

Should women teach or ask questions in Church?

It would be of interest to note what the following verses speaks to the church of God.

**1Tim. 2:11** Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. **12** But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

**1Cor. 14:26** ¶ How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, **every one of you hath** a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. **27** If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. **28** But if there be no interpreter, **let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.** **29** Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. **30** If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. **31** For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. **32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.** **33** For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. **34 ¶ Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak;** but they are commanded to be **under obedience, as also saith the law.** **35** And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

Let it be fist established that there is no command in the whole Bible for women to keep silence, the command found in the bible is the command on obedience or subjection as it is in Genesis 3:16. Hence, we are not here faced with a command to keep silent but the command of subjection and an instruction to keep silence. For those who argue about keeping silence based on a command miss the point. Rather we have to see the larger picture of women doing everything whether secular or religious in obedience or subjection of authority. Paul says:

**1 Corinthians 11:3** 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.

The same Paul argues thus:

**1Timothy 2:13** For Adam was first formed, then Eve.

Another woman advising fellow woman - Caution to Mary Loughborough

Those we love may speak or act unguardedly, which may wound us deeply. It was not their intention to do this, but Satan magnifies their words and acts before the mind in a manner by which he hurls a dart from his quiver to pierce us. We brace ourselves to resist the one whom we think has injured us, and thus we encourage Satan's temptations. Instead of praying to God for strength to resist Satan, we suffer our happiness to be marred by trying to stand for what we term "our rights." In thus doing, we allow Satan a double advantage. We act out our aggrieved feelings, and by taking this course Satan uses us as his agents to wound and distress those who did not intend to injure us. **The requirements of the husband may sometimes seem unreasonable to the wife, when if she should take the second view of the matter, in as favorable a light for him as possible, if she would calmly, candidly consider, she would see that to yield her own way, and submit to the judgment of her husband, even if it conflicted with her feelings, would save them**

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*both from unhappiness, and would give them great victory over the temptations of Satan.* {RH, April 22, 1862 par. 11}

*And, Mary, suffer me a little upon this point: I wish in all sisterly and motherly kindness to kindly warn you upon another point. I have often noticed before others a manner you have in speaking to John in rather a dictating manner, the tone of your voice sounding impatient. Mary, others notice this and have spoken of it to me. It hurts your influence.*

*We women must remember that God has placed us subject to the husband. He is the head, and our judgment and views and reasonings must agree with his if possible. If not, the preference in God's Word is given to the husband where it is not a matter of conscience. We must yield to the head.* I have said more, perhaps, upon this point than necessary. Please watch this point.

*I am not reproving you, remember, but merely cautioning you. Never talk to John as though he were a little boy. You reverence him and others will take an elevated position.* Mary, and you will elevate others. 1LMS, Lt 5, 1861.

It is clear then that a woman is not only subject to her husband in secular matters but religious matters too unless it conflicts with her conscience which means it is something that will lead her to sin. So then, after establishing that a woman has to be under a man, let us go back to our subject matter. Is Paul prohibiting women altogether to remain silent forever or there are underlying issue involved in this?

Evidence of women gospel workers working with Paul - Citing some of these verses

Notice all of the women in Romans 16 who were fellow-workers with Paul in the gospel (cf. Phil. 4:3):

- Phoebe (deaconess) in Rom. 16:1
- Prisca in Rom. 16:3
- Mary in Rom. 16:6; Junia (or Junias—if so it was a man) in Rom. 16:7
- Tryphaena and Tryphosa in Rom. 16:12
- Persis in Rom. 16:12
- "his mother" in Rom. 16:13
- Julia in Rom. 16:15
- and "his sister" in Rom. 16:15

We should be careful of dogmatism in the area of women in ministry. All believers are gifted (cf. 1 Cor. 12:7, 11); all believers are full-time ministers (cf. Eph. 4:12 Joel 2:28; Acts 2:16-21).

Acts 2:16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; 17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, *I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh:* and your sons and your *daughters shall prophesy,* and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: 18 And on my servants and on *my handmaidens* I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and *they shall prophesy:*

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It would be of great affront to scriptures in the glaring evidence God would pour his spirit upon women to say they can't communicate what God has revealed to them to men whether in public or private gatherings.

Philippians 4:3 KJV

[3] And I intreat thee also, **true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers,** whose names are in the book of life.

Romans 16:1-6,12-13,15 KJV

[1] I commend unto you **Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:** [2] That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also. [3] Greet **Priscilla** and Aquila **my helpers in Christ Jesus:** [4] Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. [5] Likewise greet the **church that is in their house.** Salute my wellbeloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ. [6] Greet **Mary,** who bestowed much labour on us. [12] Salute Tryphena and **Tryphosa,** who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord. [13] Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and **his mother and mine.** [15] Salute Philologus, and **Julia,** Nereus, and **his sister,** and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them.

1 Corinthians 11:4-5 KJV

[4] Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. [5] But every **woman that prayeth or prophesieth** with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.

In the Old Testament, prophetesses are not unfrequently mentioned. Thus Miriam is mentioned, (Exod. 15:20;) Deborah, (Judg. 4:4;) Huldah, (2 Kings 22:14;) Nosdish, (Neh. 6:14.) So also in the New Testament, Anna is mentioned as a prophetess, Luke 2:36. That there were females in the early Christian church who corresponded to those known among the Jews in some measure as endowed with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, cannot be doubted. What was their precise office, and what was the nature of the public services in which they were engaged, is not however known. That they prayed is clear; and that they publicly expounded the will of God is apparent also.

What was the main problem?

**1Cor. 4:15** For though ye have **ten thousand instructors in Christ,** yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus **I have begotten you through the gospel.** **16** Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me. **17 ¶ For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.** **18** Now **some are puffed up,** as though I would not come to you. **19** But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, **not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power.** **20** For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. **21** What will ye? **shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?**

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If we work on deduction from the above, it is apparent that some teachers had come into the Corinth church and started their own teachings as it were in Galatian church which what is called the Galatian heresy hence Paul had to warn not only the Corinth church but all the churches to be aware of these unwarranted liberties that the false teachers had brought in church on equality of men and women because of the gifts bestowed upon all genders. The church of Corinth being one of the earliest churches enjoyed the ministration of the gifts of the Holy Spirit that any other but then it fell into apostasy and lukewarmness {1 Corinthians 5}. Paul had foreseen this and warned:

Acts 20:25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. 26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I [am] pure from the blood of all [men]. 27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. 28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. 29 **For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.** 30 **Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.**

For this wise, he Send and left Timothy and Titus to put things that were wanting in order

**I Cor 4: 17 ¶ For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.**

**1 Timothy 3:14 These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: 15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.**

**Titus 1:5 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:**

In a short while, we shall see that Paul is referring to a problem group of women who are disrupting the worship service either by tongues, prophecy, or questions. Their exuberance in their new freedom in Christ was causing cultural difficulties in evangelism and worship. This localized problem made Paul to give a warning to all churches.

**1 Cor 14:32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. 33 For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. 34 ¶ Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. 35 And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.**

Another birds' view from a different angle would make you conclude that Paul is limiting women, not in public prophesying, but in evaluating other prophets' (i.e., male prophets) messages, thereby implying an authority over them (James Hurley, *Men and Women in Biblical Perspective*, pp. 185-194 and Wayne Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians*, pp. 239-255). The immediate context is in

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terms of prophets and women would have to question these prophecies or new revelations. But they were told that this was not the right platform, let them ask their husbands at home if they understood the new prophecy or revelation. This seems probable in the immediate context of Paul's injunction. The battlefield for new revelations and doctrinal matters is not for women even though they have to study and show themselves approved rightly diving the word of truth. This can readily be shown in the meeting in Antioch those who were allowed to attend:

Acts 15:1 And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, [and said], Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. 2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas **had no small dissension and disputation with them**, they determined that **Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them**, should go up to Jerusalem unto **the apostles and elders** about this question. 4 And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and [of] the **apostles and elders**, and they declared all things that God had done with them. 6 And the **apostles and elders** came together for to **consider of this matter**.

Also

"What is the sphere of woman? Home, the social circle. What is her mission? To mold character, to fashion herself and others after the model character of Christ. What are her chief instruments for the accomplishment of her great work?

