

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**  
**BOOK FOUR - THE BODY OF CHRIST**

[LESSON 24](#)

... ABOUT THE CHURCH

[LESSON 25](#)

... ABOUT DIVINE ORDER FOR CHURCH GOVERNMENT

[LESSON 26](#)

... ABOUT THE OVERSIGHT (BISHOP) MINISTRY

[LESSON 27](#)

... ABOUT THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

[APPENDIX](#)

... CAN WOMEN BE CALLED TO THE FIVE-FOLD MINISTRY OFFICE?

**XXIV. WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS**

**LESSON TWENTY-FOUR**

**... ABOUT THE CHURCH**

**INTRODUCTION**

In Book 1, lesson 7, pages 18-19, In Christ Jesus - our Identity, we learned that when we were born again, we were baptized into the Body of Christ by the Holy Spirit and become a member of His body. From Ephesians 1:22,23 identify the Body of Christ.

When we, then, were baptized into His body, we become a member of His Body, which is the Church. By virtue of being in Christ Jesus we then became a member of the Church.

The purpose of this lesson is to show the relationship, of those who are in Christ Jesus, to the Church, which, then, is the Body of Christ.

**WHAT IS THE CHURCH?**

THE CHURCH IS A DIVINELY CONSTITUTED BODY:

1. **of which Jesus is the Head; and**  
Ephesians 1:22  
Colossians 1:18  
John 15:5
2. **through which the Gospel is preached and believers are nurtured.**  
Colossians 1:28

DEFINITION THE CHURCH FROM MEANING AND WORD USAGE

1. Lets begin with a **literal definition** of the Greek word ekklesia which is translated church in the New Testament. Ekklesia, from ek, out of, and kiesis, a calling or assembling.
2. Before and during the time of Christ and the First century Church the **primary usage** of the word ekklesia referred to the assembling of the lawful body of citizens who made up the governing bodies in the different cities.  
Acts 19:39
3. In the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament written 285 - 247 B.C.) we see that ekklesia was used to **designate the gathering of Israel.**  
Acts 7:35

4. In Acts 19:21-32 (32) we see there was a **riotous mob assembled** (ekklesia) for the purpose of trying Paul.

Conclusions: We would note from the above meaning and usages of the word, that ekklesia is the assembling, gathering together of called out ones to carry out specific purposes. Therefore, the NT Church is a body made up of the citizens of the kingdom of God (those in Christ Jesus) who are assembled, gathered together to carry out the specific purposes of the body, under the direction of Jesus, who is the head.

DEFINITION FROM PAUL'S USAGE IN THE FOLLOWING SCRIPTURES.

**What do these Scriptures have in common?**

Romans 16:1

1 Corinthians 1:2

Col 4:16

Galatians 1:2,22

Acts 14:23

1 Corinthians 16:19b

Col 4:15

Rom 16: 5

Hebrews 2:12

Conclusions: We would note from the above Scriptures, with the exception of Hebrews 2:12, ekklesia in each of the Scriptures is referring to a specific Church in a specific location. Therefore, the Church, ekklesia, is LOCAL in nature. Hebrews 2:12, likewise shows the **Church, ekklesia, to be local in nature**.

DEFINITION AND ORIGIN OF THE ENGLISH WORD CHURCH.

1. The English word church comes from the Greek word kuriakon, which has the meaning of belonging to the Lord. In every instance kuriakon is translated the Lord's in the New Testament.  
Romans 14:8.
2. The ekklesia never refers to a building or to a denomination in the New Testament. When houses or structures were built for the assembling of those belonging to the Lord's they were called kuriake, "the Lord's house".
3. The English word church is not a translation but rather is a transliteration of the Greek word kuriake.

**SO, WHAT IS THE CHURCH?**

1. The ekklesia, or the NT Church is the Body of Christ, which is made up of the kuriakon, the ones belonging to the Lord (Romans 14:8).
2. The ekklesia is local in nature and therefore is not universal.
3. The Universal Church of Saints is a New Testament concept only as it refers to the body of believers, the kuriakon, those who belong to the Lord, and is not the ekklesia (Body of Christ).
4. The ekklesia since it is the Body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22,23) is then the physical manifestation of Christ on earth today.
5. Therefore, when one is born again, baptized into the body of Christ, he becomes a member of a local ekklesia (Church). Thus he/you do not join the ekklesia, a local church, you become a part of it when you become a child of God.

**RELATIONSHIP OF THOSE IN CHRIST JESUS TO THE BODY OF CHRIST**

What do the following Scriptures have to say about our relationship in the body of Christ?

