

“Churches of Christ Where Women Speak in the Assembly”

“Another 10 Churches of Christ Where Women Speak in the Assembly” is an article that stirs the spirit because it addresses the advancement of the society’s attempt (which has proven to be effective), to acquiesce to the changing of God’s word in an effort to be more “inclusive.” https://authentictheology.com/2019/04/24/another-10-churches-of-christ-where-women-speak-in-the-assembly-their-reasons-a-quiz/?fbclid=IwAR3YCn9D-8d9bb2WXOhARnj5pYGFxLg2ezav-p_3cyKbdN9oYFieHNrUbl

Phraseology is always important and as the maxim goes “in a debate, the framer of the argument usually wins” (or something along that line). So, in such a light, phrases like “Departing from this tradition, however, a growing number of Church of Christ congregations, after closely studying scripture, no longer do so. Most of the colleges affiliated with the Churches of Christ relatively recently lifted their prohibition on women speaking in their chapel worship services, too.” So, these “growing number of Church of Christ congregations” and these “colleges” “after closely studying scripture” have determined to “no longer do so.” What were these “growing number of...congregations” and “colleges” doing for the past hundred years? Were they not “closely studying scripture”? Were they only awaiting a liberal generation to implement their actions because they were fearful of being labeled heretics?

One area of the “argument” reduces scriptural doctrine to a matter of “this tradition.” Such terminology lessens the impact of the action.

I’m not the standard in this area, nor am I an authorized critic into the workings of the leadership of some “Church of Christ” congregation(s). However, over the last forty-years I have worked with, and seen leadership that either did, or thought about buying into, an all-inclusive-women speaking in the assembly (especially in the last twenty). How did it begin? By having “women’s gospel meetings” under the guise of the responsibility “aged women...may train the young women to love their husbands, to love their children” (Titus 2:5), and since they have the charge to do so the “church” is now saddled with the responsibility to make that happen. Therefore, skillful women were then brought in from other “churches” to hold a symposium to train these younger women. However, it wasn’t entirely the training of younger women as the women participating were older women. In this regard the text appealed to also says, “*to be sober-minded, chaste, workers at home, kind, being in subjection to their own husbands, that the word be not blasphemed.*” It is interesting that Gill says, concerning Ephesians 5:24 (on subjection) that the admonition was “political, domestic, and ecclesiastic; that is consistent with the laws of God, and the Gospel of Christ.” Sin is not static: the apostle Paul spoke, saying “evil men and impostors shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived” (2 Timothy 3:13).

The condition of the society speaks louder than the arguments given to justify the change in doctrine.

“... 1 Timothy 2:9-15 was directed to a specific group, with a specific set of problems, in a particular place in the early church. Their problem was in particular misinformed domineering teachers, who were overstepping traditional roles that were likely to bring the church into disrepute in the community. In an honor/shame society the actions and attitudes of these women would have been perceived as immoral and dangerous. Had Paul wanted to make it clear that women were not to exercise “authority” over men there was a perfectly good word that Paul in fact uses at 1 Corinthians 7:4 (ἐξουσιάζω – exousiadzo), a word that is not rare and subject to being misunderstood. ...

Women who have been properly instructed can speak and teach the same as a man who has been properly instructed, both should do so in a manner that is appropriate and brings honor to the name of Jesus.”

It’s interesting that this “specific group, with a specific set of problems, in a particular place,” women who were “particular misinformed domineering teachers, who were overstepping traditional roles that were likely to bring the church into disrepute in the community.” was, as the apostle Paul said, “in all the churches of the saints” (1 Cor. 14:33). Seems to me that if they’re already in “all the churches of the saints,” it would be simpler to just let them alone and this “debate” would have never come up.

Hello?

How about we do it this way: “Had the Holy Spirit wanted to make it clear, etc...there’s “a word that is not rare and subject to being misunderstood.” So, according to the argument, it has nothing to do with authority, but ignorance. I guess that’s what the Holy Spirit meant to say rather than “For Adam was first formed, then Eve; and Adam was not beguiled, but the woman being beguiled hath fallen into transgression: but she shall be saved through her child-bearing, if they continue in faith and love and sanctification with sobriety” (1 Timothy 2:13-15).

There is a phrase used by the apostle Peter, when he said, “Ye husbands, in like manner, dwell with your wives according to knowledge, giving honor unto the woman, as unto the weaker vessel, as being also joint-heirs of the grace of life; to the end that your prayers be not hindered” (1 Peter 3:7), the context of which is authority. Weaker mentally? Not as a rule. Weaker physically? Not always. Weaker in authority? Always: “In like manner, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, even if any obey not the word, they may without the

word be gained by the behavior of their wives; beholding your chaste behavior coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be the outward adorning of braiding the hair, and of wearing jewels of gold, or of putting on apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in the incorruptible apparel of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner aforetime the holy women also, who hoped in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands: as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose children ye now are, if ye do well, and are not put in fear by any terror.”

Another attempt: “[W]hen we work our way through the New Testament we also discover examples of women who are praying ..., prophesying ..., teaching ..., co-working, serving, and leading congregations Since we believe that we must hear all of what Scripture has to say on a matter, our commitment is to hold the breadth of these wide claims together and seek for a “common sense” understanding.

“After much study and prayer, we have concluded that Paul made his restrictive statements to specific and limited circumstances.”