The affections. Love is the wand by which she is to work moral transformations within her fairy circle. Gentleness, sweetness, loveliness and purity are the elements of her power. **Her place is not on life's great battle fields. Man belongs there. It is for him to go forth armed for its conflicts and struggles, to do fierce battle with the hosts of evil that throng our earth and trample upon its blessings. But woman must abide in the peaceful sanctuaries of home, and walk in the noiseless vales of private life.** There she must dwell, beside the secret springs of public virtue. There she must smile upon the father, the brother, the husband, when, returning like warriors from the fight, exhausted and covered with the dust of strife, they need to be refreshed by sweet waters drawn 'from affection's spring,' and cheered to renewed struggles by the music of her voice. There she must rear the Christian patriot and statesman, the self-denying philanthropist and the obedient citizen. There, in a word, she must form the character of the world, and determine the destiny of her race.

How awful is her mission! What dread responsibility attaches to her work! Surely, she is not degraded by filling such a sphere. Nor would she be elevated, if, forsaking it, she should go forth into the highways of society and jostle with her brothers for the offices and honors of public life. Fame she might occasionally gain, but it would be at the price of her womanly influence.

"Fancy yourself far out at sea, in a noble ship, contending with a furious storm. 'beneath is one wild whirl of foaming surges; above, the array of lightnings, like the swords of cherubim, wide brandished, to repel aggression from heaven's gates.'

Behold, amidst this scene of grandeur, the stormy petrel gliding up the face of a huge wave, darting above the foam of a breaker, or sweeping along the watery valleys as composedly and as naturally as it ever swept over the same sea in an hour of calm. Behold, too, another bird,

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whirling and darting above the spray with a cry of seeming despair; now flying before a monster sea, and anon struggling to keep its wet and weary wings from folding into helpless inaction.

"Tell me, lady, why this little trembler is in so pitiful a plight, while the stormy petrel gambols freely among the waves. You cannot answer. Then listen. **The petrel is in its appropriate sphere.** The little trembler is a land-bird, tempted, at first, by sunny weather, to wander among the islands, and driven, at last, by a strong wind to sea. He is out of his sphere; and hence his quiet has fled, his song is silenced and his life endangered. God made him for the land. The grove is his home, and his sphere is among the flowers.

"It is thus with the entire creation. **Everything has its appointed sphere, within which alone it can flourish. Men and women have theirs. They are not exceptions to this truth, but examples of it.** To be happy and prosperous, they must abide in them. **Man is fitted for the storms of public life, and, like the petrel, can be happy amid their rudest surges.**

**Woman is formed for the calm of home.** She may venture, like the land bird, to invade the sphere of man, but she will encounter storms which **she is utterly unfitted to meet;** happiness will forsake her breast, her own sex will despise her, men will be unable to love her, and when she dies she will fill an unhonored grave. . HR July 1, 1873, par. 17-HR July 1, 1873, par. 21

The above though does not negate women being thoroughly furnished to be able to defend what they believe for no one will stand for the other when it comes to judgment and believing error. Peter says to men and women:

1 Peter 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and [be] **ready always to [give] an answer to every man** that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: 16 **Having a good conscience;** that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, **they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.**

Yet Paul had to deal with some women who were unruly or too outspoken in public meetings. It must be remembered that Paul was dealing with

- a) Local (i.e., uniquely Corinth), problem that was threatening to spread to all churches
- b) First century Roman culture,
- c) Abuse of giftedness,
- d) An attempt to dominate by women,
- e) An attempt to impose a Jewish structure,
- f) A false view of a factious group at Corinth?

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The History behind the Texts

B.W. Johnson

*Let the women keep silence in the churches.* This, in view of other portions of the Scriptures, is confessedly a difficult passage. In 1 Tim. 2:11, 12, We have the same teaching. On the other hand, Deborah was a judge and a prophetess; Huldah was a prophetess; Joel predicted that in the Christian dispensation "the sons and daughters should prophesy" (Joel 2:28), and Peter declared that this was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:4). In addition, the daughters of Philip prophesied (Acts 21:9), and in 1 Cor. 11:5, Paul gives directions concerning women prophesying.

Probably these apparent discrepancies may be reconciled as follows: (1) Paul's prohibition of speaking to the women is, in the churches; that is, in the church assemblies when "the whole church is come together into one place" (verse 23). It is an official meeting of the church. "Church" in the New Testament always means the ecclesia. It does not apply to such informal meetings as the social or prayer-meetings, but to formal gatherings of the whole body. (2) *It may be that even this prohibition was due to the circumstances that existed in Ephesus, where Timothy was, and in Corinth, and would not apply everywhere.* If so, *it applies wherever similar circumstances exist, but not elsewhere.* Both were Greek churches. *Among the Greeks public women were disreputable.* For a woman to speak in public *would cause the remark that she was shameless.* Virtuous women *were secluded.* Hence it would be *a shame for women to speak in the church assembly.* It is noteworthy that *there is no hint of such a prohibition to any churches except Grecian.* Wherever it would be shameful, *women ought not to speak.*

Bruce Winter

Verses 33-36 deals with an aspect of the role of *wives in the church.* Some commentators get round the problem by stating that this section is a later addition and not by Paul. But *every manuscript includes this passage.* Three points need to be noted in seeking to understand the passage, (i) *Wives prayed and prophesied in Christian gatherings* (see 11:5). *This was a common practice in all the apostolic churches* (33b). The context is crucial viz. *the evaluation of prophecy* (v 35). (ii) *The law requires the acknowledgement of the distinctive roles of men and women* (34), a reference to Gn. 2:20-24 or 3:16. Paul has already cited the former in 11:8-9. (iii) *The wife is to seek the elucidation of points at home, which could well mean that it is her husband who has given the prophecy* (35). While there is no absolute certainty, *the present writer takes the view that wives, in this public gathering, are not to engage in the public weighing of prophecy which involved the interrogation of its content.*

Adam Clarke

*Verse 34.* Let your women keep silence in the churches. *This was a Jewish ordinance; women were not permitted to teach in the assemblies, or even to ask questions.* The rabbins taught *that a woman should know nothing but the use of her distaff.*" And the sayings of Rabbi Eliezer, as delivered, Bammidbar Rabba, sec. 9, fol. 204, are both worthy of remark and of execration; they are these: *ישרפו דבר תורה ואל ימסרו לנשים* lenashim, "Let

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*the words of the law be burned, rather than that they should be delivered to women.*" This was their condition till the time of the Gospel, when, according to the prediction of Joel, the Spirit of God was to be poured out on the women as well as the men, that they might prophesy, i.e. teach. *And that they did prophesy or teach is evident from what the apostle says, chap. xi. 5, where he lays down rules to regulate this part of their conduct while ministering in the church.*

But does not what the apostle says here contradict that statement, and show that the words in chap. 11 should be understood in another sense? For, here it is expressly said that they should keep silence in the church; for it was not permitted to a woman to speak. *Both places seem perfectly consistent.* It is evident from the context that the apostle *refers here to asking questions, and what we call dictating in the assemblies. It was permitted to any man to ask questions, to object, altercation, attempt to refute, &c., in the synagogue; but this liberty was not allowed to any woman.* St. Paul confirms this in reference also to the Christian Church; he orders them to keep silence; and, if they wished to learn any thing, *let them inquire of their husbands at home; because it was perfectly indecorous for women to be contending with men in public assemblies, on points of doctrine, cases of conscience, &c.* But this by no means intimated that *when a woman received any particular influence from God to enable her to teach, that she was not to obey that influence; on the contrary, she was to obey it, and the apostle lays down directions in this chapter for regulating her personal appearance when thus employed.* All that the apostle opposes here is their *questioning, finding fault, disputing, &c., in the Christian Church, as the Jewish men were permitted to do in their synagogues; together with the attempts to usurp any authority over the man, by setting up their judgment in opposition to them; for the apostle has in view, especially, acts of disobedience, arrogance, &c., of which no woman would be guilty who was under the influence of the Spirit of God.*

But they ought to be under obedience, as also saith the law. This is a reference to Gen. iii. 16: *Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.* From this it is evident that it was *the disorderly and disobedient that the apostle had in view; and not any of those on whom God had poured out his Spirit.*

**Verse 35.** For it is a shame for women to speak in the church. *The Jews would not suffer a woman to read in the synagogue; though a servant or even a child, had this permission; but the apostle refers to irregular conduct, such conduct as proved that they were not under obedience,* ver. 34.

