawrence had a full-time job, he declined. My answer was, "I wouldn't way no." I was called for an interview and hired part-time as small group coordinator and pastoral care coordinator, the same position I now hold, with a different title.

Lawrence. Our situation soon was complicated when earlier overtures to the Brethren in Christ Church about the possibility of starting a congregation in Harrisonburg started receiving positive and concrete responses. A likely candidate to take pastoral leadership in such a project appeared on the scene. I was interested in the possibility of starting a Brethren in Christ church in Harrisonburg for two reasons: first, I calculated that an Anabaptist denomination without a strong ethnic base in the area might have greater success in reaching the unchurched in the surrounding community than Mennonite churches had demonstrated. Secondly, a Brethren in Christ congregation in Harrisonburg might make Eastern Mennonite Seminary a more likely option for seminary training for Brethren in Christ ministerial candidates. The result was that we could not decide to relate to either Park View Mennonite alone or to the new Brethren in Christ

congregation alone. Besides, our sons were well connected at Park View Mennonite. The result is that to the present time we live with the tension of leadership and ministry commitments to these two congregations.

The other tension in the area of church and ministry has to do with the ministry that goes along with my position as seminary professor. Shirlee's commitments to Park View and mine to Dayspring effectively prevent our home from becoming a venue for ministry to and with seminary students. Personal contact with professors in their homes was important to us when I was in seminary. We are not able to do that with the kind of commitments we have elsewhere.

Shirlee. One of the frustrations we face is with coordinating our schedules. Occasionally either Lawrence or I will forget to check on the other's schedule, and we find ourselves with conflicts. One way I have lessened tension this year is not to participate in Lawrence's small group at Dayspring. This gives me one more night a week at home with the boys.

Lawrence. A side effect of this decision, however, is that our small group involvement is even less to meet our needs and more to fill our commitments to others.

Shirlee. Our life together divides itself into responsibilities we each feel are our strengths--Lawrence gardening, mechanical, carpentry, household accounts; mine household maintenance, marketing and food, bill-paying. Dishwashing is shared. Sometimes cooking is shared. One of my struggles has been to ask for help with household or cooking responsibilities when I have sermon preparation or other speaking texts to prepare. Since we did this one together, I felt less tension. This retreat was a good idea!

Both of us feel that we are very much in process, still learning to cope with the demands of professions, family, and church. At this

point we feel that we have more questions than answers about how to survive when the wife and mother takes a leadership role in the church. But in the journey we are committed to God, to each other, and to our boys.

Diversity and Complementarity in Pastoral Ministry

*By Mary J. Davis and Robert B. Ives**

Men and women serving God together in the church does not seem innately contrary to God's order and plan, but the pastoral leadership of the Christian church down through the years has been relegated to men rather than to men and women working side by side.

The understanding or misunderstanding of scriptural texts has been one of the main stumbling blocks to this model. We will look first at the questions raised through the Scriptures and then at the questions local churches and multiple staff teams have raised as more women heed the call to serve beside men in pastoral ministry.

Questions Raised Through the Scriptures

Two crucial passages are 1 Corinthians 14:34,35 and 1 Timothy 2:12. The Corinthian passage reads: "Women should remain silent in the churches, they are not allowed to speak, but must be in

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submission, as the law says . . . it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church." This cannot mean that in all circumstances women are not to speak in the church, for in I Corinthians 11:5 they pray and prophesy and in Acts 21:9 Philip's four daughters have the gift of prophecy.

In verse 34 the word for "speak" is a word that may mean "arguing," "protesting," or "chattering," and since the context determines the specific meaning, one of the latter English words is what the Greek must mean here.

Paul might have written to men. Chattering is not a gender characteristic, but in the Corinthian church there seems to have been a particular problem with women chattering. Further, Paul says in verse 34, "They are not allowed to speak." He uses the same word "allow" in 1 Timothy 2:12: "I do not *allow* a woman to teach or have authority over man." This tells us that Paul is acting on his initiative to deal with a particular issue in a particular church. Further, the word in 1 Timothy 2 for "authority" is different from the word in Matthew 28, for example, where Jesus has authority. In 1 Timothy 2 the word may also be translated "domineer," and that is what it means in 1 Corinthians 14; and further, it means that neither men nor women are to be domineering (cf. Eph. 5:21). In the specific instance of Corinth, it was women who were acting in domineering ways.

Again in 1 Timothy 2: 12, Paul says women are to be silent. He uses a word for silence found in 1 Corinthians 14:28,30, and 34. The word in 1 Timothy 2 means the opposite of domineer. It means quietness. Women and men are not to domineer but to live in quietness.

Now you might hesitate about these meanings of the words because you have not heard them before. Indeed, the old translations come from a time before the specific role of women in the church and society had been focused. Today we need to be more exact in digging at the exact meanings of the words used. These new words have the merit of fitting in with a new role for women in the church.

Questions Raised by the Local Congregation

As churches consider calling women to ministry, they must face these questions:

1. There are more females than males worshipping in the average evangelical Christian church. Would it not be helpful to have godly women as well as men serve as models and give pastoral care to the wide variety of female and family issues?

Many churches that have experience with women in pastoral roles find that there are certain women and men in the congregation who feel more comfortable relating to the female pastor both in worship style and in counseling needs. As more women are advancing to leadership roles in business and industry, the female pastor becomes the role model as the female servant-leader to women in other professions. The female pastor may offer a different style of pastoral care than the corresponding man on the staff.

It is apparent at the Grantham church that some women particularly have gravitated to the female pastor for counseling. It is fair to say that people clearly go to the staff person, male or female, to whom they most easily relate or with whom they have something in common. For some, it is because of being the same sex, or being at a similar stage of life, or specifically needing the expertise that a given pastor may have.

2. There is an attitude among some men, and, yes, some women too, of resistance to participating in a service in which women lead worship or preach. Do we attempt to ignore those people or is a specific church driven by men and women who feel that strongly?

We had a number of men at Grantham who did not like women in leadership roles. Some would shift seats so as not to be served communion by a woman. One would not come to worship when a woman preached. The fact was that they were in a minority and so we were free to go in the direction of women in ministry because the majority of the church supported that.

Although unaccustomed to having females in leadership roles, many parishioners are willing to listen and follow the direction given by the senior pastor and/or the church board. It is important, where

there are concerns, that a church handle the transition to women on staff cautiously and communicate the responsibilities of all the staff members. When the senior pastor teaches and preaches clearly on the subject of women in leadership and, likewise, publically affirms the role of the female on staff, the congregation feels more at ease and often supports the direction that the church is moving on that issue.

3. Should all churches hire both men and women? Though we favor women in ministry, we recognize that we are supported by the Grantham Church Board and by the majority of the church. It works well for us, and we have now seen the benefits of having a woman on staff to help balance out the ministry needs; therefore, we will most likely continue from this time on to consider women for future pastoral roles.

The attitude of the senior pastor also plays an important role in whether a church hires women or not. Obviously, every congregation has different staff needs. Calling a woman to the senior pastorate or to an associate role will not be for every church at all times. It should be recognized, likewise, that not all pastors have the personality, leadership style, or interest in serving with others--male or female. When a church calls someone like that into a team ministry, it is not fair to the pastor or to the church.

Questions Raised by Members of Multiple Staff Teams

As more women accept the call to ministry and are offered positions with men on multiple staff teams, these questions need to be answered:

1. How do men and women in ministry relate to one another? Males and females in ministry share the work of the church through equal submission to each other's authority. The senior pastor has the ultimate authority over staff. Team members need to feel secure in their roles. Honesty among the staff enables them to express their opinions, knowing they will be heard and respected regardless if they

are men or women. As in the whole church community, each staff member is encouraged to give and receive affirmation and support to one another. Each team learns how that can best be accomplished with their diverse personalities. This kind of healthy male-female relationship will serve as a model to the members of the congregation as they work out relationships in family, community, and the marketplace.

It will take time to see how the model among staff will affect the imaginations of people in the church and thus affect the way men and women in the congregation relate to one another in other settings.