1 Corinthians 12:20

1 Corinthians 12:27

Romans 12:5

Ephesians 5:21

Philippians 2:2-4

Galatians 5:13

Ephesians 5:30-32

Conclusions: We would note from the above Scriptures that the ekklesia, the Church, is not an organization. But is a living, breathing, moving Body of Christ - A LIVING ORGANISM - THE FAMILY OF GOD. The members of which are inter-dependent upon each other, accountable to and responsible for each other.

### **RESPONSE TO THE TRUTH**

It is only when those who are in Christ Jesus know, understand, submit themselves to and exercise the correct relationship with their brothers and sisters in the Body of Christ (local ekklesia, church) will that Body of Christ function effectively according to our Father God's will and plan for it.

Are you will to be dependent upon, accountable to, and responsible for you brothers and sisters in the body?

Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

If your response is no. Are you willing to allow God to give you the willingness?

Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

## **XXV. WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS**

### **LESSON TWENTY-FIVE**

...ABOUT DIVINE ORDER FOR CHURCH GOVERNMENT

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The Scriptures teach us that God is a God of order. That His ways are not always our ways. That He has a way of doing things which does not leave things to chance. If we are to enjoy the full blessings of our Father God, then it is necessary that we let God's government (His way of doing things) be the rule and standard which governs each one of us individually, and the ekklesia (Church - Body of Christ) corporately.

In 1 Corinthians 14:33,40 the Apostle Paul reminds us that

**"...God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints...Let all things be done decently (properly) and in order."**

Therefore, in-order that His church be not in confusion and disorder, our Father God has established an order of government and authority for the churches collectively and individually.

#### **DIVINE ORDER OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT**

From the following Scriptures what is the DIVINE ORDER OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT, that is to say, the line of authority or leadership in the Body of Christ?

Ephesians 1:22

Colossians 1:18

1 Peter 2:6-8

Ephesians 4:8,11

Titus 1:5

1 Timothy 3:8

1 Corinthians 12:28g

1 Corinthians 12:28h

Conclusions: We would note from the above Scriptures the Divine Order of Church Government is according to the following ministries/servant positions.

Head - Christ

Five gifts of Christ - Apostles, Prophets, Evangelist, Pastors and Teachers

Two anointed church ministries - Elders & Deacons

Two additional church ministries - Helps & Government

Note: The relationship of these ministries to the Church is seen in Matthew 20:25-28.

**But Jesus called them *unto him*, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be GREAT among you, let him be your minister (*SERVANT*); And whosoever will be CHIEF among you, let him be your servant (*SLAVE*): Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and TO GIVE HIS LIFE A RANSOM FOR MANY.**

#### MINISTRY DESCRIPTIONS

##### 3. FIVE GIFTS OF CHRIST TO THE CHURCH

Of the five gifts of Christ to the church, known also, as the five fold ministry, the ministry of apostles, prophets, evangelists and teachers is not just for one local church but is to a number of churches, specifically those churches which are submitted to their ministry.

##### MINISTRY OF APOSTLES

Ephesians 2:20

Ephesians 3:2-9

Titus 1:5

Acts 14:23

1 Corinthians 9:1-2

2 Corinthians 11:22-23

2 Corinthians 12:12

Conclusions: We would note from the above Scriptures that the Apostolic Ministry consists: (1) of laying foundation truths in the local Churches, (2) establishing/raising up new assemblies, churches and (3) having a wide range of ministry in the power of the spiritual gifts.

##### MINISTRY OF PROPHETS

Ephesians 2:20

Ephesians 3:3-5

Acts 11:27-28

Acts 15:32

Acts 21:10-11

Conclusions: We would note from the above Scriptures that the Ministry of the New Testament Prophet includes (1) along with the Apostles, laying foundation truths in the Churches, (2) fore-telling future events, (3) forth-telling, that is to say, speaking forth words of exhortation (warnings and encouragements from the Word) to confirm the Believers in the Faith, (4) confirming God's Word concerning events, direction, or etc. spoken to other believers.

##### MINISTRY OF EVANGELISTS

Note: The English word evangelist is not a translation, but is a transliteration of the noun form of euaggelizo, pronounced "yoo-ang-ghelee-on." This Greek word has the meaning of "a messenger of good" (eu - well, angelos - a messenger).

Euaggelizo in its verb form is most often translated preaching, preached, preach in the Book of Acts, chapter 8, verses 4,12,25,35,40. In each of these verses they were preaching the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Preached, in verse 5 is not a translation of euaggelizo but rather of kerusso which is a general term for proclaim, the message may either be good or bad news. An Evangelist then, is one who preaches, proclaims, announces the good news of the Gospel,

**"... that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." 2 Corinthians 5:19.**

**For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John 3:16.**

An Evangelist then is a "good news messenger."

The Ministry of an Evangelist is best seen in Philip's ministry in Acts, chapter 8.