A woman should *attempt nothing, either in public or private, that belongs to man as his peculiar function. This was prohibited by the Roman laws:*

*In multis juris nostri articulis deterior est conditio foeminarum quam masculorum;; l. 9, PAP. LIB. 31, QUAEST. Foeminoe ab omnibus officiis civilibus vel publicis remotae sunt; et ideo nec judicis esse possunt, nec magistratum gerere, nec postulare, nec pro alio invenire, nec procuratores existere; l. 2, de Reg. Juris. ULP. LIB. i.*

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AD SAB. — Vid. POTH. Pand. Justin., vol. i. p. 13.

"In our laws the condition of women is, in many respects, worse than that of men. Women are precluded from all public offices; therefore they cannot be judges, nor execute the function of magistrates; they cannot sue, plead, nor act in any case, as proxies. They were under many other disabilities, which may be seen in different places of the Pandects."

It was lawful for men in public assemblies to ask questions, or even interrupt the speaker when there was any matter in his speech which they did not understand; but this liberty was not granted to women.

Dr. Bob Utley,

1 Timothy 2:11, 12

This could refer to all Christian women or wives (cf. Charles B. Williams translation, "a married woman" in 1 Tim. 2:11 and). The context must clarify the author's intended meaning.

At first this seems very negative, but (1) women could not study the Law in Judaism or attend school in the Greco-Roman world. So, in a sense this is a positive step towards women being trained in God's word, (2) this text must be seen in light of the false teachers who were targeting women (cf. 1 Tim. 5:13; Acts 20:30; 2 Tim. 3:5-9; Titus 1:11). It is possible that some women were surrogate speakers for the false teachers in public worship in the house churches (Gordon Fee, New International Biblical Commentary, vol. 13).

Arrogant, exploitative dominance is evil whether from men or women. There are two extremes to avoid: (1) women can do nothing (Ancient Near Eastern culture) and (2) women can do anything (modern western individualism).

14:34 "The women are to keep silent in the churches" This verse has become a major theological issue in certain segments of the modern church. The modern western social, cultural trend toward individual rights and equality has made the NT, and especially Paul, seem judgmental and negative on this issue. In Paul's day his theology relating to women was radically positive (cf. Eph. 5:22-23). Paul obviously worked with many women, as his list of co-workers in Romans 16 shows.

Even in this context, Paul states the balance, 1 Cor. 11:5 versus 14:34. Somehow 1 Cor. 14:34-35 relate uniquely to Corinth and the first century. Paul limits several groups in the Corinthian worship setting, "keep silent," 1 Cor. 14:28,30,34. There was a problem in gathered worship at Corinth. Christian women were a part of that problem. Their new freedom in Christ (or their being part of a Roman societal woman's freedom movement) was causing cultural, theological, and evangelistic problems.

"just as the Law also says" Is Paul referring to a specific text or a general principle? There is no OT text that says this. It is possible that in light of 1 Cor. 11:8-9 that Gen. 2:20-24 is the referent (cf. 1 Tim. 2:13). Some think that the result of the fall and that Gen. 3:16 is the referent. It is also

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contextually possible that the "subjection" is related to the use of the word in 1 Cor. 14:32, where it would refer to submission to other prophets (cf. Hard Sayings of the Bible, p. 616).

There is a fluidity in Paul's writings in using this term "law." Most often it refers to Mosaic Law, the old covenant, but sometimes it refers to the concept of law in general. If that is true here then it refers to the general tenets of this patriarchal, "men first," culture. If women were allowed to be in charge, even in appearance, it would have hurt the cause of Christ in the first century Greco-Roman world.

**14:35** This verse shows that the term "woman" in 1 Cor. 14:34 refers to "wives." Does this imply a single woman can speak? This same ambiguity is in chapter 11:5. This verse is related to 1 Tim. 2:11-12 and Titus 2:5. The question to ask ourselves is, is it theological or cultural in 1 Tim. 2:13-14? Is it locked into a unique historical setting or is it a universal truth for all cultures, all ages?

Christian wives were asking questions in gathered worship at Corinth. The church meetings were already being interrupted by singers, tongue speakers, tongue interpreters, and prophets. Now curious wives or wives flaunting their freedom were also becoming actively involved in the chaos! Paul says that God is not a God of confusion and everything has to be done with order, let one sing, one interpret, one prophesy etc but it seems there was chaos and women wanted to be heard more. These women are told who to ask and when to ask and why! Their actions were affecting the effectiveness of gathered worship.

Chapter 14 does not come before chapter 11. Chapter 11 gives the propriety if the women would prophesy in church while chapter 14 addresses the problem of women who were exercising their gifts given in chapter 12 to usurp the authority of men and think they were of equality in with men just because they had received the gifts of the Holy Spirit. If they had to speak then there was some decency that was to be considered:

**1 Corinthians 11:5** "But every woman who has her head uncovered while praying or prophesying" This implies strongly that with her head covered she may pray and prophesy in public meetings. The term "prophesying" in this book means "sharing the gospel" or "preaching publicly" (cf. 1 Cor. 14:39). Verses 4 and 5 are parallel relating to what men and women do while participating in group worship.

Corinth was a Roman colony and reflected Roman culture. Roman women were marriageable in their early teens. The veil was a cultural aspect of the marriage service. It was expected to be worn outside the home by Roman women. Its absence and shaving would be seen as

- a) a shamed woman
- b) a prostitute
- c) a dominant lesbian partner
- d) a "new" woman (i.e., a social movement of equality and freedom active among Roman society in the first century)
- e) it refers to the common attire of local prostitutes
- f) it is a cultural act of an adulterous woman's public shaming

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- g) it showed that shamed women were characteristic in the Mediterranean world for followers of the "Mystery Religions"
- h) it refers to the culturally unexpected act of Christian women cutting their hair extremely short to show their new freedom (i.e., a cultural trend in first century Rome and its colonies)
- i) In many commentaries, it is asserted that this must refer to the temple prostitutes of Diana. However, this temple on the Acropolis was destroyed by an earthquake 150 years before Paul's time and there is no historical evidence that it still functioned. There is also no evidence that prostitutes in Greece shaved their heads.

A woman flaunting herself in this manner would have publicly shamed her husband and given the wrong impression about the church to visitors and the community. Christ makes males and females free, but each has an obligation to limit freedom for the cause of Christ. Women and men, wives and husbands who are believers are called on to live for the health and growth of the Kingdom! This is the theme of 1 Corinthians 8-10 and is continued in chapter 11. The key question is "What topic is Paul addressing?"

- a) appropriate or culturally expected worship attire and actions
- b) abuse of personal freedoms

*The appropriate relationship between*

- c) men and women
- d) husbands and wives
- e) angels and women (1 Cor. 11:10)
- f) culture and women (1 Cor. 11:13)

*I have come to understand #1 as the best option, addressing both husbands and wives not being led by their new freedom in Christ, but by their dogged refusal to put aside their cultural privileges and work toward the unity and growth of the church. There were Christian women in the church who refused to cover their heads, but still wanted to be active in gathered worship. It was socially unacceptable. Believers must limit their new freedoms in Christ for*

- a) the weaker ones within the church (cf. Rom. 14:1-15:13)
- b) the cultural expectation of the society the church is seeking to evangelize and incorporate

*Historical data on the use of face coverings (i.e., veils) or shoulder-length head coverings by ancient Mediterranean people is very helpful. I have documented the latest evidence in the notes at 1 Cor. 11:4. Roman women who were married, not widowed, and not a prostitute, were culturally expected to wear a veil in public as a sign that they were married. There were very few single women in the ancient Mediterranean world. In Jewish culture the facial veil was used as a sign of*

- a) leprosy, Lev. 13:45
- b) mourning for the dead, Ezek. 24:17,22
- c) embarrassment, Micah 3:7

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- d) marriage, Gen. 24:65
- e) prostitution, Gen. 38:14-15

However, remember Paul is not referring to Jewish culture at all because in that culture men cover their heads in worship. Christian women for Christ's sake conform to the expected culture in order to reach people for salvation and church membership. The forms will change from culture to culture and age to age! The goal remains the same (cf. Matt. 28:18-20; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8).