2. How important is the senior pastor in enabling a multiple staff to function effectively? The senior pastor is the key person in creating a cohesive, effective ministry team. He or she needs to thoroughly understand and to feel positive about the concept of "sharing the ministries of the church." That concept in turn should be communicated to the congregation, especially in the "growing churches" that are accustomed to one pastor doing everything. The senior pastor's role is to help the church define her specific ministry/staff needs, as well as to set the vision for the church. As he or she promotes the shared ministry concept, the congregation will know what to expect from each pastor and how they and their ministries relate to one another. This also permits the associates to fully use their gifts and to carry out all the work of the church without assignments overlapping; and it discourages pastors and ministries from becoming autonomous.

At Grantham the senior pastor's attitude and role have been the key factors in the success of the ministry team and especially in the addition of a woman on that team.

3. What makes a balanced team ministry? A team ministry is effective when the individuals on the team (men and/or women) have diverse gifts, skills and personalities. This sounds ideal, but these are only in perspective when each pastor *respects* those differences, has *confidence in his/her gifts*, and *is not intimidated by the work of others*. These attributes denote a certain degree of maturity or at least a teachability on the part of each pastor. As this attitude develops among the staff members, each is free to minister effectively. This is true whether it is a staff of all men or of men and women. It is

important to the church to analyze what skills, gifts, and personalities are needed to balance the ministry team at the time of hiring a new staff person. It is much more difficult, if not impossible, to mold someone into a balanced ministry team who does not fit the missing needs or skills.

Even with a diverse staff such as ours, we have worked at recognizing each others' gifts and opinions. It is common on our staff to go to one another and share ideas--even our disagreements. First of all, we know we will be heard and our ideas will be considered. We also know that it is safe to disagree, and that whatever tensions may arise, they are confidential to the staff. Over the years, that has built up our trust in one another. These tensions, created by our diversities, help to keep us all in balance.

The Scriptures give us a good model for complementarity and diversity in shared ministries. The body is whole when all parts are present and working together (eg. Eph. 4:7-13). Pastors on multiple staff teams should be team players who like to work with others and share the leadership of a congregation. Understanding one's strengths and weaknesses enables each pastor to use his or her gifts, as well as to continue to grow by learning from one another. Feeling secure with oneself in God's sight helps each pastor to recognize and affirm the work of others, as well as enabling him/her to accept constructive criticism and suggestions. By understanding that diversity and conflict are healthy characteristics of a team, each pastor is challenged to deal with the tensions that are created; each realizes that the tensions are needed for him/her and the church to become all that God wants them to be.

Self-Assertion/Self-Denial Tension

*By Dorothy Gish**

T-E-N-S-I-O-N! For many, even the very word seems to crackle with conflict. Paul was a man who seemed to live with tension. In fact, Ken Williams maintains that if you read what Paul wrote about his feelings, you will find twenty-eight different feelings mentioned--fourteen of them the happy, comfortable type, and fourteen the painful, disturbing kind. For many, the emotional valance carried by self-assertion and self-denial is quite different. As I search the writings of Paul, I find both expressed.

Self-assertion: what does that make you think of? What Scriptures speak to it? 2 Corinthians provides an interesting study of self-assertion. In verse 10:8 we read, "For I am not ashamed even if I have boasted somewhat too much about the authority that the Lord has given me." In the next chapter, talking about the false teachers who have come among the Corinthians, Paul says (10:5), "I do not think that I am the least bit inferior to those very special so-called 'apostles' of yours!" And he concludes the epistle by adding (13:6), "I trust you will know we are not failures." In writing to Timothy, Paul says, "From watching me . . . you know what I believe and the way I live and what I want" (1 Tim. 3:10, Living Bible). To Philemon, Paul writes (vs. 5), "For this reason I could be bold enough, as your brother in Christ, to order you to do what should be done." Speaking of events following the Jerusalem Council, Paul writes to the Galatians (2:11), "When Peter came to Antioch I opposed him in

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public because he was clearly wrong." In numerous places throughout his writings, Paul strongly asserts his apostleship. Thus it appears that Paul exhibits at least some self-assertiveness.

Perhaps the greatest problem with self-assertion is the underlying danger of pride. From the beginning, when pride motivated Adam and Eve's attempt to usurp God's place, pride has been a sin that has been unequivocally condemned. Pride elevates one above others--often at their expense. It seems almost standard fare for our news nowadays to include tales of well-known figures who have risen so high they seem to think that they are above the law and the rules that bind ordinary people.

An over-emphasis on one's rights is another problem associated with the self-assertion approach. For some the "women's lib" movement exemplifies this. The assumption seems to be that I have a right to be happy, to control my own body, to do my own thing. My responsibility seems to be limited by my rights. There's very little looking at what happens when one person's rights bump into another person's rights. With the emphasis on rights, the behavior is very often self-centered. This me-first attitude frequently appears uncaring about others. In fact, the attitude seems to be one of I'll care only if it doesn't inconvenience me. Thus relationships are sacrificed to nurture self.

Self-assertion clearly contributes to our individualism. Over the last several decades this has been viewed with increasing concern by many authors. Rather than there being a concern for community or even a contribution to it, there is much more a sense of independence: I can do it, I am self-sufficient, etc. This kind of individualism leads to isolation and is inimical to community.

It is not unusual for self-assertive people to let others know how they think things ought to be done. Because of his clear sense of calling as an apostle, Paul exhibited numbers of instances where he as leader taught his readers the truth and demanded that they do it that way. Quite apart from that divinely directed leadership, people who are self-assertive generally tend to speak their minds. Thus, they sometimes intimidate others, whether they realize it or not. Whatever the reason, the end result is that frequently things get done their way.

Self-assertive people often seem to be clearly aware of their gifts. They assume that those gifts are important, thus they are willing to work at developing them. This frequently takes the form of goal-setting. These goal-directed people not only are more likely to accomplish things but also able to specify what it is they have accomplished. Sometimes this is conveyed in a manner that makes others feel as if their gifts count less, or as if they have not done as much as other people.

Albert Borgman has identified hyperactivity as one of the aspects most characteristic of our American society today. Indeed, frenetic activity is such a prevalent part of our society that it seems stating the obvious to belabor the point. It is as if those who loudly assert their work must "prove" it by being busy.

Anne Schaeff tells of doing a weekend workshop with a group of "confident, influential women." One of the participants was a woman who typifies the self-assertive person.

She walked with a strong, confident stride and carried herself assertively. She took on many tasks that the others would not have dared to try and always completed them. After an accident in which she cut herself seriously, she went to the hospital, got stitches, and returned to complete the workshop Almost everyone in the group admired and cared for this woman and frequently looked to her as a model of success. She had "arrived." Nevertheless, as she began to focus on herself and on personal issues, it became clear that she "knew" there was something wrong with her. She felt that she had to be tough or people would take advantage of her. She believed that one had to be prepared for anything or end up with nothing.

Although she appeared strong and self-confident to those around her, she held her sadness inside and was uneasy in asking for support. Hard on the outside, she was really gentle and vulnerable. Much of her attitude of toughness was developed to cope with deep feelings of inadequacy.¹

So far I have attempted to show that self-assertion is often associated with the proud, uncaring, self-centered, hyperactive individualism so characteristic of our world today.

Self-denial: What does that make you think of? What Scriptures speak to it? Paul in Ephesians 3:8 says, "I am less than the least of all God's people." In writing to the Galatians (2:19,20) he says, "I have been put to death with Christ on the cross so that it is no longer

I that live but Christ who lives in me." Later in that same epistle he instructs: "You were called to be free. But do not let this freedom become an excuse for letting your physical desires control you. Instead let love make you serve one another" (5:13). In the next chapter (6:2-3) he continues, "Help carry one another's burdens and in this way you will obey the law of Christ. If someone thinks he is something, when he is really nothing, he is only deceiving himself." Paul instructs the Philippians (2:3), "Don't do anything from selfish ambitions or from a cheap desire to boast but be humble towards one another, always considering others better than yourself, and look out for one another's interests, not just for your own." In these passages Paul appears to be clearly calling for self-denial.