Acts 8:5-8,12,26-40

Most often their ministry is confirmed with signs following

Mark 16:20

#### MINISTRY OF PASTORS

Ezekiel 34:12-16

Revelation 2:2

John 10

Ezekiel 34:1-11

Jeremiah 23:1

**Conclusions:** We would note from the above Scriptures that the pastor is the shepherd of the local Body of Christ. A shepherd is one who cares for, is concerned about and gives his attention to the needs of the sheep placed in his care.

#### THE MINISTRY OF TEACHERS

Matthew 28:19-20

2 Timothy 2:2

**Conclusions:** We would note from the above Scriptures that the ministry of the teacher is (1) to teach believers to observe to do all that Jesus commanded, and (2) to instruct others in the truth of God's Word, so that, they may teach others.

## **2. TWO ANOINTED LOCAL CHURCH OFFICES (MINISTRIES)**

### ELDERS

#### Qualification of Elders

1 Timothy 3:1-7

Titus 1:4-9

**Conclusions:** We would note from the above Scriptures that an Elder must be:

blameless, having no accusation against him;

the husband of one wife;

vigilant, that is watchful, wide awake, alert;

sober, having a sound, disciplined mind;

temperate, having self under control;

of good behavior;

holy, being modest, chaste, not conceited;

given to hospitality, that is generous, not a miser, or selfish, liberal;

apt to teach, that is to tend, rule, guide and lead the Flock of God into the green pastures of the Word;  
not given to wine;  
not a striker, not one who hits back, or gets even revengeful), or strikes the sheep, or whips with the Word;  
not after money, not a hireling;  
patient with God and with the sheep - impatience breed disasters in the Church;  
not a brawler; does not fight for himself or for his position;  
not covetous; having ungodly/unlawful lusts;  
must rule his own house and family well; his home-order is a type of the Church-order; God's house;  
not a novice; not one newly come to The Faith;  
must have a good report of outsiders.

#### Ministry of Elders

Acts 20:27-35

1 Peter 5:1-4

Hebrews 13:7

Hebrews 13:17

1 Thessalonians 5:12

Conclusions: We would note from the above Scriptures that the ministry of Elders includes:

taking heed of his own life, that is to say, to carefully watch over and rule his soul life;

taking heed to the Flock of God, that is to say, to carefully take notice of Flock, ruling, tending and shepherding the Flock;

ministry of the Word.

**Note:** Elders is always used in the plural in relation to the local New Testament Churches; not a dictatorship, or lordship, or one-man rule, but the Eldership (Presbytery) - however, it is not a co-equal Eldership.

Acts 14:23 (elders)

Titus 1:5 (elders)

Acts 15:13-22 (James makes final judgment)

#### DEACONS

The qualifications of a deacon are very similar to that of the elders, as in

1 Timothy 3:1-7.

Compare verse 8, "likewise" and verse 10, "also".

#### The Ministry of a Deacon

Acts 6:1-4

Though the word "deacon" is not specifically used here in these verses from Acts, it is clearly implied in the use of the Greek words in verses 1 and 2.

Verse 1. The Greek word "diakonia" is used for "ministration".

verse 2. The Greek word "diakonea" is used for "serve".

The Greek word for "deacon" is "diakonas". This Greek word "diakonas" is translated in the New Testament as follows:

Deacon, 5 times

Servant, 7 times

Minister, 20 times

The word essentially means, "A servant, one called to serve, to wait (a waiter, one who serves tables), or an attendant."

**A Deacon is:**

A servant of Christ.

A servant to the Church.

A servant to the Ministry.

Conclusions: In the local church the ministry of deacons is a ministry of serving - especially taking care of the physical needs of the church as seen in Acts 6:2,3. The qualifications of a deacon are found in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

**3. TWO ADDITIONAL MINISTRIES OF THE LOCAL CHURCH**

**MINISTRY OF HELPS**

1 Corinthians 12:28

Romans 12:8

Exodus 17:12

Conclusions: Helps is the supporting ministry of the local church - every one in the local church has a ministry of helps. This ministry includes but is not limited to, the ministry of prayer, intercession, music ministry, giving, church cleanup, and etc.

**GOVERNMENTS** (lesser governments)

1 Corinthians 12:28

Conclusions: This ministry includes such ministries as leaders in the men's groups, women's groups, Bible class teachers, teachers and leaders in the youth and children's ministry, and etc.

**RESPONSE TO THE TRUTH**

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 sums up for us the Godly response to God's order of church government.

**"We beseech you, brethren, TO KNOW them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And TO ESTEEM THEM VERY HIGHLY IN LOVE FOR THEIR WORKS SAKE. And be at peace among yourselves."**

**CONTENTS**

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**XXVI. WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS**

**LESSON TWENTY-SIX**

**...ABOUT THE OVERSIGHT (BISHOP) MINISTRY**

**INTRODUCTION**

Question: Is a born again child of God competent to oversee Himself, that is, always make correct moral judgments?