The head being covered was a sign of subjection; and while a man was employed in the public ministration of the word, he was to be considered as a representative of Christ, and on this account his being veiled or covered **would be improper**. This decision of the apostle **was in point blank hostility to the canons of the Jews; for they would not suffer a man to pray unless he was veiled**, for which they gave this reason. "He should veil himself to show that he is ashamed before God, and unworthy with open face to behold him." Dr. Lightfoot.

The only difference marked by the apostle was, the man had his head uncovered, because he was the representative of Christ; the woman had hers covered, because she was placed by the order of God in a state of subjection to the man, and because it was a custom, both among the Greeks and Romans, and among the Jews an express law, that no woman should be seen abroad without a veil. This was, and is, a common custom through all the east, and none but public prostitutes go without veils. And if a woman should appear in public without a veil, she would dishonour her head-her husband. And she must appear like to those women who had their hair shorn off as the punishment of whoredom, or adultery.

Tacitus informs us, Germ. 19, that, considering the greatness of the population, adulteries were very rare among the Germans; and when any woman was found guilty she was punished in the following way: *accisis crinibus, nudatam coram propinquis expellit domo maritus*; "having cut off her hair, and stripped her before her relatives, her husband turned her out of doors." And we know that the woman suspected of adultery was ordered by the law of Moses to be stripped of her veil, Num. v. 18.

Women reduced to a state of servitude, or slavery, had their hair cut off: so we learn from Achilles Tatius. Clitophon says, concerning Leucippe, who was reduced to a state of slavery: *pepratai, dedouleuken, γην εσκαψεν, σεσυληται της κεφαλης το καλλος, την κουραν ορας?* lib. viii. cap. 6, "she was sold for a slave, she dug in the ground, and **her hair being shorn off, her head was deprived of its ornament**," &c. It was also the custom among the Greeks to **cut off their hair in time of mourning**. See Euripides in Alcest., ver. 426. Admetus, ordering **a common mourning for his wife** Alcestis, says: *πενθος γυναικος της δε κοινουσθαι λεγο, κουρα ξυρηκει και μελαχιπεπλω στολη?* "I order a general mourning for this woman! **let the hair be shorn off, and a black garment put on.**" **Propriety and decency of conduct are the points which the apostle seems to have more especially in view.** As a woman who dresses loosely or fantastically, even in the present day, is **considered a disgrace to her husband, because suspected to be not very sound in her morals; so in those ancient times, a woman appearing without a veil would be considered in the same light.**

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If she will not wear a veil in the public assemblies, let her be shorn-let her carry a public badge of infamy: but if it be a shame-if to be shorn or shaven would appear, as it must, a badge of infamy, then let her be covered-let her by all means wear a veil. Even in mourning it was considered disgraceful to be obliged to shear off the hair; and lest they should lose this ornament of their heads, the women contrived to evade the custom, by cutting off the ends of it only. Euripides, in Orest., ver. 128, speaking of Helen, who should have shaved her head on account of the death of her sister Clytemnestra, says: ειδετε παρ' ακρας ως απεθρισεν τριχας, σωζουσα καλλος, εστι δε η παλαι γυνη: "see how she cuts off only the very points of her hair, that she may preserve her beauty, and is just the same woman as before."

In Hindostan a woman cuts off her hair at the death of her husband, as a token of widowhood; but this is never performed by a married woman, whose hair is considered an essential ornament. The veil of the Hindoo women is nothing more than the garment brought over the face, which is always very carefully done by the higher classes of women when they appear in the streets. — Ward's Customs.

Hence these cultural practices were for decency, propriety and identification. The underlying point was that a woman was under subjection or authority and didn't enjoy the privileges of a man not that because they were of inferior or lesser beings but God had ordained it so. I repeat

1 Timothy 2:13 **For Adam was first formed, then Eve.**

Seventh day Adventists Pioneers views

Response by Uriah Smith - Women as Preachers and Lecturers by UrSe

[Extracted from the "Portadown News," Ireland, of March 2, 1861.]

[We consider the following a triumphant vindication of the right of the sisters to take part in the public worship of God. The writer applies the prophecy of Joel - "Your daughters shall prophesy," etc., to female preaching; but while it must embrace public speaking of some kind, this we think is but half of its meaning. We have nothing to say upon what the writer claims to have been done by certain females. That to which the attention of the reader is especially called is the argument by which he shows that they have a right to do this, or any amount besides in the same direction. - U. S.]

To the Editor of the "Portadown News:" - DEAR SIR, A correspondent in your paper takes up the question of women occupying positions as public speakers, and by every means in his power endeavors to show that women ought not to do so; still, as he is "open to conviction," and as he wishes for "an explanation" of the texts which he quoted, I shall endeavor to gratify him therein.

I will say here that if a woman can effect good in a world like ours, where so much is yet to be done for its reformation, I would think twice before I would discourage her or throw any obstacle in her way.

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Perhaps no man living has effected half as much for a revival of religion as **Mrs. Phoebe Palmer**; but "An Admirer of Woman in her proper place," would not suffer a woman to teach. I would like to know if ever he saw a female engaged in a school to teach. Could such a man not see that the teaching of which Paul writes is not such as that given in our Sunday Schools, and from our pulpits or platforms? I hold that each individual in this world is morally bound to do as much good to others as he or she can; and he or she is bound to leave the world better than he or she found it - if they possibly can. **And is Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe and other ladies to teach me through my eyes, and are they prohibited from teaching me through my ears? Certainly not. Has Miss Buck, of England, powers in the pulpit equal to the greatest pulpit orator of the day, and is she not to use such powers? Are Spurgeon and such men to be lauded to the skies while sowing the heresy of Calvinism, mixed up with scraps of street songs and old wives' fables, and is Miss Buck to be condemned while she preaches, with much superior eloquence and dignity, the glorious gospel of the grace of God to sinful, fallen mankind - none excepted? Let us hear no more of this condemnation of woman going about doing good.**

I suppose, indeed I might venture to assert, that Mrs. Palmer, Miss Buck, and women like them, have each done more to lead sinners to a Saviour than any man of the same period; and will not the souls thus saved be to these women "a crown of rejoicing?" To be sure they will.

**Who would object to a woman rescuing his friend from temporal death?** No man. **Then why object to a woman rescuing men from eternal death?** Who would dare say that Grace Darling did wrong to go out in the life-boat and rescue the crew of a sinking vessel? No man. **Why then object to a woman pushing out the gospel life-boat to rescue men sinking into perdition? Who would dare say Mrs. Fry did wrong in seeking to rescue men from dismal dungeons?** No man. **Then why object to woman going to seek and to save those that are pining in the dungeons of sin and iniquity?**

**Is not Mrs. Theobald one of the ablest advocates of the Total Abstinence cause? Is she surpassed by any as a speaker on that question? I venture to affirm she is not. Then why silence such an advocate?**

**Neither Paul nor any other apostle forbade women preaching, or lecturing. I affirm such a command is nowhere in the Bible, and I shall proceed to prove it; and, besides, I will prove that Paul taught the very opposite.**

"An Admirer of Woman in her proper place" has quoted 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35. Now, surely **the fourteenth chapter does not contradict the eleventh, which was necessarily written before it.** In 1 Corinthians 11:4, 5, St. Paul says, "Every man praying or prophesying having his head covered dishonoreth his head; but every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoreth her head." Why did not "An Admirer" read this chapter before he read the other?

Instead of St. Paul's forbidding woman to conduct public worship - for that is what praying and prophesying mean - **he actually condescends, as "An Admirer" would perhaps think, to settle and arrange how a woman is to dress when she prophesieth, or preacheth.**

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It will be seen from the verses I have quoted above, that whatever every man was to do in the church in praying and prophesying, woman was to do the same; and, instead of Paul forbidding the woman, he merely tells herself and the man how they are to dress - one with the head uncovered, the other with it covered. "An Admirer" has made some reference to Eve, but he is evidently totally ignorant of the nature of the temptation to which Eve was exposed, of the manner in which it was put, and of the share which Adam had in the matter.

Dr. Adam Clarke says the prediction of Joel 2:28, would not be fulfilled unless women prophesied, preached or taught; and he says Peter understood it thus when, in Acts 2:17, he quotes it, saying, "Your daughters shall prophesy." Dr. Adam Clarke, in a word, is entirely in favor of female preaching, and contends that the verses quoted by "An Admirer" bear no such meaning as that attached to them by those who oppose female preaching.