Perhaps one of the greatest dangers of self-denial is a sense of guilt. For some, this produces a feeling of worthlessness; for others, it results in masking some very deep feelings of inadequacy. Thus self-denial contributes to two things that characterize the lives of many Christians today--depression and workaholism. These are indeed very different kinds of behavior and yet I believe that both are frequently contributed to by self-denial, which results from a sense of guilt: one is depressed because one feels totally unworthy, despite all of one's best efforts to measure up, or one continues to try to become worthy by attempting to meet everyone's needs.

In the self-denial camp, the emphasis is clearly on responsibility and particularly on responsibility towards those who have a right to make demands on me--namely God and others. Since self has no rights, my only responsibility is to deny responsibility. However, it is not unusual for that to lead to dishonest behavior because one does not acknowledge or recognize one's needs. In fact one's needs are taken either as unimportant or as being automatically met as one serves others. Thus the people practicing self-denial often appear to others to be dishonest in the sense that they not only negate their true feelings and needs but are unwilling to own up to them. Others are served at the expense of self. Within interpersonal relationships, this often results in manipulative behavior because one's unacknowledged needs intrude and cause one to try to get others to meet one's needs without appearing to do so.

A self-denying person may believe it inappropriate to engage in

the identification and development of one's gifts since that is time spent on oneself and indeed may lead to the sin of pride. Thus the self-denial approach leaves one feeling unsure of one's gifts. In many situations, one does not try at all because one feels like others can do it better and/or one cannot do it well enough. This sense of incompetence is related to not feeling important enough to have anything worthwhile to contribute. In a sense what happens when one elevates others far above oneself is that one is able to look up to them. Thus one becomes aware of others' great gifts and abilities, and the comparative lack of one's own. Therefore one is less likely to exercise the gifts one possesses or to try to do anything important. If one is clearly gifted in an area that has been identified, there is a need to put down that gift or indicate that one is not responsible for it. Any good that comes from it is totally dependent on the Lord. Thus one doesn't acknowledge one's efforts toward developing and using one's gifts.

Sullenness is cited by Borgman as the second major characteristic of our society today. The self-denial approach is prone to the kind of sullenness well exemplified by the elder brother in the parable of the prodigal son. His joyless doing what was expected of him led to a smoldering resentment. Self-denying people often seem judgmental and unforgiving.

Mary Hammond uses the term servaholic to describe the results of an unbalanced self-denial approach.

Six years ago I experienced a "Servaholic" breakdown. I had served, ministered to, counseled, taught, and prayed for others to the point of pure emotional exhaustion. I was a Servaholic, caught in the grip of meeting the needs of others with little time or regard given to my own

It didn't help that my theology was part of the problem rather than part of the solution. Years ago as a new Christian I had learned the JOY acronym--Jesus first, Others second, Yourself last. Thus the priorities of Christian life were easily arranged in proper order with self last. I had learned that serving others and being a committed follower of Christ were intertwined. I understood self-sacrifice as among great Christian virtues

As I talked with other Christian women, however, I found a common thread running through our stories

I visited a woman friend in Philadelphia working with an

inner-city youth ministry. After hearing a rousing sermon on commitment and self-sacrifice, she commented, "If I hear another sermon on servanthood, I'm going to get sick! I'm so tired of it. I'm already doing everything I can!"

Over and over the story was repeated . . . ²

I have suggested that self-denial may be associated with feeling of guilt, worthlessness, incompetence, responsibility for meeting the needs of others, manipulating others to meet one's own needs, and sullenness so characteristic of good people today.

The following chart summarizes each side of the discussion to this point.

CHART 1

pride	Danger	depression
rights	Emphasis	responsibility
self-centered	Behavior	manipulative
self	Elevates	others
individualism	Contributes to	exhaustion
uncaring	Appear	dishonest
independent	Feel	incompetent
do it my way	Result	don't try
hyperactivity	Leads to	sullenness
goal-related	Gifts	unsure of

The contrast between these two sides may indeed suggest conflict, but it may also suggest a finely-honed balance. In fact, if we look at it that way, we could conceptualize self-assertion/self-denial as being different points on a continuum. If each of those sides was pushed further, we would have on the extreme self-assertion side, self-aggrandizement: making oneself appear great, building up of oneself over all others. At the self-denial end, we would have self-sacrifice, perhaps even carried to the point of self-destruction.

It seems to me more beneficial to consider the self-denial/self-assertion tension in terms of balance between the two sides rather than conflict between them. There is an optimal amount of tension that each of us need. If we have no stress at all we are either bored

stiff or asleep; or if there's too much, we're overwhelmed and incapacitated. Having the optimal amount of stress in our lives enables us to produce to capacity. Carrying it to the extreme of self-aggrandizement or self-sacrifice is too much tension and is overwhelming and incapacitating. Too little tension, i.e. focusing almost totally on either self-assertion or self-denial, is unbalanced. By viewing our topic in terms of balance, my hope is that we will see that while neither side contains the whole truth, there is indeed some element of truth on each side of the continuum. While neither side is totally wrong, there are pitfalls on either side of the continuum.

SELF-ASSERTION/SELF-DENIAL TENSION

Self-aggrandizement	Self-assertion	Self-denial	Self-destruction
pride	Danger	depression	
rights	Emphasis	responsibility	
self-centered	Behavior	manipulative	
self	Elevates	others	
individualism	Contributes to	exhaustion	
uncaring	Appear	dishonest	
independent	Feel	incompetent	
do it my way	Result	don't try	
hyperactivity	Leads to	sullenness	
goal-related	Gifts	unsure of	
worth	Underlying Truth	sin	
"This is who I am --	Appropriate Response	"I can't; you can.	
use me for your glory"		Let's go!"	
care-fullness	Corrective	celebration	

Indeed I would suggest that each side represents, in a somewhat unbalanced way, a concern with an underlying truth. The self-denial side recognizes the sinfulness of our human nature. God created perfect human beings and put them in a perfect environment. Not

content to keep things that way, Adam and Eve wanted to have everything and to become "like God." Thus they sinned. That sin of pride has been part of the human condition ever since then, so that each of us wants to be God rather than to obey God. While self-denial is premised on the sinfulness of our human nature and our susceptibility to pride, that sinful human nature and our susceptibility are so great that even people who are genuinely concerned about denial of self can become proud about how much they deny themselves.

On the other hand, the self-assertion side makes us aware of the underlying truth of the worth of human beings. God created human beings in his own image and loved them so much that he sent his only son to die so that they could indeed have a relationship with him. That worth is far beyond our comprehension. "Secular Humanists" have elevated human beings to the point of worshipping them since they see no higher creation. However, in their moving to that position they have at least recognized the great worth of human beings. This is a worth that Jesus himself reflected when he taught that there was nothing outside the Godhead more important than human beings. Thus it seems to me that we need to keep both the sinfulness and the worth of human beings in a healthy tension, recognizing that human beings are of incomparable worth because God created them in his own image, but that at the same time they are beings who are prone to worship themselves rather than the God who gave them worth.

If we take a balanced view of the self-assertion/self-denial tension, we can see that an appropriate response from the self-assertion side is carefully to examine my gifts, acknowledge them, and do all that I can to develop them. As I develop the gifts which He has given me, I can give them back to Him to work through them. Thus, I can say to God, "This is what I have, use it for your glory." At the same time we need to realize that despite all of our best efforts, nothing we do in our own strength will ultimately succeed. Additionally, there are many times God calls us to do things that are far beyond our human capacity. Thus I say to Him in situations to which he calls me, "Lord I can't but you can; let's go!"