**Jeremiah 10:23, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."**

**Galatians 5:16, "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."**

Romans 14:23, "And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because *he eateth* not of faith: for whatsoever *is* not of faith is sin."

Man was created with a spirit, a soul, and a body. His spirit is to be the overseer of his soul - as God took Adam and placed him in the garden to "dress (cultivate) it and to keep (tend) it (Genesis 2:15), so, the spirit of man, which is God conscious, was created to oversee, cultivate and keep, the soul, which is the garden of man.

Genesis 3:1-6 is an example of what happens when one relies on soulish judgments where moral issues are concerned. I have no doubt that Eve felt she was competent to judge situations for her- self, so that, when she found herself in this confrontation with the serpent it never entered her mind to seek out Adam for advise and direction.

Judges 21:25 sums up very simply this question of the need for oversight outside of ourselves,

**"In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in HIS OWN EYES."**

Our Father God in His wisdom has established the "Oversight Ministry" through His Son Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:25 - **Jesus the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls**). A ministry which He carries out personally by means of the Word (John 17:17) and through His body, the Church. It is His desire to "to finish His (the Father's) work. Philippians 1:6 says,

**"...He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it (literally, will bring it to completion) until the day of Jesus Christ."**

The purpose of this lesson is to remind us to thank our Lord for His love in providing us with oversight in the Body of Christ and to submit ourselves to that oversight.

#### **THE OVERSIGHT MINISTRY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH**

Our Father God has established an order of authority in the Church.

**Hebrews 13:17, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you."**

According to the above Scripture, What is the ministry of those in authority?

Specifically, over what are they overseeing?

According to the following Scriptures who, in the local Body of Christ, has been given the ministry of oversight?

Titus 1:5-9

Acts 14:23

1 Peter 5:1-3

Acts 20:17; 20:28

**Note:** The designation as Elder refers to the maturity of their spiritual experience. While the designation as Bishop (overseer) refers to their work as an Elder.

From Acts 20:28, who makes them overseers?

The "oversight ministry" is a ministry where our conduct is under the judgment of what?

John 12:48

James 1:21

It is ministering the \_\_\_\_\_ for the saving of the \_\_\_\_\_ of those under that ministry.

According to the following Scriptures, what then is the goal or purpose of the "oversight ministry"?

Ephesians 4:11-16

Colossians 1:28

2 Timothy 2:21



Conclusions: The "oversight ministry" in the local body of Christ is the ministry of Jesus finishing the work His Father sent Him to do. A ministry He wants to work in the heart of each and every believer, so that, He can work through them the works of Father God. The works of the Father which He desires to work through each believer are the same works that He, Himself, did during His earthly ministry. This "oversight ministry" is invested in the Elders of the Church.

### **RESPONSE TO THE OVERSIGHT MINISTRY**

The response of the members of the local Body of Christ to the Elders and to their ministry in the body is to be what according to the following Scriptures?

1 Thessalonians 5:12

1 Thessalonians 5:13

Hebrews 13:7

Hebrews 13:17

Hebrews 13:24

1 Timothy 5:17-18

Conclusions: We would note from the above Scriptures that the response of the members of the Church to the Elders and their ministry is :

1. to having a close personal relationship with them,
2. to honor them for the sake of their ministry,
3. to receive them and their ministry,
4. to obey and submit to their counsel, and
5. to support them in their ministry.

**Note:** This response to the "oversight ministry" in the Church will bring the "peace of God into your life" and victory to your walk as a child of God.

1 Thessalonians 5:13

James 4:6-7

### **YOUR RESPONSE TO THE TRUTH**

Our Father God has established the "oversight ministry" because He loves us and because He desires to bless us, His children. Deuteronomy 28:1,2 says that if we:

**"...hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord...observe and to do all his commandments all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shall hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God."**

What then is to be your personal response to the "oversight ministry" of the church?

Are you in that place?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

If your answer is no, do you desire to be?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

If you desire this, know that your Father God will work it in you. If you are not sure if you desire it or not, God will work that desire in you if you will allow Him to do so. Philippians 2:13. Amen

[BOOK 4 - FOUNDATION SERIES](#)

[CONTENTS](#)

## **XXVII. WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS**

### **LESSON TWENTY-SEVEN**

#### **... ABOUT THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH**

##### **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this lesson is to clear up some of the confusion concerning the role of women in the local church by carefully looking at the Scriptures concerning the order of authority and sub-mission in the family and in the church, and the Scriptures which seem to say that women are to be silent, not to even speak, or teach in the church and a Scripture which has been interpreted to say there is total equality between men and women concerning authority in the local church.

##### **ORDER OF AUTHORITY AND SUBMISSION**

###### **1. IN THE FAMILY**

According to the following Scriptures passages what is the general and basic principle concerning the relationship of husbands and wives in the area of authority and submission?