Perhaps some may ask, "What is prophesying?" In 1 Corinthians 14:3, St. Paul says it is to speak "unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort," and women were to do it. And, according to the word of the Lord by the prophet Joel, "Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy;" and, according to Peter, this prediction was fulfilled on the day of pentecost; and according to Paul, women were to pray and prophesy as much as men, only to keep their heads covered. And why even this rule about the covered head? Simply because in the East then, and at present, an uncovered female was, and is, looked upon "all one as if she were shaven" - the latter being the mark of prostitution. The reader will now see why St. Paul ordered the covered heads - that is, covered with a veil in the East - and this portion of his directions does not apply at all to our fashions.

Will the reader be kind enough to turn now to 1 Corinthians 14, from which "An Admirer" quotes, and read the entire chapter over. You will see that St. Paul is writing on a different topic from that on which he wrote in chap. 11; and every fair interpreter of the Scripture will admit that, if in chap. 11 Paul authorizes female preaching, then he cannot in chap 14, forbid it. Let us now see what chap 14, refers to. There seems to have been some confusion in the church at Corinth, in their meetings of church courts; for it could not be in the ordinary or regular public service.

The men speaking [verse 27] were to speak "by two, or at most by three, and that by course," or in other words, in their turn - after one another. This was to prevent two, or three, or half a dozen men speaking at once - or even a dozen, as I have often seen in public meetings. This was a meeting for discussion and debate on church matters, such as that recorded in Acts 15, where there was much disputing. It was not a regular religious service, and could not be such. At verse 29 it is said, "Let the prophets speak, two or three, and let the others judge." Here, again, it was not an ordinary regular service; it was a meeting for discussion, and for the election of church officers; and the candidates for positions in the church were to be heard, and all the other members were to judge of the qualifications of each, and to make their selections accordingly. At verse 33, this view is sustained still further by the words, "For God is not the author of confusion." In order to prevent much discussion in these church courts, he forbids the women to speak in them - they are to ask their husbands at home; therefore Miss M'Kinney cannot be included.

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Having thus clearly established that the place in which a woman was to keep silence was in a court of the church, not in an ordinary regular meeting, I shall pass on to notice the passage from Timothy.

In 1 Timothy 2:12, 14, St. Paul is forbidding the woman to usurp authority; and if any reader will but read this chapter, of fifteen verses, through, he or she will see at a glance that he has nothing whatever to say to public speaking.

If "An Admirer" had quoted 1 Timothy 2:9, it might have been more needed in the present day. Our Methodist ladies seem to have forgotten that such a passage is in the Bible, "That women adorn themselves in modest apparel (could Paul have had hoops on a windy day in his prophetic vision?), with shamefacedness and sobriety: not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works." There is not a word in the entire chapter against woman speaking and doing good - adorning herself with good works - in the cause of God and of fallen and debased humanity. If "An Admirer" will have a literal rendering of verse 12, then out with all our thousands of female Sunday-school and day-school teachers, for if a woman is not to teach, in the literal sense, then all our female teachers, religious and secular, in Sunday-schools, national schools, Church Education Society schools, etc., are all rushing on in direct opposition to Paul when he says, "I suffer not a woman to teach." The woman is to learn in silence with all subjection.

Subjection to whom? Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Colossians 3:18. This is the subjection spoken of in Timothy, as is clearly shown by Adam and Eve - husband and wife - representatives of all our race of husbands and wives - being brought in by way of illustrating his subject, and the object which he had in view.

A woman is not to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, that is, a wife is not to act so toward her husband. The passage has nothing whatever to do with regard to Total Abstinence lecturers, or gospel preachers. On the contrary, a woman is to pray and prophesy [1 Corinthians 11:5] just as the man, and with equal power and authority; and this is according to the prediction of the Holy Ghost. Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17.

"An Admirer" could not have quoted a case which tells more against himself than that of Phoebe mentioned in Romans 15:1. She was a deaconess. Does not "An Admirer" know that the Church of England and other churches hold that a deacon was a certain rank in the ministry? and if so, then so was a deaconess. Dr. Adam Clarke says, too, that the deaconesses "were ordained to their office by the imposition of the hands of the bishop." In the second verse of this chapter, Paul actually directs the Christians at Rome - the men, too - I wish "An Admirer" had been among them, how it would have lowered his dignity - to assist sister Phoebe "in whatever business she hath need of you." Does this not look very like an appointment of Phoebe as the first pope of Rome, for she was to have absolute authority over all the church there?

I will conclude by glancing at female characters in Scripture who occupied a position as teachers and leaders of the people equal to men. Deborah, the wife of Lapidoth - mark, she was married, too - was a prophetess, and judged Israel. Judges 4:4, 10. Huldah, the prophetess, the wife of

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Shallum - a married woman also - dwelt at Jerusalem, in the College; and her dignified message to the king, who came to inquire at her mouth the will of God, does not betray any trembling diffidence or abject servility, although "An Admirer" would have woman so much inferior to man. It would be, perhaps, useless to remind him that in Christianity there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:28. It is said [Micah 6:4], "For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt; and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron and Miriam." God here classes Miriam with Moses and Aaron, and declares that he sent her before his people. I presume had "An Admirer" been there he would have refused to go up through the wilderness under such a female leader. Need I refer to Anna, the prophetess [Luke 2:37, 38], and to the women which labored with Paul in the gospel as his fellow-laborers - therefore, preaching as he did? Timothy, in 1 Thessalonians 3:2, is styled a minister of God, and our fellow-laborer in the gospel of Christ. Then these were the same as Timothy, who was a bishop in the church. In Romans 16:12, three women are named as having labored much in the Lord; and Dr. Adam Clarke contends that they preached, for he says they prophesied, and that if a woman thus prophesied, then women preached. This is Dr. Clarke's view, and I value it as highly as John Wesley's.

"An Admirer" seems to think that woman is much inferior to man, and throws out taunts about mother Eve, to which taunts I have already alluded. If, through Eve, sin first entered into this world - and that too, with the hearty concurrence of Adam - then let it not be forgotten that by woman, without the concurrence of man, a Saviour came to bring deliverance. If woman be taunted about Eve, she can turn and point to Mary, and all the women who ministered to Christ daily up to his burial, and at his resurrection. Dr. Doddridge exhorts man to rejoice that, as by woman came transgression, so by her came redemption to; and I may add - why should not women preach that redemption also?

Judging by the results which have followed the labors of such women as Mrs. Rogers, Mrs. Fletcher, Miss Tooth, Miss Culter, Miss Buck, Miss Marsh, Mrs. Theobald, Mrs. Stowe, Mrs. Palmer, Mrs. Booth, and a host of others, I rather think the Lord of the vineyard will require some more satisfactory excuse for even female timidity and backwardness in his service than the one given by "An Admirer," before they will be justified in ceasing to labor in his cause. ARSH July 30, 1861, page 65-ARSH July 30, 1861, page 66.6

E.J. Waggoner

"Women in the Church" - SITI May 12, 1887, page 278

We are asked by a subscriber in Washington Territory to explain how the usages of Seventh-day Adventists, and of many other religious bodies as well, can be harmonized with 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35, and 1 Timothy 2:11, 12. He asks: "Were these commands transient? if so, when did they cease to be binding, and by what authority?" He also asks if 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35, is correctly translated in Conybeare and Howson's "Life and Epistles of the Apostle Paul."

To the last question we would reply that the Authorized Version gives the sense of the text as well as can be done, and is more nearly literal than is Conybeare and Howson's rendering. The question on the text itself is worthy of consideration, for many good people think that the Bible forbids women to take part in public religious service. 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35, reads as follows:-

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"Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church."

*It is worthy of mention that those who are most bitterly opposed to women's taking part in public service, are inconsistent with their own interpretation of this text.* They interpret it to mean that women should never speak in public, either to preach, or to bear testimony in prayer-meeting; yet there is not a church in the land which does not have women singers, and in many of them the singing would greatly languish if it were not for the women. Now it is certain that those who sing do not "keep silence." We do not think that this is wrong, not a violation of Paul's injunction; *we cite this instance merely for the purpose of showing the inconsistency of those who interpret Paul's words as prohibiting speaking in meeting, but allowing singing.* Now if the injunction to "keep silence" does not prohibit singing, it is reasonable to suppose that it does not prohibit speaking at proper times and in a proper manner, for simple speaking is far more nearly an approach to silence than is ordinary singing.