Likewise each side would suggest a corrective for our behavior. In a world where individualism and self-centeredness characterizes much that is done, we need the corrective of being responsible for caring for others and for the environment that God has entrusted to us. That we have an obligation to reach out to and to care for others even at the expense of caring for ourselves is a seldom-heard truth today. On the other hand, often when that truth is proclaimed, the implicit assumption seems to be that there is no responsibility to care for oneself or to recognize one's needs. Thus we need the self-assertion corrective of recognizing that God created us for his glory and takes joy in us (I particularly enjoy the Living Bible paraphrase of Psalm 67:1, "O Lord let your face be with joy when you look down on us!"). As this God of all the universe who created us in his image takes joy in us, we need to celebrate who we are by caring appropriately for ourselves and creatively exercising our gifts.

In the 2 Corinthians 11 passage that I quoted earlier where he was driven to boasting, Paul displays a sense of balance when he adds, "If I must brag I would rather brag about the things that show how weak I am" (vs. 30). Galatians 6:3-4 also emphasizes self-assessment: "For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another." In Romans 12:3 Paul commands that we have a sane estimate of ourselves.

Jeanette Anderson tells how she found balance;

I was a Christian--confused but committed. A turning point came when I heard about the relational Bible study method. I quit trying to understand and started to let myself feel how the Bible functioned. One day while I was scrubbing my kitchen floor, I realized who I was in that book. I identified with the poor widow who put her coins into the collection box. I knew how she felt, having so little among all those who had so much. But I also heard Jesus say she had given more and I let that sink in. When I allowed myself the luxury of feeling His love for my plain ordinary self, I began to find a whole new life.

The first thing I did was stop comparing myself with everyone else. I've always loved music and enjoy playing various instruments but have mastered none of them. I became church organist only

because there was no one else to do the job. All went fine until someone appeared in the congregation who knew something about music and then I became a basket case. I felt I had no ability; others had it all.

But now that was no longer true--I had two mites. What's more, they were mine to bury or to spend. Since Jesus is interested in percentages and not in amounts, I could spend my dusty pennies and have them accepted for what they were

That was a milestone in my life. I now dared believe that I had a few cents worth of some other things It is impossible to describe how good it is to know that being average and ordinary is OK³

Which side of the selfhood/servanthood tension do you need to adjust to bring balance to your life?

NOTES

¹ Anne Wilson Schaef, *Women's Reality* (Minneapolis: Winston Press, Inc., 1981), pp. 24-25.

² Mary Hammond, "Servaholics and Other Victims of Joy," *Daughters of Sarah* (January-February 1990), 18.

³ Jeanette Anderson, "Being Ordinary is Okay," *Faith/at/Work* (December 1990), 16-17.

Making Mutual Submission Work in Ministry

By William David Spencer

Here are four questions I handed out at the beginning of my workshop for people to answer while we waited for everyone to gather:

1. 5 things that are wrong with the Church's ministry;
2. 5 ways to improve the Church's ministry;
3. 5 things that are wrong with my ministry;
4. 5 ways to improve my ministering.

I gave out the questions one by one, starting with the two general questions on the church--a target Christians are always feeling at ease to criticize--and then I got personal. The correlation I wanted my attendants to make was that we are "the church." When we ask, "What's wrong with the church?" we ask, "What's wrong with me?" What we are really seeking are ways for me, and by that means for the church, to improve. When all the "me's," all of us who comprise the church, allow God to improve us, then "the church" will improve.

Thus to start, I fielded all the ideas my attendants had to improve our ministry and then I contributed my suggestions. I begin by pointing out that I am talking about the larger issue of team ministry. What does this have to do with women many probably wondered? To answer we must ask this central question: Does God give gifts to women? If we answer yes, then God intends women to share in the ministry of the body of Christ. Therefore, we ask a pertinent practical question in making mutual submission work when we ask: How can we all minister together?

For each of us to improve our participation as a mutually submissive serving Christian, for each of us to develop as a team

minister (and here I am speaking in the largest sense) what do we need to do? We need to begin by discovering our gift.

1. Discover our gift.
 - a. If we don't know what we can do well, we just get in other people's way.
 - b. And anybody who thinks he or she can do it *all* well hasn't done much ministry.
2. Develop a program of activity that aids the work of others, contributing a valuable part.
 - a. Not meddling--not doing other people's jobs!
 - b. If we feel guilty that something is not being done in the church--then it *may* be our job--maybe we misjudged what we've been equipped to do.

One way to discover your congregation's individual spiritual gifts is to ask people what is wrong with the church, the way I did at the outset of the workshop. Chances are that what they complain is lacking is in the area of their spiritual gifts.

Look again at your chart, I tell them, your complaint may very well be in the area of your spiritual gift: not enough evangelism, not enough caring, not enough prayer, etc. Listen to the kinds of complaints we hear all around us. There is variety in them: "This church doesn't do enough evangelism! We don't pray enough! We're fat Christians in an age of hunger! Who's looking out for our children--the future church?" You see, your gift makes you sensitive. You feel the need of what you can contribute.

When you determine you do have a contribution to make, you have to be courteous and helpful to your co-workers when you begin to contribute your help. But you must not shirk your duty.

Take heed of Paul's advice to Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:14-15. Paul wrote, "Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophetic utterance when the council of elders laid their hands upon you. Practice these duties, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress."

You will note by 2 Timothy 1:6-7 that Paul is still charging Timothy: "Hence I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands, for God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power and love and self-control."

Timothy neglected his gift. But at least he knew what it was!

Many of us "Lone Ranger" Christians today don't even know what our gift is! We try to do all the gifts! And we feel guilty when we fail at tasks we are not gifted to do. No wonder we get in each other's way. And we get the ridiculous prospect of eyes walking, feet trying to talk, elbows trying to call the shots in the church. The way to be a team member is to start acting like a team member: build up the body of Christ and co-operate with the efforts of others. To begin that process we need to discover our gifts and our parts in the body of Christ.

There are four things to keep in mind as we pursue the knowledge of our gifts. First, what is a "minister" anyway? Webster's dictionary says a minister is, "A person acting for another as his agent and carrying out his orders or designs." So, a minister is someone acting on behalf of another. The synonym is servant or subordinate--one who serves another. Jesus acted on behalf of God's business. We act on behalf of Jesus' business.

Being this kind of minister--a server--will help keep you from tyrannizing others by your ministry in the church, and it will make you a better family person, a servant to your spouse and family, not a tyrant (and tyranny cuts both ways: the explicit male tyranny and the implicit female tyranny).

Our aim is to build a life of each one serving others. This is what mutual submission in ministry and marriage means. Each one is looking out for the interests of the others.

Second, learn when to say "yes." These days we don't want to get so good at saying, "NO!" that we stop saying "yes." If we know what our gift is or what our gifts are, we will know when to say yes. When we are asked to do something in the area of our "gifts," we *should* say "yes." The question becomes *not whether* we should do it but *when* we should do it.

"Certainly, I can do that," I said recently, "but Tuesday night's no good for me. That's one of the nights I help Steve with his homework." Then I gave some alternative times. If it is impossible to change a night, than change a place. "Sure, o.k., if Tuesday night is your only night, but you have to make it after 8:00 at my house after Steve goes to bed, because Aida's teaching and I have to be

here." Ninety-nine percent of the time a change of time or a change of place solves the problem. If neither work, then it's too rigid and they don't need me.

When working as part of a pastoral team, a clear delineation of roles is imperative. Everybody doing every area with every gift is not only wasteful but means leaders stepping on each other's toes continually. A clear definition of jobs by area of gift helps discipline this problem. A gentle, "Don't worry about it, that's my area, you've got plenty on your hands" forestalls a lot of sticky situations.

This helps one to know what one is responsible to do. It lets one use authority with confidence and develops one's strength. It streamlines the church's work, cutting out conflicting duplications. And it frees one to say "yes" when one can help the most and "no" when one is equipped to help the least.

Third, learn to say, "no," at the right times. Don't do something someone else can do better or that anyone can do if you are overworked.

Some seminary professors, for example, are overloaded with part-time pastorates that they get talked into taking, while some students are starving for a call. This is wrong. It is not utilizing well the body of Christ. It is similar to burning out one cycle on your washingmachine or one gear on your car, or wearing out one step on your stairway.