Ephesians 5:22,23

Colossians 3:18

1 Timothy 2:12,13

###### **2. IN THE CHURCH**

The Bible establish for us God's Divine order of authority and submission in the family. This order holds true also in the local church which is the family of God. According to the following Scriptures what is that order?

Isaiah 9:6

Colossians 1:18

Ephesians 4:11

Ephesians 4:8

Acts 14:23

Acts 20:17,28

Titus 1:5

Titus 1:6

1 Timothy 3:2

Acts 6:2,3

1 Timothy 3:12

Hebrews 13:17

Read 1 Corinthians 11:3-15. According to verse 3 what is the order of authority and submission in the church?

Determine from verse 10 what women need?

According to verse 15, what is symbolic of the woman's covering?

Conclusions: We would note from the above Scriptures that God's order in the relationship of men and women concerning authority and submission both in the family and in the local church is women need the covering of their husbands in the home and the Elders in the Church. There-fore they are to be in submission to and under there respective coverings provided by God.

Does this mean that women are created inferior or lower than men? No, it does not! In the God-head, the Son is in no way inferior to the Father (John 5:18, Philippians 2:6), yet He is subject to Him. In marriage, a husband and wife are of equal importance (Galatians 3:28), but the wife's role is to be subject to the husband as Christ is to God.

Thus in God's order it is fitting for a wife to subordinate herself voluntarily to her husband. This subordinate role of women to the elders in the local church is also to be the rule for women to follow in the church.

This subordinate role of the woman in her relationship with her husband or her subordinate relationship in the church does not in any way make her inferior to her husband or the elders in the church.

### **WHERE DO WOMEN FIT IN THE ACTIVITIES OF THE CHURCH?**

The following Scriptures have led to a confusion and conflict as to what women are to do and not do in the church?

1 Timothy 2:11,12

Is the Scripture saying that women are not to speak in church and that they are not permitted to teach? NO! To understand what Paul is saying, we need to understand from the Greek, the words in the KJV which are translated SILENCE, SUFFER, and USURP.

Silence - The Greek word translated silence in this passage literally means to have an inward quietness, or peace.

Suffer - The Greek word translated suffer literally means to turn to, entrust to, leave to, give a license to (appoint, anoint or give formal permission).

Usurp Authority - The Greek word translated usurp literally means to exercise authority on one's own account - to act of oneself.

Applying these meanings to 1 Timothy 2:11-12, what is Paul actually saying?

1 Corinthians 14:34-35

Applying the above meanings to silence and permit (suffer) in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, what could Paul be saying in this passage in light of the above 1 Timothy 2:11-12?

Galatians 3:28

Is this saying, there is no distinction between men and women in the Church? Or in the physical realm? What is this Scripture saying?

#### Conclusions:

1. Women have no self authority in the local church, thus of their own accord they are not to exercise or hold positions of authority in the church. However, they can be given authority by the elders of the church and exercise that authority under the covering of the elders.
2. Since, the offices of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, teacher, elder, and deacon are positions of authority, women may not be placed in these positions. **Note:** For more detail and clarity concerning point 2, refer to the paper entitled "Can women be called to the Fivefold Ministry Offices?" (Page 92)
3. All the ministries of the local body, with the exception of those mentioned above, are open to women as well as to men - the gifts of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12:8-11.

### CONTENTS

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#### **APPENDIX 1**

##### **CAN WOMEN BE CALLED TO THE FIVEFOLD MINISTRY OFFICES?**

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness that the man of God (church of God) may be perfect (mature), thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (2 Tim. 3:16,17) But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God. (I Cor. 11:3) Do not be conformed to this world but be

transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (Rom. 12:2)

## **A. SURVEY OF CONTEMPORARY VIEWS**

### **1. The liberation of the laity**

In the 20th century there has been an unprecedented outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh in keeping with Joel 2:28-32 and Acts 2:14-21. This has occurred around the world in three successive movements: the classical Pentecostal visitation (1900), the charismatic renewal (1960) and the third wave among the evangelicals (1980). As a consequence, "sons and daughters" have been prophesying! I call this phenomenon "the liberation of the laity." It has come 400 years after Martin Luther rediscovered the "priesthood of all believers." (1 Pet. 2:9) Today, instead of the trained/ordained clergy doing all or most of the ministry, the Holy Spirit is releasing all believers into active, fruitful ministry in one form or another according to Ephesians 4:12 (the saints being equipped for works of service). For this we rejoice and praise God! David Barrett, recognized as the foremost authority on Christian demographics, states the pentecostal - charismatics are growing at a rate of 19 million per year, or at least 54,000 per day, totaling 21.4% of the world's Christians. This group also supplies over half of the laborers in all Christian missionary outreach.