And this we shall find to be the case, when we consider a few other texts; for we must always let scripture explain scripture. Read the other text to which our correspondent referred, 1 Timothy 2:11, 12: "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." This must certainly be considered as parallel to, and explanatory of, 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35. But there is nothing in it which would stop a woman from bearing testimony in social meeting, or *even from preaching.* Notice that Paul says: "I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to *usurp authority over a man,*" *the idea being of a women's setting herself up as superior, and assuming authority which does not belong to her.* But a simple testimony for Christ is the farthest removed from the assumption of authority, and even the preacher who usurps authority over his hearers, is out of place. The place of the preacher is not to be a lord over God's heritage, but to act the part of an ambassador for Christ. From the two texts quoted we must conclude that *Paul did not mean to prohibit women from witnessing publicly for Christ, but only to have them act with becoming modesty.*

This conclusion is made positive by other texts. In 1 Corinthians 11:4, 5, 13, the same apostle says: "Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head; for that is even all one as if she were shaven." "Judge in yourselves; is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?"

In these verses, and the context, the apostle is giving directions for the proper conducting of public worship. Now if in chapter 14 he meant to teach that women should utter no sound in public service, *why did he here give directions concerning their praying and speaking in public assemblies? Certainly no directions are needed for the performance of that which is forbidden, and the fact that Paul tells how women should pray and prophesy in public meeting, shows that such action was not forbidden.*

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To forbid women any of the privileges of the gospel would be utterly at variance with the spirit of the gospel. Says Paul: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Galatians 3:27, 28. That means that in the gospel plan there is no difference made for race, condition, or sex. A woman stands before God a sinner, just the same as a man; she is responsible for her own sins, and, if saved, must be saved in exactly the same way that a man is. No Christian would think of prohibiting a person from taking part in meeting, on the ground that he is a servant, or because he is of a different nationality from the majority of the members of the church; then no Christian should prevent a person from speaking to the praise of God, because that person is a woman.

To interpret Paul's language in 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35, as meaning that women should bear no part in public worship is to do violence to the Scriptures which, being inspired, must always and everywhere be harmonious. Thus in Acts 21:8, 9, we read that Philip the evangelist "had four daughters, virgins, **which did prophesy.**" Paul speaks of Phebe, "a **servant of the church which is at Cenchrea**" (Romans 16:1), and in Philippians 4:3 bespeaks the care of the church for "**those women which labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other fellow-laborers.**" And the mighty and eloquent Apollos was instructed in the way of God by Aquila and his **wife Priscilla.** Acts 18:2, 24-26.

In the Old Testament we read of "Miriam the prophetess" (Exodus 15:20) by whom the Lord spoke as well as by Moses and Aaron (Numbers 12:1, 2). We read also (Judges 4) of "Deborah, a prophetess" who judged Israel, and whose wisdom and prudence were esteemed so highly that Barak would not go to war without her counsel and her presence. Still later we read of "Huldah the prophetess" (2 Kings 22:14) to whom Josiah sent when he would inquire of the Lord concerning the book of the law which the priest had found. There is something remarkable about this case. At this time Jeremiah had been prophesying for five years, yet the king sent to Huldah instead of to him. Moreover the king's messengers to the prophetess were, among others, a scribe of the law, and the high priest, whose lips should keep knowledge, and at whose mouth men were accustomed to seek the law. Micah 2:7. **Yet it seems that on this occasion no one had the word of the Lord except this woman.**

We have considered this matter at this length not only for the satisfaction of our correspondent, but also to meet a **very common infidel cavil.** There are many men, and more women, of a class who seek to overthrow the divinely-established order of nature, who are accustomed to rail at the apostle Paul as a crusty old bachelor and a misogynist, because of his words to the Corinthians. Hastily assuming that he absolutely forbade women to take any part in public meetings, **they think that the present liberty accorded to women is an evidence of the advance which people of the nineteenth century have made over Paul's antiquated notions.** From railing at Paul they naturally come to despise all his writings, and as a natural consequence, **they lightly esteem the entire Bible.**

But Paul was not crusty, he was not a misogynist, and he was not a bachelor. He was a large-hearted, whole-souled, loving Christian, who treats of the family relation with a knowledge and tenderness not exceeded by any writer who ever lived. **Instead of commanding women to say**

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*nothing in meetings for the worship of God, he encouraged them even to occupy responsible positions. What he did do was to give instruction that would keep them from being classed with the heathen women who, in their eagerness for notice, divested themselves of that modesty which always characterizes true woman, and which the gospel tends to heighten.* W. SITI May 12, 1887, page 278 - SITI May 12, 1887, page 279.2

Shall the Women Keep Silence in the Churches? ARSH February 23, 1860, page 109UrSe

"LET your women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything let them ask their husbands at home; for it is a shame for women to speak in the church." 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35.

This passage, together with 1 Timothy 2:11, has been construed as an objection to women's speaking in public; and thousands of females that have submitted their hearts to God, and have received a baptism of the Holy Ghost, their hearts burning with love to God, and "the word of the Lord as a fire shut up in their bones," have been deprived of the privilege of speaking out their feelings in the public congregation, to the almost entire loss of their enjoyment, by the false construction put upon these passages, notwithstanding the great amount of evidence which can be brought to prove that all who are made partakers of such love have a right to speak forth his praises.

Often have I been in meetings where it was contrary to the rules of the church for females to speak; and while the brethren would speak of their enjoyment, some humble sister whose heart would be overflowing with the love of God, would sit bound down by the chains of the church creed, while her flushed cheek and flowing tears told plainly that she was an unwilling slave to the laws of the church.

I saw a case a few evenings since. A school teacher who had been educated a Presbyterian attended a meeting where my brother was preaching. She became convinced of sin and gave her heart to God, and was made happy in a Saviour's love. *She, together with her sisters who also were converted, had been forbidden to speak in public by their parents; but while others were speaking and telling what God had done for them, her feelings were such that she could not hold her peace. Her tongue was loosed, and she was enabled to speak forth the praises of God, and also exhorted sinners to flee to Christ, while one of her sisters that had been blessed and desired to speak of it, but durst not for fear of her parents, sat and wept as though her heart would break.* This is but one of many cases where parents, professing to be religious, have endeavored to bind the consciences of their children.

But says one, What is the meaning of the passage above alluded to? I understand it to mean a troublesome asking of questions, which could be better answered at home than in their religious meetings. That the asking of questions had become troublesome, is obvious from the following considerations. When the gospel was first preached, it excited astonishment in the minds of a large number of those who heard it. It was "to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness." And even to the sober and sincere inquirers it presented mysteries in which they

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desired to be more perfectly instructed. Hence it became common for doctrinal questions to be asked. And this practice, in time, became troublesome by being abused, and led to an impudent, inquisitive disposition respecting unimportant things. Hence the apostle cautioned Timothy not to "give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions rather than edifying." 1 Timothy 1:4. And in the same epistle he further cautions him against some who were "proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words," etc. 1 Timothy 6:4, 5. And in 2 Timothy 2:23, he charges him, "But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes." He gives the same caution to Titus chap. 3:9; from all of which it is clear that the asking of questions had become troublesome in their religious meetings. And as he makes so direct an allusion to such inquiries, or questions in the text under consideration ("let them ask their husbands at home, for it is a shame, etc.), it is at least a fair inference that he designed to put a stop to this, but had no allusion to the exercise of a gift in the ministry or in exhortation.

Indeed, we cannot suppose that the apostle would attempt to prove the impropriety of their speaking or exhorting in public, by reminding them that they might ask questions of their husbands at home. What relation could this bear to the case in hand? What question could a pious female ask at home, that would relieve her mind from the burden of a message she had received to deliver in the church. Thus it is evident that as the prohibition of the apostle in the passage above cited, related to asking of questions, and such as could properly be answered at home by their husbands, it had no relation to the exercise of a gift which God had given them to use for the advancement of his cause. Their usurpation of authority over the men, as prohibited by the apostle, related, I should suppose, to their domestic concerns; for preaching, prophesying, exhorting or praying in public, is not usurping authority and has nothing to do with it. Our Lord on one occasion reminded his disciples, "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," etc. Matthew 20:25-27.