“After much study and prayer...” There’s always “much study and prayer.” When the remnant left in Judah was fearful that Nebuchadnezzar would revenge the death of his appointed governor, the people asked Jeremiah, “Let, we pray thee, our supplication be presented before thee, and pray for us unto Jehovah thy God, even for all this remnant; for we are left but a few of many, as thine eyes do behold us: that Jehovah thy God may show us the way wherein we should walk, and the thing that we should do” (Jer. 42:2-3), “Then they said to Jeremiah, Jehovah be a true and faithful witness amongst us, if we do not according to all the word wherewith Jehovah thy God shall send thee to us. Whether it be good, or whether it be evil, we will obey the voice of Jehovah our God, to whom we send thee; that it may be well with us, when we obey the voice of Jehovah our God” (ibid., vs. 5-6).

This was great! Jeremiah, “pray for us,” “whether it be good, or whether it be evil, we will obey the voice of Jehovah.” Wait for it...When Jeremiah returned, and said, “Jehovah hath spoken concerning you, O remnant of Judah, Go ye not into Egypt: know certainly that I have testified unto you this day” (ibid., vs. 19). When the remnant heard this message, they said, “Thou speakest falsely: Jehovah our God hath not sent thee to say, Ye shall not go into Egypt to sojourn there” (Jer. 43:2). Don’t get me wrong, I believe in prayer, and Christians should “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17), but those prayers are to be measured, as John says, “And this is the boldness which we have toward him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us” (1 Jn. 5:14). An individual (or group as the case may be) can pray until they are blue in the face, but if requests are contrary to what the Lord has already revealed...they are on their own, i.e., “For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according

to knowledge. For being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God" (Romans 10:2-3). Then again, God may indeed answer their prayers, i.e., "Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Every man of the house of Israel that taketh his idols into his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I Jehovah will answer him therein according to the multitude of his idols" (Ezek. 14:4).

Least I weary myself (too late), there are a couple of more excuses:

"The word translated "silent" is used 3 times 14:28, 14:30, 14:34, and means to "become still" or "stop talking". The idea is not a prohibition against ever talking, but rather knowing when to "stop talking"." When reading this one to my wife, she said, "When do women ever know when to 'stop talking'"?

"[W]hen we work our way through the New Testament we also discover examples of women who are praying ..., prophesying ..., teaching ..., co-working, serving, and leading congregations" I have missed this one entirely! And would be amenable to a consideration of the text, that affirm "examples of women...leading congregations."

One reference stated, "... 1 Cor 14:34 ... "For it's disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church" It's interesting that after referring to some twenty Bible Translations, not one uses the term "disgraceful:" "not permitted," "not allowed," "not been permitted," "not right," "must not be allowed," "don't have the right," ... but NO "disgraceful." Wonder why that is? Since the statement was in quotations it would be interesting to know from which "translation" the term originated.

These groups do not agree with one another on the extent of "Affirmation of Women's Inclusion." One group says, "... [T]he New Testament implies that the distinct leadership role of elder is reserved for men" (Sugar Grove, Stafford, TX), while another says, "Dayspring Church has always been gender-inclusive throughout its 34-year existence. We have had female deacons and full participation in public worship for over 20 years. For the last 4 years, we have also had female shepherds (elders)...." Concluding with an affirmation, such as, "[W]e studied the issue extensively." Other references assure the reader that "elders" gave the issue a thorough investigation. To which the apostle Paul warns, saying, "I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them" (Acts 20:29-30).

When engaged in my first work, an elderly gentleman made a comment regarding the possibility of another serving as an elder. He said, "He would make a great elder if it wasn't for the fact that his wife would be making the decisions."

Taking a position contrary to the scriptures due to the pressures of the society is a sure sign of weak leadership.

These arguments are reminiscent of the arguments used by the LBGTQ community to justify their existence biblically, i.e., the "The sin of the city of Sodom was originally considered to be the violation of the rights of Lot's guests" i.e., "the original concept of a violation of the law of hospitality" (Heb. 13:2)," Thus, "The sexual overtones to the story are minor, if present, and that the original moral impact of the passage had to do with hospitality. Briefly put, . . . Lot was violating the custom of Sodom (where he was himself not a citizen but only a 'sojourner') by entertaining unknown guests within the city walls at night without obtaining the permission of the elders of the city" (Boswell). It's interesting that Boswell takes such a position since the destruction of Sodom was determined prior to the angel's arrival. Genesis 18:17 - "And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way. And Jehovah said, Shall I hide from Abraham that which I do; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? 20 And Jehovah said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous. 22-23 And the men turned from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before Jehovah. And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou consume the righteous with the wicked?" Or, [Sodom] 'was destroyed because the men of Sodom had tried to rape the angels." Matthew Vines puts forth a similar argument: "For centuries, this story was interpreted as God's judgment on same-sex relations, but the only form of same-sex behavior described is a threatened gang rape" (Ibid.). Both of these explanations run afoul with Jude's affirmation "Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, having in like manner with these given themselves over to fornication and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the punishment of eternal fire" (Vs. 7).

I'm not a prophet, nor the son of a prophet, but time will tell that these "churches of Christ" will one day adopt the LBGTQ movement as being biblically legitimate. OH, NO! they say, but, so also did the United Methodist which is in the midst of a division on the issue, as well as the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Presbyterian, and even now the Southern Baptist Convention: "SBC elects new leader who is 'accommodating' to homosexuality. At the annual meeting, the SBC overwhelmingly elected J.D. Greear, a moderate pastor who caters to millennials, to be the new president of the denomination. As Bryan Fischer of American Family Radio points out, Greear often goes out of his way to be accommodating to homosexuality in

his messages. Greear has told his congregation to “love our gay neighbor more than we love our position on sexual morality.”

These “churches of Christ” need to remember whose name it is they wear.

The camel’s head is under the tent and the body is following. ret