Within many sectors of the Pentecostal/charismatic revival, women have begun to minister also in the fivefold ministry capacities, not necessarily because of a secular feminist motivation but rather in response to a **presumptuous calling and anointing from God**. Yet not all leaders agree as to whether all five offices are open to women. Some say women can pursue all five. Others say all except the offices of apostle and pastor, because these deal more directly with government which historically has been the sphere of men. Yet within most Pentecostal and charismatic groups, less than 10% of the ordained ministers are women.

The key theological question for Pentecostal/charismatics is this: did God, through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our generation, intend only to liberate the laity into meaningful ministry or did He also intend to liberate women to function in headship roles in the home and in the church? How does the New testament answer this question?

### **2. The rise of radical feminism**

Radical feminism came on the scene in America in the 1960s as one of the devil's means of undermining all authority structures in our society. The 1960s and 1970s saw the war protestors, the hippie drug culture with its anti-establishment agenda and the exploding sexual revolution with its commitment promiscuity, divorce and abortion. Desiring their own careers and equal opportunities in the marketplace, women were suddenly thrust into competition with men. Mother-hood and homemaking were no longer viewed as fulfilling, significant vocations. By attempting to destroy all vertical authority structures, Satan hoped to create chaos and anarchy in our land. After thirty years, it is obvious that he has scored a great victory. America's traditional Judeo-Christian family order has suffered a mortal wound, largely through the feminist movement.

Rev. Nicholas Ittzes has written, "If men had used their position to serve as Jesus did, the modern feminist movement might not have risen to great prominence. Indeed, men have used their authority to dominate and exploit women, and have thereby sown seeds of rebellion. Modern, radical feminism rejects not only male domination, but men altogether. It's a bitter harvest poisoning society, church and family. Feminists scoff at the Bible's distinctions between male and female roles. They believe that male leadership has caused most of the problems in the world. Their answer is simple: get rid of male leadership or perhaps get rid of males altogether. Unfortunately, the world's leadership problems do not come from maleness. They come from domination. Those who strive for position will use that position to dominate others. This evil is not contained in maleness or femaleness but in domination. Feminine domination is no improvement over male domination."

### **3. The deception of evangelical feminism**

Not surprisingly, feminism as a philosophy made its first inroads into the church world through liberal denominations and church men who, because of a low view of the Bible, dismissed Paul's teaching on the roles of men and women as human opinion or cultural tradition. What is surprising, however, is a growing trend within evangelical Christianity, which holds a high view of Scripture, to re-interpret the Bible in order to accommodate

the chief principles of secular feminism. This the Trojan horse in our midst which has the backing of many reputable scholars and theologians, both men and women. In short, evangelical feminism is the "sanitizing bridge" between secular feminism and the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Sadly, this more "Christianized" version of feminism does have a strong appeal to multitudes of true Christians, both lay and clergy, particularly among those who feel that women have been abused by men for centuries, even in the church.

In a nutshell, evangelical feminists maintain that the male headship/female submission tradition is a result of the Fall and is removed in the Redemption in Christ thus obliterating all authority distinctions between men and women in home, church and society. (Interchangeability). Therefore, the male headship order has supposedly been done away with in Christ and now women as well as men are free to pursue any office or ministry in the body of Christ.

Their "biblical key" to this new understanding is Galatians 3:28, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Their logical conclusion is that equal worth of man and woman in Christ demands equal function in home and church.

The real truth is that evangelical feminists, however well-intentioned, are guilty of faulty biblical interpretation because Paul in Galatians is talking about how we are saved, namely, through the finished work of Christ alone, by grace through faith and not by works. All human beings, whatever their sex, race or social status come to salvation the same way and thus are of equal value and standing before God. To adhere to the Reformation principle that Scripture interprets Scripture we must go to Paul's inspired words in Ephesians 5:22-23 to learn how God intends redeemed men and women to relate in marriage - male headship and female submission like Christ and the Church. If we want to learn from Paul how redeemed men and women functionally relate in the church, we need to study I Timothy 3 and Titus 1. In these texts the apostle says that elders are to be men who rule their own families well.

To take Galatians 3:28 or any other verse out of its context and give it a meaning contrary to the whole of Scripture is to both grieve the Holy Spirit and to approach God's Word in a manner not unlike the cults. That Christian scholars can fall prey to such a deception shows the power and craftiness of our ancient foe. The church in every generation is in danger of being "enculturated" by the spirit of the age. It is the solemn duty of Christian leaders to expose this evil conspiracy instead of legitimizing it!