But what puts the question beyond all doubt as to the sentiment of the apostle, is that he actually gave directions how the women should behave in the exercise of their gifts. 1 Corinthians 11:5. He uses the words, "prayeth," and "prophesieth," which he certainly would not have done had it been prohibited. He not only gave such directions, but he mentions, with peculiar regard, certain women that had labored with him in the gospel. Philippians 4:3. And Phillip, the evangelist, had four daughters, virgins which did prophesy, Acts 21:9.

We find also that in the prophecy of Joel as quoted by Peter Acts 2:17, 18, the promise of the effusion of the Holy Spirit was to sons and daughters, servants and handmaidens. The promise of the Spirit is as positive to the daughters and handmaidens, as to the sons and servants. And Peter says verse 39, "For the promise is to you and your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Then where is the authority for saying that females should not receive a gift of the Holy Spirit in these last days. Verily God hath promised it; and I would to God that more of his handmaidens were endued with power from on high.

We read that females prophesied under the old dispensation, such as Miriam, Deborah and Huldah. The prophetess, Anna, testified to the coming of the Messiah, as did also Elizabeth, the

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mother of John the Baptist. It was a woman to whom that clear exposition of worship was given at Jacob's well; and she immediately commenced inviting others to come and see a man that had told her all that ever she did. Is not this, said she, the Christ? And so effectually did she preach Christ that many believed from her testimony, and sought him for themselves. And how many there are in these days that can say with Bro. Robbins that it was under the exhortations or prayers of females that they were led to consecrate themselves to God.

It was a woman that first announced the glorious tidings of the resurrection of our blessed Lord; and let it be remembered that these "glad tidings" were preached to the apostles themselves, who at that time were sunk into despair. They were then scattered as sheep without a shepherd, and all their prospects were involved in gloom. How cheering then the message Jesus sends by a woman, Go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend to my Father and to your Father, etc. John 20:17. Priscilla, as well as Aquilla, instructed the eloquent Apollos more perfectly in the nature of the gospel dispensation. And numerous cases are mentioned in the New Testament of women who labored in the gospel. Seeing that females were admitted to the high office of prophecy under the old dispensation, and in the promise of the more general effusion of this gift, the daughters and handmaidens were equally included with the other sex, that they were among the first messengers of the gospel, and after the churches were formed and settled received particular instruction how to conduct themselves in the church, in the exercise of their gifts, it is strange that the privilege should have ever been called in question.

We are informed on the authority of divine revelation that male and female are one in Christ Jesus; that in the relation in which they both stand to him, the distinction is as completely broken down as between Jew and Gentile, bond and free. Thus revelation has made known the important truth, and reason will bear testimony to the same thing. The mind of the female is certainly susceptible of all those sensibilities, affections and improvements which constitute the christian character. In a state of renovation we must admit it has equal access to the fountain of light and life. And experience has proved that many females have possessed the natural qualifications for speaking in public, the range of thought, the faculty of communicating their ideas in appropriate language, the sympathy with suffering humanity, a deep and lively sense of gratitude to God, and of the beauty of holiness, a zeal for the honor of God, and the happiness of his rational creatures - all these are found among the female part of the human family, as frequently and as eminently as among the men. Then let no stumbling-block be thrown in their way, but let them fill the place that God calls them to fill, let them not be bound down to silence by church rules, but let their tongues speak forth the praises of God, and let them point sinners to the Lamb of God, and grieve not the holy Spirit by silence in the congregation. ARSH February 23, 1860, page 109 - ARSH February 23, 1860, page 110.6

### SECOND QUESTION. "Will you please give an exposition of 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35?"

ANSWER. 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35, reads as follows: "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church."

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We judge it to be an easier task to show what this passage does not mean, than to tell just what it does mean. We shall not attempt an exposition of the passage, but merely say at present, that if it proves that women should not speak in meetings of religious worship, the declaration, "let them ask their husbands at home," also proves that they should not attend meetings of worship, but learn the facts in regard to such meetings, of their husbands, when they return home. But as no one can suppose that Paul would exclude women from the place of public and social worship, the rational conclusion is, that in this passage, he does not refer to religious meetings, but to those meetings of the church where the judgment and wisdom of the sisters are not especially needed, therefore they can remain at home, "and if they will learn anything" in respect to such matters, "let them ask their husbands at home." ARSH April 22, 1862, page 164.12 - ARSH April 22, 1862, page 164.14

Paul Says So.

SAYS what? "Let your women keep silence in the churches." But what does this prove? "It proves" say some, "that women should not rise in social meeting and speak." Well, what would you have them do? "Let them do as Paul says, "If they would learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home."

Well then, you and Paul would have the sisters all stay at home. For certainly, if they go to meeting and hear all that is said, they will have no need to ask their husbands at home. It is evident that if Paul meant that women should not speak in religious meetings, his words prove also that the sisters should not attend religious meetings.

But as this view of the subject proves too much for our friends, who do not like to hear the Marys preach a risen or coming Saviour, we suggest a position to take on the text which will harmonize with both revelation and reason. It is this. Paul was probably speaking of meetings of church business. The sisters would be quite out of place in meetings of general church business. And "if they will learn anything" about such matters - quite immaterial whether they do or not - "let them ask their husbands at home."

If they have no husbands to inquire of, it will do quite as well for them not to understand all the particulars of church business, the brethren generally being capable of managing such matters.  
J. W. ARSH September 10, 1857, page 152.8 - ARSH September 10, 1857, page 152.12

Additionally

At this time and place Miss Maud Sisley (now Mrs. Boyd) connected with the work, giving Bible readings and doing house-to-house labor. As a result of this effort, several embraced the truth. In the following winter we held meetings in a hall in Ravenswood Villa, the building in which we lived and had our depository. GSAM 417.3

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Ellen White

*Women of firm principle and decided character are needed*, women who believe that we are indeed living in the last days, and that we have the last solemn message of warning to be given to the world. *They should feel that they are engaged in an important work in spreading the rays of light which Heaven has shed upon them*. When the love of God and His truth is an abiding principle, they will let nothing deter them from duty, or discourage them in their work. - DG 17.2

The Lord designs that the school Avondale should also be a place where a training may be gained in *women's work*—cooking, housework, dressmaking, bookkeeping, correct reading, and pronunciation. They are to be qualified to take any post that may be offered—*superintendents, Sabbath \*school teachers, Bible workers Evangelism*, 475 (1898). - DG 86.3

*Women who have the cause of God at heart can do a good work in the districts in which they reside*. Christ speaks of women who helped Him in presenting the truth before others, and *Paul also speaks of women who labored with him in the gospel*. But how very limited is the work done by those who could do a large work if they would.—Letter 31, 1894.

*The Saviour will reflect upon these self-sacrificing women the light of His countenance, and will give them a power that exceeds that of men*. Ev 464.2

A great work is to be done in our world, and every talent is to be used in accordance with righteous principles. *If a woman is appointed by the Lord to do a certain work, her work is to be estimated according to its value*. Every laborer is to receive his or her just due.—Evangelism, 491 (1898).

I was solicited to visit Melbourne before the tent would have to be taken down, but on account of the severe heat they dared not make the request too urgent. Elder Robinson thought my testimony must be given, as it was greatly needed. *He and his wife were left to bear the responsibility of the work, giving Bible readings, conducting the mission, and training several young men and women as workers*. The work has rested heavily upon them. *Sister Robinson has hired a girl to do her housework and is doing work every way as taxing as that of a minister*. The women workers have not received pay, but this will be changed in due time. The cause is now hemmed in for want of means.—Manuscript Releases 12:160 (1898).

Our camp meetings are to be conducted in such a way that they shall be schools for the education of workers. We need to have a better understanding of the division of labor, and educate all how to carry each part of the work successfully.... Let short discourses be given, and then let Bible classes be held. Let the speaker be sure to rivet the truth upon minds. *Intelligent women, if truly converted, can act a part in this work of holding Bible classes*. There is a wide field of service for women as well as for men.—Letter 84, 1910.