Fourth, seek ministries you, your spouse, your children can do together with you. The more we have actively ministered, the less magical we have come to regard God's calling. When people first begin ministering, they often spend a lot of time straining to discern God's will for their lives and ministry. Much of this is bunk.

For example, when I was a college chaplain, one of my students stood out in a field shouting in frustration at God for not clearly revealing God's perfect plan for his life. What a waste of time!

There is an enormous amount of ministry to be done. One needs simply to start doing it--to start doing something! Do any good act that helps the kingdom of God and God will automatically guide. (As James, Jesus' earthly brother, promises in James 4:8, "Draw near to God and God will draw near to you.") You see, nobody can guide a stopped wheel. Nobody can drive a stalled car or direct a blocked

stream. There are usually dozens of ministries you could be doing at any given time. God's plans for the universe are not so fragile that picking "the wrong one" disrupts them utterly and irreparably. What a fatuous bit of conceit this is on our part. God waiting breathlessly, dismayed in case we miss a heavenly hint and foul up God's eternal plan of salvation! If God has a specific call for you, do you think you will get away so easily? Look at Jonah!

So, sorting through the many available options, look for ministries you and your spouse and family (children, parents, grandparents, singles with whom you are the extended family) can do together.

If ministries aren't really suitable or their overseers don't want your family participating--well, why are there single ministers in the church? Don't do them; there are plenty of things you can do. You can, for example: deliver food with your children; work together at a soup kitchen; invite people you are asked to counsel to dinner at your house (They will have a good positive family time and then while your spouse is putting the children to bed or the children are doing their homework, you counsel); take your child on evangelism visits. (The Jehovah's Witnesses have done this for years. It is not only charming, and lessens some of the hostility they receive, but is good child training. Why should the cults be more familial than the saints? Our pastor of evangelism takes his one-year-old and two-year-old visiting by day, and his six-year-old on hospital visiting in the early evening.)

The ministries are out there that strengthen and upbuild your family when you do them. You just have to have eyes to see them. And you have to have the self-fortification and the faith in God's positive will for you to go ahead and tackle them.

You must not be filled with guilt to do *every* ministry. But you must choose wisely to do what ministries are in the area of your gift and to let the rest of the members of the body of Christ exercise their gifts. That is a ministry to them, to let them, too, do ministries they are suited to do. So, what must you do? Discover what gift God has given you to edify the church and take ministries in the area of your gift, courteously, humbly contributing your part to the overall functioning of the body of Christ.

How Much Does it Cost? (Luke 9:57-62)

By *Luann Zercher**

As I think about our discussions these past days, and consider the topics discussed, one very important piece is still missing. I wonder how many men and women here today have taken the time to reflect on the cost of either supporting or, for women, assuming a role of leadership.

Several years ago when I was nineteen years of age, I learned some important lessons about counting the cost of things before you delve into them. I learned these lessons one Saturday morning when my girlfriend and I went into a restaurant, each ordering a huge breakfast. The breakfast included such things as three eggs over medium, bacon hash browns, whole wheat toast, milk, juice, and coffee. It was a wonderful breakfast which we enjoyed immensely, until we reached into our purses to discover that neither one of us had any money! I had just assumed that I had money, and I certainly never dreamt that my friend would not have any either. After a few minutes of panic, being the brave nineteen-year-olds that we were, we assured ourselves that things were fine because I had my checkbook. As we walked to the counter to pay for the meals with a check, we saw a sign above the cash register that read, "NO CHECKS ACCEPTED!" We went back to our table in a panic and nervously laughed over how this could have happened.

Needless to say the waitress came over, and we explained the

* Luann Zercher is Director of Ministry at Lifeline Ministries Women's Shelter in San Francisco, and a member of the Board for Ministry and Doctrine of the Brethren in Christ Church.

situation to her. She then proceeded to call the manager over, and he allowed us to write a check. He taught us in essence two very important lessons: one, the importance of counting the cost before you jump into anything; and two, people need to know within themselves whether they have what is necessary to pay the price.

In the Scriptures read this morning, Jesus too reminds us of the importance of taking the time to count the cost of being a disciple. He uses three different examples from the cultural context. I would like to take a look at those with you this morning.

The first would-be disciple in the story voluntarily draws himself into the community of disciples. No one recruits him. Yet his understanding of what is involved is rather shallow. The idea of following a rejected, suffering servant would be a jarring shock to any first-century Jew. In the Book of Daniel, the Son of Man is to have Dominion and Glory, and all the peoples, nations and languages shall serve him. But here the man is given the picture of a rejected leader. It is as if Jesus is saying, "Do you see that YOU too will have to stand against the majority, risking rejection? Have you considered this? Whatever your motives, keep in mind that you are offering to follow a rejected leader."

I believe this dialogue also has political overtones. An oppressed people are seldom allowed to declare publicly that they are oppressed. Consequently they speak of their oppression in symbols that only the oppressed understand. It is believed that the "birds of the air" were an apocalyptic symbol of the gentile nations. The fox could have been a symbol for Herod's family who was seen by the Jewish people of Palestine as a foreigner. The terrors of the Herodian era with its tortures and murders were fresh in the minds of the people to whom Jesus was speaking. No one dared criticize Rome. The Romans and the Herodian supporters were the powerful of the land and their spies were everywhere.

Jesus in symbolic fashion may be saying, "Look, if you want worldly power and influence, go to the birds who feather their nests everywhere. Or follow the fox who manages his affairs with considerable cunning. For in spite of your expectations, the Son of Man stands powerless by the world's standards. He is often alone. With this in mind, were you serious about following me?"

As we look at our world today, I wonder how serious we are about following this rejected leader. It's still easy to see only the glory and forget about the cost. It is still easy to follow from a distance, especially if we have something to gain from the relationship. But what happens when there are risks? What happens when our faith requires something really hard from us? What happens when our faith calls us to take the side of an oppressed group causing our jobs or our standing in that community to be called into question?

I was reminded of the cost of being a disciple as a woman in the denomination shared her story with me. As she began to feel God calling her into ministry, she shared this calling with her pastor. The pastor, as well as the bishop, affirmed her gifts for ministry, and helped her work through the process of assuming a leadership role within the church. The process was a painful one as people in the congregation did much to block the process. The pastor and bishop received many unkind expressions, including the rejection of them as leaders in the church. The woman experienced from those who opposed her a complete rejection of anything she had to say.

The pastor and bishop stood with this woman, never backing down from their belief in her calling, despite their own roles being called into question. Likewise, the woman never denied her calling, despite the pain. Because of their ability to stand with her, she is now in full-time ministry serving God, but not without cost!

The second would-be disciple does not volunteer, but rather is recruited. The type of statement indicates a command to start a new action. The person involved has not followed Jesus and is asked to do so. The request of the man to go and bury his father does not seem too much to ask in our way of thinking. But a Middle Eastern interpretation of the words of Jesus points to what the follower is really saying: "Let me go and serve my father while he is alive and after he dies I will bury him and come."

We are also dealing here with the expectations of the community. For instance, if a group of people at this time were discussing emigration, at some point in the conversation, someone would ask, "Are you not going to bury your father first?" meaning, "Are you not going to stay until you have fulfilled the traditional duty of taking care

of your parents until their death, and then consider emigrating?" Here the community expectations are the predominant influence on the person's action.

The community of believers is so important. We truly need each other. But what happens when the expectations of some in our community conflict with what we perceive as Kingdom values? What do we lose, and at what cost? Anthony de Mellow in his book, *The Song of the Bird*, shares this story:

He was a difficult man. He thought differently and acted differently from the rest of us. He questioned everything. Was he a rebel or a prophet or a psychopath or a hero? "Who can tell the difference?" we said. "And who cares, anyway?"

So we socialized him. We taught him to be sensitive to public opinion and to the feelings of others. We got him to conform. He was a comfortable person to live with now. Well adjusted. We had made him manageable and docile.

We congratulated him on having achieved self-conquest. He began to congratulate himself too. He did not see that it was WE who had conquered him.