At the close of the 20th century the church stands between two tidal waves. On one side is the wave of the Holy Spirit which is bringing the liberation of the laity. On the other side is the wave of evangelical feminism which is bringing the masculinization of women. Satan would like us to embrace both waves as if both were spiritually and biblically compatible. But such is not the case! Indeed, the Holy Spirit has come to liberate the people of God from being ministerial bench warmers but not at the expense of the godly order between men and women set in motion at Creation (I Tim. 2:12,13), tarnished by the Fall (Gen. 3:16), but restored in the Redemption in Jesus Christ (I Cor. 11:3, Eph. 5:22ff). With maleness and femaleness come divinely-given roles which are to be recognized, respected and demonstrated by the power of the Holy Spirit in the midst of a dark and perverse world. (Phil. 2:14-16)

## **A SURVEY OF SCRIPTURE**

Since every word of God is to be established in the mouth of two or three witnesses, let's take a look at the Old Testament, the New Testament and 2000 years of church history to see if God has altered His pattern of male headship in the home and the church.

### **1. The Old Testament**

The offices of prophet, priest and king were almost exclusively occupied by men. At no point in Israel's history did a woman serve as a priest in the temple. No woman ever served as a monarch in Israel or Judah except for the evil usurper named Athalia. (2 Chron. 22:12) Only four women are listed in the entire Old Testament as prophetesses, namely, Miriam (Ex. 15:20), Deborah (Judges 4:40), Hulda (2 Kings 22:14) and Isaiah's wife (Is. 8:3). Among the judges of Israel, only Deborah is mentioned and she sought to be under Barak's leadership. (Judges 4:4-10)

By God's own design, life in the Old Testament was a patriarchy (the rule of the fathers) - in marriage, family, church and society. In this respect Israel was not a reflection of the surrounding unredeemed culture, but rather an expression of divine order. Clearly, men were called to headship roles with rare exceptions.

## 2. The New Testament

Although Jesus elevated the status of women in a remarkable way, thus modeling the ennobling effects of grace under the New Covenant, the patriarchal order of the Old Testament continued on in the early church even after Pentecost and was written into the inspired epistles of the New Testament canon as a norm for the church of all times. There were no women apostles either among the Twelve or those mentioned after Pentecost. Junia(s), referred to in Rom. 16:7, could be either a man or a woman but is not clearly identified as an apostle in this text. Such an obscure reference cannot be used to establish a doctrine. If Jesus had wanted to make the point that male headship had been done away with under grace, He could have settled the issue once and for all by calling at least one woman to be among the Twelve. But He did not. This fact, by the way, is the major reason the Roman Catholic Church does not ordain women to be priests.

There were no women prophets, at least none who are specifically identified as such. Granted, Philip had four daughters who prophesied but they are not called "prophetesses" in the Greek. (Acts 21:9) The verb "propheteuo" is used, not the noun, "prophetis". This means that Philip's daughter's simply prophesied as any New Testament believer can do according to I Cor. 14:3 and Acts 2:17. On the other hand, Anna is specifically called a prophetess "prophetis" in Luke 2:36. However, she fits more into the Old Testament period because she served prior to Calvary and Pentecost.

There were no women evangelists. Only two men are identified as such. Philip in Acts 21:8 and Timothy in 2 Tim. 4:5, who was also an apostle. (I Thess. 1:1; 2:6) That women evangelized cannot be denied. But that in itself does not mean they necessarily stood in the office of an evangelist.

There were no women teachers who filled the office gift. The men who are mentioned as teachers are Paul (I Tim 2:7) and those who gathered to fast and pray in Antioch among whom were prophets and teachers. (Acts 13:1) Does this mean there were no women who taught in some capacity? Not at all. But the New Testament gives no clear example of a woman standing in the office of teacher. Granted, Priscilla taught Apollos in Acts 18:26 but this was in a private context and in conjunction with her husband, Aquila. Nowhere is Priscilla listed as an elder in the church.

There were no women pastors or elders. Wherever elders are referred to in the context of local church government, the masculine gender is used. Examples include: (1) Paul and Barnabas ordaining elders in every church (Acts 14:23);

(2) Paul meeting with the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:17), and (3) Paul giving qualifications for those who aspired to the office of pastor/elder (I Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1:1-9). In each of these passages the elder was to be the husband of one wife and have his family in godly order. I believe that if women were to have equal access to this office, Paul would have made it clear in these instructions because they contain the most definitive qualifications for church leadership in the entire New Testament.

Some scholars contend that women were pastors because the church frequently met in the homes of women. Examples would be Chloe (I Cor. 1:11), Priscilla (Rom. 16:3-5) and Nymphas (Col. 4:15). This is an argument from silence because it is very possible that these and other women simply hosted the meetings in their homes. Let us remember that doctrine must be established on clear texts and not on a subtle inference or by an argument from silence.

There were women deacons (deaconesses) who, like their male counterparts, served the elders and churches in a supportive role, not in a headship capacity. We see from Acts 6:3 that the apostles delegated authority to the seven deacons to carry out their service to the widows in the daily distribution of food. Paul similarly describes the ministries of the following women with whom he had some kind of relationship: (1) Phoebe who is called a deacon (Greek: "diakonos") in Rom. 16:1, (2) Priscilla and husband Aquila in Rom. 16:3, (3) Euodia and Syntyche in Phil. 4:23, and (4) Thyphena, Iryphosa and Persis in Rom. 16:12. Many interpreters believe that Paul in I Tim. 3:11 is referring to deaconesses (female deacons) and not to the wives of either elders or deacons. These examples would easily correspond to the faithful women who accompanied Jesus and the Twelve and ministered to them out of their resources. (Luke 8:1-3)

A fair conclusion to draw from the aforementioned biblical data is this: in the New Testament, women were free to function in any capacity except in eldership or government roles for this would violate God's appointed order in

marriage and family where men have the headship. Since the church is made up of families it would be a contradiction of godly order for women to reverse their roles in the church. Consequently, there are no examples of women functioning as elders or fivefold ministers. This should not surprise anyone inasmuch as Calvary and Pentecost did not change God's order that was put into effect in the Garden of Eden prior to the Fall. (I Tim. 2:12,13)

### **3. A survey of church history.**

In his monumental work, "Man and Woman in Christ," author Stephen Clark concludes from extensive research that women's ordination to the governmental offices of the church is a very recent phenomenon (within the last hundred years) and has occurred largely outside of the tradition of both the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches. The question must be honestly asked: is this because these ancient church bodies are devoid of the Holy Spirit and ignorant of the Bible or because they are preserving a time-honored biblical practice? Church history also bears ample witness to the significant contribution women have made in the capacity of deaconess.

Revival movements among Protestants have been more prone to ordain women because (1) they frequently lacked a solid, systematic understanding of the Bible, many of their leaders being untrained lay people and (2) they tended to exalt charismatic anointings and giftings as if that alone were sufficient to determine the leadership issue.

### **GUIDELINES FOR ESTABLISHING A BIBLICAL PRACTICE**

#### **1. Does God call women to fivefold ministry offices?**

From the witness of both Old and New Testaments and church history it is clear that normally He does not for these offices lie outside the divinely-appointed sphere for women. Why is this? These offices are extensions and expressions of Jesus' own shepherding ministry as the Chief Shepherd of the church. As such they are inherently governmental in nature for through them Jesus leads, feed, equips, protects and disciplines His church. The overall function of these offices, singly and together, is to communicate the Word of God so that the whole body of Christ is built up in every way to manifest Jesus in all His perfection and power. (Eph. 4:11-16) In short, the fivefold offices are the same in nature and function, like so many fingers on a hand. In my view, it is therefore inappropriate, to say women can be called to some offices and not others.

Are there exceptions to the male headship rule? Does the Lord reserve the sovereign prerogative to call and anoint a woman to one of the fivefold ministry offices? Yes, of course God can and does make exceptions for His own good purposes, especially in times of transition or when men are unavailable or unwilling to lead. The same thing often happens in marriages when men desert their families or abdicate their roles. In such circumstances women are often called to lead. So also in the church. But this is not the norm. And an exception must not be allowed to minimize the value of the norm or cancel out the norm itself.

#### **2. How then do you identify and release women who have strong teaching, evangelistic and prophetic gifts?**

Two very important biblical principles must be kept in mind as we seek God's answer. First of all, the giftings to teach, evangelize and prophecy should first be seen as evidences of motivational gifts as Paul lists them in Romans 12:6-8. Men or women who have been blessed with such gifts are not automatically or necessarily called to be elders or fivefold ministers. Secondly, women with such gifts need to be released under the spiritual authority of their husbands and/or the eldership of the local church. This is the whole point of Paul's discourse in I Cor. 11:1-10. Women who prophecy, pray, counsel or teach need to do so in submission to authority.

What do you call women who are released in this kind of biblical order? Call them what the Holy Spirit called Phoebe - a deacon or deaconess, one who serves the body and its leadership. By so doing we preserve godly order. We do not fuel the feminist deception. Yet at the same time we allow women to function according to their gifts.

### **SUMMARY STATEMENT**

Historically women have made a tremendous contribution in helping release fivefold ministry gifts by serving as godly mothers and intercessors. It is not only true that the hand that rocks the cradle rocks the world. It also rocks the church. Think of the example of Hannah, the mother of Samuel, of Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, of Mary, the mother of Jesus, of Lois and Eunice, the grandmother and mother of Timothy and Suzanna Wesley, the mother of John and Charles Wesley, who raised nineteen children and spent an hour a week with each one

individually imparting spiritual life and wisdom. I believe God is calling women back to their highest and most noble calling, that of being dedicated wives, mothers and intercessors. Only in this way will strong men come forth in the last days as part of the Elijah company who will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers.: (Mal. 4:5,6)