A society that domesticates its rebels has gained its peace. But it has lost its future.

What is it we lose as the body of Christ when we choose community expectations over kingdom values? Or what is the cost to those who step beyond the community's expectations to follow perceived Kingdom values? The price tag seems high!

The third would-be disciple brashly offers to follow Jesus but begins with a precondition, "Let me first say farewell to those at my home." This seems like a legitimate request. Surely he will be allowed to go home and say good-bye. Is this such an unreasonable request?

But the request is much more than saying good-bye. The person leaving must request permission to leave and follow Jesus from those who are staying. In other words, the person is asking for the right to go back to get permission from those at home. Everyone listening to the dialogue knows that naturally his father will refuse to let the boy wander off on some questionable enterprise. The person is requesting permission to submit the question of following Jesus to another authority. Consequently his excuse is ready-made. In the cultural scene he is clearly saying, "I will follow you Lord, but of

course the authority of my father is higher than your authority, and I must have his permission before I venture out."

Kenneth Bailey, the author of a book on the parables says, "I will never forget a class of Middle Eastern seminary students who literally turned pale when this text was expounded with its clear affirmation that Jesus is claiming an authority higher than the father." The shock must have been so great in Jesus' day that he used the agricultural example of the plow to help them understand. Their understanding would have been something like this:

The light Palestinian plough is guided with one hand. This one hand, generally the left, must at the same time keep the plough upright, regulate the depth by pressure, and lift it over rocks and stones on its path. The ploughman uses the other hand to drive the unruly oxen with a goad about two yards long containing an iron spike. At the same time he must continually look between the hindquarters of the oxen, keeping the furrow in sight. This primitive kind of plough needs dexterity and concentrated attention. If the ploughman looks around, the new furrow becomes crooked. Thus whoever wishes to follow Jesus must be resolved to break every link with other ultimate authorities and fix their eyes on the Kingdom of God only.

The imagery is strong and clear. The tension lies between loyalty to Jesus as the inaugurator of the Kingdom of God and its all-consuming demands, and loyalty to the authority of the family. Both loyalties have high priority for the serious-minded Christian. When they are in conflict, it is excruciatingly painful. But when the person cannot resolve the tension and keeps turning back to look over his/her shoulder to see what the family is ordering, Kingdom values suffer.

Allan Boesak, well known minister and leader in South Africa, shares these comments in a sermon based on the scripture verse, "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple." He states:

I know that Jesus does not mean that I should actually hate my parent, my wife or children. His command that I should love them, honor them, respect them, love them as much as I love my own life still stands. There is a deeper meaning to this hatred; it is more than our human definition of utter resentment. It means that while we love them we must realize that love for the

Messiah, obedience to the Messiah, comes before and above all. Nothing, not love of father, mother, wife or children, brother or sister, or even one's own life, must stand in the way of obedience.

You see that is what makes it all so difficult. It is not easy to stand in front of a body which represents authority to you and say, "I must obey God rather than you." But how infinitely more difficult it is to look at the ones whom you love, whose love for you is at the root of their concern, and say to them: "I must obey God rather than you." For you see this is precisely the cost of discipleship. And my brothers and sisters, I am not sure we are ever fully prepared for it.

So although we are never fully prepared to suffer, we recognize that the ultimate cost of being a disciple for Jesus Christ is great. As we have looked at the Scriptures, and reflected on new and continuing questions which this retreat has hopefully raised, the price tags continue to flash before us. What I realize more than ever as I reflect on our time together is how much we, as brother and sisters, need each other, that as we minister together in love, we more fully reflect the beauty and image of God. But shared ministry, in any capacity, and living lives of servanthood together require something from each of us.

In each of the three scriptural examples, we never found out if the individual felt the cost of following Christ was too high. As we share in this symbolic time of communion, and go forth from this place, I pray that we take the time to count the cost of being a disciple. The decision is yours!

Women and Leadership: Post-Retreat Reflections

By Harriet Bicksler

From Wednesday evening, March 28, through Friday noon, March 30, 1990, approximately 100 people from four denominations, nine states and two provinces met together at Camp Hebron, a retreat center nestled in the mountains of Central Pennsylvania just north of Harrisburg. The occasion was a retreat for women and men, "Women and Leadership: Changing Roles in Church and Society," sponsored by the Board for Brotherhood Concerns and the Board for Ministry and Doctrine of the Brethren in Christ Church. Laypeople, pastors, church administrators, and bishops gathered to learn from careful exegesis of pertinent scriptural passages, share with each other in small groups, listen to personal stories, learn from a variety of experienced people in workshop settings, and worship the Lord together.

Coming to us from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, Massachusetts, were Aida Besancon Spencer and her husband Bill. Together they modeled a marriage of mutual submission, each encouraging the other's gifts (it's no accident that Aida is the minister of organization and Bill the minister of encouragement at the small church they founded in Massachusetts!). Aida's thorough and sometimes highly technical presentations of 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 and 1 Timothy 2:11-15 answered many questions about those difficult passages while raising others. Bill delighted many with his personal reviews of the books on women in the church which were offered for sale at the retreat.

Eleven different workshops, led by people selected for their

relevant skills and experience, helped to apply in more practical ways some of the issues raised by the biblical scholarship. Susan Gilmore and Sandi Hannigan led us in worship and communion, and Luann Zercher preached on "The Cost of Following Christ."

The impetus for this first-ever Women and Leadership Retreat began in California during the 1988 General Conference. Women in leadership and ministry networked with each other during Conference, sharing in a breakfast meeting one morning and agreeing to keep in touch. Sometime after Conference, two women who later formed the nucleus for the planning committee met and brainstormed ways for women in ministry to support and encourage one another. Luann Zercher and Mary Jane Davis came up with the idea of a retreat. That idea was then taken to both the Board for Ministry and Doctrine (of which Luann is a member) and the Board for Brotherhood Concerns where it was enthusiastically received. Both boards agreed to provide funding for a conference/retreat on women in ministry, and a planning committee was named.

Besides Mary Jane Davis, Minister of Christian Education at the Grantham Church, and Luann Zercher, now Director of Ministry at Lifeline Ministries Women's Shelter in San Francisco, the planning committee consisted of Harriet Bicksler, Education Director for the Board for Brotherhood Concerns; Jim Ernst, pastor of the Lancaster (Penn.) congregation and a member of the Board for Ministry and Doctrine; Sandi Hannigan, Associate Director of the Board for Congregational Life in the Canadian Conference; Janet Peifer, on the pastoral staff of the Refton (Penn.) congregation and a seminary student; Morris Sider, denominational archivist and also a member of the Board for Ministry and Doctrine; and Naomi Stambaugh, pastor of the Winchester (Va.) congregation.

The planning committee met for the first time in April 1989, and then twice more in June and October. The first task was to decide what our goals would be--what we wanted this event to achieve. We agreed that "what the church needs is a consultation, but what women need is a retreat." We knew that not everyone in the church was of one mind on the issue of women in ministry and therefore we needed to provide some solid biblical exegesis of some of the most problematic passages. We also knew that women already in ministry

need encouragement on what is often a lonely road.

Those two needs then became the basis for our approach. The planning committee never seriously considered presenting both sides of the issue. We were well aware that the issue has not been resolved for all at the grassroots level; we also felt that because the Brethren in Christ Church has already officially established its position and is currently credentialing women and placing them in pastoral and other church leadership roles, our goal should be to provide some of the biblical and theological bases for that practice. In retrospect, I believe our approach was appropriate given our assumptions and what we wanted to accomplish, although I understand the objections of those who felt that true dialogue was not possible under those circumstances.

Besides the formal goals we adopted, we also established some other "ground rules" which affected our approach. For example, we agreed at the start that we wanted to avoid as much as possible the anger and stridency that is often associated with the feminist movement. While we all recognized that such anger is often legitimate, we felt that it would be self-defeating in this setting. So we deliberately set out to choose a keynote speaker who would be "gentle," and we ourselves worked hard at creating an atmosphere of openness.

In addition, we wanted to be inclusive; we did not want the retreat to be a gathering of women off in a corner somewhere. Instead, we wanted women and men to come together and talk with each other, and we wanted church leaders (bishops, administrators, pastors, and denominational board members) to attend and participate in the discussion. Finally, with the special encouragement of the two men on the committee, we decided to feature women in most of the leadership roles at the retreat--as session moderators and workshop and worship leaders.

How well did we succeed in achieving our goals and sticking to the ground rules? That question can best be answered by those who attended the retreat. Each participant was asked to return an evaluation form rating everything from the date, location and accommodations of the retreat to the schedule, workshops and speakers. Over sixty percent of the forms were returned, from which

a number of recurring themes emerged.

In answer to the question, "What did you appreciate most about this retreat?" many noted the tone of the retreat, and especially "the openness, honesty, and willingness to be vulnerable." Others commented on how well the retreat was planned and carried out. While some felt that the planning committee had done well at packing many different kinds of events into such a short time, others felt that the schedule was too full and did not allow enough time for informal sharing and processing.

A number of people were pleased that the retreat had happened at all. One who had been involved with a grassroots forum of women's issues at General Conference in 1980 said she was glad "that the interest has not died after '80-82, that there's new, invigorating blood to carry on." Another woman with a lifetime of service in the church echoed the feelings of others when she said, "I appreciate this time of acknowledgement and affirmation of my sex." One man appreciated the differences in approach he detected in a retreat that was "organized primarily (although not exclusively) by and for women."

Another general question asked for areas of improvement. Three major themes emerged here. First, a number of people thought that the retreat should have presented balanced biblical perspectives on both sides of the issue. One person asked, "Can we find a forum where those who don't feel good about women in leadership could join with us to hear each other out?" Another felt that had more than one aspect of the issue been represented, the discussion would have had more integrity. Second, several people commented that more pastors ought to have been present, since "the teaching on this issue needs to happen at the grassroots level." (There *was* appreciation for the fact that bishops and the general secretary did attend.) And third, several noted that the publicity for the retreat did not filter down to many laypeople who would benefited from attending.

In addition to the brief responses solicited on the evaluation form, several people were asked to reflect in writing in more detail. Excerpts from these reflections follow.

Verna Miller works at MTS Travel in Ephrata, Pennsylvania, and is a member of the Sandy Hill Mennonite Church. She was one of

several Mennonites who attended the retreat.

"I was greatly blessed by listening to women tell their stories, their pilgrimages. There is no doubt that the women in ministry or in positions of leadership in your churches have been called and blessed by God. They are effective leaders with compassionate, sensitive hearts.

"The foundation for effective dialogue in your churches regarding women in leadership was firmly laid those several days. May you build on this foundation by continuing to recognize the gifts of ministry with which God has equally blessed women."

Jane Musser is an elementary school teacher and active in her congregation, the Mechanicsburg Brethren in Christ Church.

"In our American history, we look back to a time when black people were treated as second-class citizens. They had segregated seating on buses, separate water fountains, separate schools, etc. They were not given their opportunity for education and consequently, areas of leadership and responsibility were closed to them. Looking back at that time, I think 'How could we treat people like that? How could we have felt they were inferior? How could that have been tolerated?'

"Twenty years from now, when my daughter Bethany is grown, I hope that our church life has changed so much that she will look back and say, 'Mom, how could women have been treated that way? Didn't people know women are God's chosen creation? Why couldn't they see and understand and acknowledge that women are capable leaders in the church of God?'

"Just as certain blacks who participated in the march on Washington and other events can point to their involvement and say, 'I was there helping to make change,' I will be able to say to my daughter, 'I was there giving support to make a change.'"

Elaine Dent is a member of the Grantham Brethren in Christ Church and the organist and choir director at St. Michael's Lutheran Church in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania. She is also a part-time student at Lutheran Theological Seminary in Gettysburg.

"By attending the conference on Women and Leadership, I was hoping to get a grasp on a faithful interpretation of the Scripture which allows for women in various aspects of church ministry. I felt

convinced that God had called my women colleagues at the seminary to serve him in ministry; surely God calls Brethren in Christ and other evangelical women to use their gifts in church leadership. Aida Spencer provided a starting point for looking at Scripture in a scholarly way, recognizing its authority in our lives, and coming to an affirmation of women in church leadership roles.

"I am concerned that individual members of congregations have the opportunity to discuss the interpretation of Scripture as it relates to women. The denomination has made a statement on this issue. Perhaps it is time that it becomes more generally known what the denominational policy is. I have been attending the Brethren in Christ Church for eight years, for example, and it wasn't until six months ago that I found out that women could be ordained as pastors. I wonder if there are young (or older) women with spiritual gifts needed in church leadership who have never been challenged that a pastoral ministry may be a direction in which God is calling them.

"A significant surprise to me was attending a workshop and meeting a couple who each work in ministries in two different churches. Ever since we moved to Grantham, my husband and I have had to deal with this issue if I was to continue to serve the Lord in the ministry of church music. One of the things this couple mentioned was the importance of being involved together in a small group. Rick and I can certainly attest to the significant role our small group at Grantham has always had in providing encouragement and prayer support."

Mary Ebersole has a home-based business in Akron, Pennsylvania, as an editor and graphics artist. She is an active member of the Speedwell Heights Brethren in Christ Church.

"I signed up for the Women in Leadership Retreat partly for pragmatic reasons: a good friend on the planning committee, a need to take a break from a heavy stretch of family responsibilities. As a mid-life woman, I also wanted to know what direction the Brethren in Christ denomination is heading regarding women in ministry and leadership roles. What choices would be open to me or others like me who have 'ministry gifts?' I chose several workshops which promised to deal with mutual submission and developing mutual roles

in a marriage stretched by dual ministries.

"I returned home with my head full of hermaneutics (thanks to Arthur Climenhaga and Aida Spencer) providing new insights into perplexing passages which seem to encourage and forbid women's authority in the church. Without the preparation of reading Spencer's book, I was surprised and sometimes snowed by the word-by-word thoroughness with which Aida attacked the difficult women-in-leadership passages of the New Testament. By seminar's end I felt tired but exhilarated by several days of thinking, talking, and listening.

"I expected to be challenged and moved at the Women's Retreat. I felt gratified to see bishops and many church leaders (both genders) attend the sessions. I was prepared to deal with the cerebral issues of biblical interpretation, early church and Brethren in Christ historical and present views of women in leadership. I was surprised by the emotional issues raised for me, especially by the practical workshops. (This woman did not bring a suitcase full of bitter experiences and blocked ambitions!) When I returned home, I greeted by husband, John, with a two-page letter expressing questions and concerns about our roles and places in marriage and in the church--along with reassurances that I had not turned into a man-hater.

"Some questions which remain are: What avenues are open to provide reconciliation and healing for women embittered by years of 'gift squelching' in the home or church? What processes will help congregations (sometimes less willing than church leaders) to discern, appreciate, and support the leadership gifts of women? How can women assume and model leadership roles without being viewed as crusaders or usurpers of men's authority?

"I would hope for continued dialogue on women in leadership at all levels: personal, congregational, denominational. Do the Brethren in Christ have a task force on women's issues? Would it be helpful or divisive to hear testimonies from women struggling with leadership roles? Could a future issue of *Shalom* be devoted to this issue? Could women with scholarly or practical interest in the subject be encouraged with scholarships, mentor relationships with women or men in church leadership, or more visible platforms like delivering the conference sermon?"

Mary's concluding questions help to focus some of the issues that will need to be considered as the Board for Brotherhood Concerns and the Board for Ministry and Doctrine (and, in fact, everyone in church leadership) discuss follow-up to this retreat. There was agreement that this was an event of historical significance, but much work still needs to be done. For example, many people called for similar retreats or conferences at the regional and local levels. If women are to be encouraged and empowered to use their gifts in leadership and ministry in the church, and if those who are uncomfortable--either theologically or emotionally--with this shift in practice are to be included in the process, then one conference is not enough. The dialogue must happen openly, honestly, and caringly in many settings in the church. Both women and men must work together to listen to each other's hurts, fears and questions, and then genuinely seek to find the will of God for the church.

Annual Meeting, 1989

The annual meeting of the Brethren in Christ Historical Society was held on September 9, 1989, near Foothill, Ontario, on the farm on which Andrew Hansler (one of the first ministers in the Canadian Brethren in Christ Church) settled. The program was planned by a committee of Canadian members of the Historical Society and consisted of the following presentations: Bruce Nix on experiences as a conscientious objector in World War II; Jean Climenhaga on Mrs. Everett Jones, one of the early members of North Star Mission in Saskatchewan; Paul Nigh on his mother, Della Nigh; and Ruth Tuttle and Myrtle Hogan (the "Steckley Sisters") on their years in home mission work in Canada (interviewed by Elaine Cassel).

At each annual meeting, officers of the Historical Society report on the year's activities. These reports are carried in a subsequent issue of the society's journal. The reports for the 1989 meeting are presented below.

President's Report (abbreviated for publication)

This is a wonderful occasion for the Brethren in Christ Historical Society--to experience fellowship together in this historic setting so near the beginnings of 200 years of Brethren in Christ life and ministry in this great nation. I feel very fortunate personally to give my first report as President in this place at this time!

Our thanks to those who discovered the significance of this location, to those who envisioned the possibility of this meeting, and

those who planned and worked to bring this dream to reality.

It is especially significant since the existence and vitality of the Brethren in Christ Historical Society are so much the result of efforts of many people who share that 200-year heritage.

I've brought with me the set of books I carry throughout the church representing Brethren in Christ authors. It is far from a complete set, but it is complete enough to demonstrate the major Canadian contribution.

While rejoicing in the accomplishments of the past, your Executive Committee is also looking to the future.

Please plan to be a part of the next annual meeting of the Brethren in Christ Historical Society at 9:00 p.m., Tuesday, July 3 in Climenhaga Fine Arts building at Messiah College (during the One Hundred Eleventh General Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church).

Merle E. Brubaker

Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Membership Report:

Regular membership	367
Contributing membership	75
Supporting membership	11
Institutional membership	57
	<hr/>
	510
Complimentary to missionaries	25
	<hr/>
	535

Financial Report:

7-1-88	Balance Forward	2556.59
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Receipts:

Memberships	5354.27
Sale of Boyer book	33.10
Sale of Journals/tapes	273.90
Donations including 1000 from BBC for extra printing	1500.00
Interest from JEF	266.91

Total Receipts:	<u>7428.18</u>
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Receipts + Balance:	9984.77
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Disbursements:

Evangel Press/printing 3 issues of the Journal	6265.00
Deposit for meeting place	30.00
Office expenditures/1 year	574.30
Letterheads & envelopes	63.21
Service charge	37.50
Miscellaneous	2.25

Total Disbursements:	<u>6972.26</u>
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Balance on hand 6-30-89	3012.51
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Lela Hostetler

Editor's Report

I consider that this has been a good year for our journal, *Brethren in Christ History and Life*. In evidence of this evaluation, I offer the large number of excellent articles and book reviews appearing in this year's issues, not least (since I am addressing a Canadian audience) the biography of William Charlton by Lucille

Charlton.

Also in evidence of our good year is the appointment of John Yeatts as book review editor. A colleague of mine on the Messiah College faculty, John is the first to hold this office. Under his leadership, I look forward to an even better review section for the journal.

The future holds promise of still more good things. The forthcoming December issue will contain the papers and addresses on the church and public policy given at a conference at Messiah College in April of this year. This conference was a first of its kind in the history of the Brethren in Christ Church; thus the publication of its papers by the Historical Society is a significant event.

The December issue will also have a new appearance. I have recently acquired for the Archives a computer-based Word Processor with desk top printing capabilities. This will give the journal a much more sophisticated style of lettering and will allow us also to print more words on a page than in the present format, thus enabling us to publish more material without additional cost.

As editor I express my appreciation for the many loyal supporters of the Brethren in Christ Historical Society and for their efforts, through the journal and elsewhere, to make our heritage known and appreciated.

E. Morris Sider

Membership, Brethren in Christ Historical Society, 1989

The following persons and institutions were members of the Historical Society in 1989. Many members made special contributions beyond the basic membership fees when they renewed their membership for 1990. These special contributors are recognized in two categories: contributing members (designated by *), and supporting members (designated by o). (For the size of contribution for each category, see the inside front cover.)

Individual Membership

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Agee, Bedsaul	Book, Doyle and Thelma
*Akin, Alma Deck	Book, Jerel
*Alderfer, Owen and Ardis	Book, Paul
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oBert, Dwight and Faye	*Brubaker, Graybill and Ethel
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Bicksler, John and Elva	Brubaker, Menno

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 oBrubaker, Samuel and Lucy
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 Brumbaugh, Ralph
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 *Climenhaga, David and
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 Curfman, Carl
 Dalton, Glenn and Kim
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 Dayton, Donald W.
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 *Dietz, Myron
 *Dohner, Elam O.
 Dohner, Ernest U. and
 Evelyn
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 *Dourte, Allen and Jeanette
 *Dourte, Eber B. and Ruth
 Dourte, Jesse and Wilma
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 oEbersole, Esther
 Ebersole, John L.
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 *Engle, Dorcas and Leon
 Engle, Earl and Esther
 oEngle, Eugene K. and Ann
 *Engle, Harold H. and
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 *Engle, Mahlon
 *Engle, Naomi
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 Freed, Mary
 Fretz, Elva
 *Fretz, Lester and Mary
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 *Frey, Glenn and Beth
 Frey, J. Elbert
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 oGaris, Glenn E. and Elaine
 *Garis, Mark
 *Garman, Ruth
 *Gibble, Kenneth and June
 Byers
 Gibson, Kenneth R.
 Ginder, Glenn
 *Ginder, Henry and Martha
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 Orpha
 Gish, Dorothy
 Givler, Christopher
 Gooderham, Gordon T.
 *Gordon, Richard C.
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 Graybill, John W.
 Gray, Deborah
 Gruenewald, Rick and Helen
 oHaines, Lester and Marjorie
 Hall, David L.
 Halter, Ralph
 *Hannigan, Michael and
 Sandra
 Hansler, Asa
 Hare, Erma Z.
 *Harley, Isaiah B.
 *Harmon, Frances and
 Wendell
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 Kreider, Nancy J.
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 *Lady, Martha L.
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 Landis, Dr. and Mrs. Howard
 Landis, P. John
 *Landis, Paul L. and Arlene
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 Lehman, J. Richard
 Lehman, J. Robert and
 Agnes
 Lehman, James O.
 Lehman, Semona
 *Lenehan, Daniel
 oLenhert, P. Galen and
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 Link, Curtis B.
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 Lofthouse, Brian R.
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 Long, Richard
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 Maehler, Claude
 *Mann, Lowell D. and Anna
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 Marr, Naomi
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 Miyake-Stoner, Robert
 Moyer, Jacob and Janet
 Moyo, Elias
 Musser, Arthur and Wilma
 Musser, Rev. and Mrs. Avery
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 *Musser, J. Earl and Lois
 Musser, Roy J. and Lois
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 Myers, Mr. and Mrs.
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 Myers, Richard A.
 Niesley, Arthur E.
 Niesley, Raymond G.
 Nigh, Paul A.
 Nigh, Ross
 Nisly, Paul

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 Oyer, John
 Paine, Dwight
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 Ressler, Marlin and Anna
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 *Richwine, Esther F.
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 Rolston, Robert
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 Maureen
 Ross, Richard
 Ruegg, Mrs. John
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 oSchrag, Martin and Dorothy
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 *Sherk, Morris and Janet
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 *Smith, Ruth W.
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 *Sollenberger, Jacob and Ada
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 oStepp, Jonathan
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 Zuck, John

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