*We believe fully in church organization*, but in nothing that is to prescribe the precise way in which we must work; for all minds are not reached by the same methods. Nothing is to be allowed *to keep the working servant of God from his fellowman*. The individual believer is to

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labor for the individual sinner. **Teach this, my sister.** You have many ways opened before you. **Address the crowd whenever you can; hold every jot of influence you can by any association that can be made the means of introducing the leaven to the meal.** Every man and every woman has a work to do for the Master. Personal consecration and sanctification to God will accomplish, through the most simple methods, more than the most imposing display. . . .{DG 130.3, 4}

**Mrs. A had often made the statement that she would never join the Seventh-day Adventists. She had been brought up in the Presbyterian Church, and had been educated to think that it was very improper for women to speak in meeting, and that for a woman to preach was altogether beyond the bounds of propriety.** She enjoyed hearing Elders Daniells and Corliss, and thought them very clever speakers, but she would not listen to a woman's preaching. Her husband had prayed that God would so arrange matters that she might be converted under the ministry of Sister White. When I made the appeal, and urged those to come forward who felt their need of drawing nearer to God, to the surprise of all, these sisters came forward. **The sister who had lost her little one said that she was determined that she would not move forward, but the Spirit of the Lord so forcibly impressed her mind that she dared not refuse.** I feel so grateful to my heavenly Father for His loving-kindness in bringing these two precious souls to unite with their husbands in obeying the truth.--RH, July 30, 1895. {DG 246.1-3}

All who desire an opportunity for true ministry, and who will give themselves unreservedly to God, will find in the canvassing work opportunities to speak upon many things pertaining to the future, immortal life. The experience thus gained will be of the greatest value to those who are fitting themselves for the ministry. It is the accompaniment of the Holy Spirit of God that prepares workers, **both men and women, to become pastors to the flock of God.** As they cherish the thought that Christ is their Companion, a holy awe, a sacred joy, will be felt by them amid all their trying experiences and all their tests. They will learn how to pray as they work. They will be educated in patience, kindness, affability, and helpfulness. They will practice true Christian courtesy, bearing in mind that Christ, their Companion, cannot approve of harsh, unkind words or feelings. Their words will be purified. The power of speech will be regarded as a precious talent, lent them to do a high and holy work. The human agent will learn how to represent the divine Companion with whom he is associated. To that unseen Holy One he will show respect and reverence because he is wearing His yoke and is learning His pure, holy ways. Those who have faith in this divine Attendant will develop. They will be gifted with power to clothe the message of truth with a sacred beauty. {CEv 16.1}

**Sister Caro is a superior dentist.** She has all the work she can do. She is a tall stately woman, but sociable and companionable. You would love her if you should see her. She does not hoard her means, she puts it into bags which wax not old. She handles an immense amount of money, and she uses the money to educate young men to become laborers for the Master. I am greatly attached to her. She holds her diploma as dentist and her credentials as minister. [MRS. CARO IS LISTED IN THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST YEARBOOK FOR 1894, P. 7, AS MINISTERIAL "LICENTIATE."] **She speaks to the church when there is no minister, so you see that she is a very capable woman.** Her husband is a physician and surgeon.-- Letter 33, 1893, p. 2. (To Jennie L. Ings, Sept. 26, 1893.) She [Sister Caro] is a queenly woman, tall, and every way proportioned. Sister Caro not only does her business, **but she has a ministerial license** and bears many burdens

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in their church at Napier [New Zealand]. **She speaks to the people, is intelligent and every way capable.** She supports her three sons--two in Battle Creek, and one in England who is studying law. . . . Dr. Caro supports the home. Sister Caro takes in a great deal of money, but nothing is expended in luxuries. She is supporting young men in the Bible school at Melbourne, besides some in America. The Lord blesses this noble, unselfish woman. Her work is about double when compared with the patronage of the other dentists in Napier.--Manuscript 22, 1893, p. 2. (Untitled, July 12, 1893.) White Estate February 1, 1979 {9MR 25.1, 2}

Women can be the instruments of righteousness, rendering holy service. **It was Mary that first preached a risen Jesus. If there were twenty women where now there is one, who would make this holy mission their cherished work, we should see many more converted to the truth.** The refining, softening influence of Christian women is needed in the great work of preaching the truth.--Review and Herald, Jan 2, 1879.

### An admonition – Propriety

Titus 2:1 But speak thou the things which become **sound doctrine**: 2 That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. 3 The **aged women** likewise, that [they be] in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, **teachers of good things**; 4 That they may **teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children**, 5 [To be] discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

**The sisters should encourage true meekness. They should not be forward, talkative, and bold, but modest and slow to speak. They should be courteous.** To be kind, tender, pitiful, forgiving, and humble, would be becoming and well pleasing to God. If they occupy this position, **they will not be burdened with undue attention from gentlemen.** It will be felt by all that there is a sacred circle of purity around these God-fearing women, which shields **them from any unwarrantable liberties.** There is too much careless, loose, coarse freedom of manner by **some women professing godliness, which leads to greater wrongs.** Those godly women who occupy their minds and hearts in meditating upon themes which strengthen purity of life, which elevate the soul to commune with God, **will not be easily led astray from the path of rectitude and virtue. They will be fortified against the sophistry of Satan, and prepared to withstand his seductive arts..** SA 148.2

It's like James White copied from EGW above:

"These remarks of the apostle are a standing rebuke against those unquiet and self-sufficient women who are **unwilling to submit to their husbands in the Lord**, and have a disposition to take **the lead in meetings**, in the presence of brethren who are **qualified to rule the church.** It is a shame for women **to thus lead out.** If they would learn anything, **let them ask their husbands at home.**" {December 2, 1862 JWe, ARSH 6.9}

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#### Concluding Remarks

I have given the context of the disputed verses, their history and evidence from Adventists pioneers to my best knowledge. I welcome additional information of what I have missed. In dealing with the verses that are controversial in nature yet easily understood with a few more texts, it is proper to deal with them in the perspective of the sanctuary for it is the theme above all other themes covering the whole plan of redemption. In arguing our positions, we should ask ourselves, how does this matter affect me in my salvation? How does it relate to the whole sanctuary theme? Is it something to cause disunity and shake the church in its gospel call uncalled for? But let us consider one last thing:

Exodus 38:8 - New International Version - The Basin for Washing

Verse 8; They made the **bronze basin** and its bronze stand from the mirrors of **the women who served at the entrance to the tent of meeting.**

1 Samuel 2:22 - New International Version

Verse 22; Now Eli, who was very old, heard about everything his sons were doing to all Israel and how they slept with the **women who served at the entrance to the tent of meeting.**

It's clear from Bible that these women served at the laver of Brass or basin of water and at the entrance of the tabernacle. What is not clear was what manner of work they did. I presume that women can do service in the church under guidance or in subjection of male as those women were connected directly to **sacrificial services under the priests.**

Another example is that the tithes and offerings was strictly for the tribes of Levites and women belonging to Levi only ate from the Father's Tithe or Husbands Tithe even if they worked at the Laver:

Leviticus 22:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Speak unto Aaron and to his sons, that they separate **themselves from the holy things of the children of Israel, and that they profane not my holy name [in those things] which they hallow unto me:** I [am] the LORD. 3 Say unto them, Whosoever [he be] of all your seed among your generations, that goeth unto the **holy things,** which the children of Israel hallow unto the LORD, having his uncleanness upon him, that soul shall be cut off from my presence: I [am] the LORD. 10 **There shall no stranger eat [of] the holy thing: a sojourner of the priest, or an hired servant, shall not eat [of] the holy thing.** 11 But if the priest buy [any] soul with his money, he shall eat of it, and **he that is born in his house: they shall eat of his meat.** 12 **If the priest's daughter also be [married] unto a stranger, she may not eat of an offering of the holy things.** 13 **But if the priest's daughter be a widow, or divorced, and have no child, and is returned unto her father's house, as in her youth, she shall eat of her father's meat: but there shall no stranger eat thereof.**

But we find that that changes and women can receive Tithe. You see how it starts to make a shift:

**There are ministers' wives.** Sisters Starr, Haskell, Wilson and Robinson, who have been devoted, earnest, whole-souled workers, giving Bible readings and praying with families, helping along by personal efforts just as successfully as their husbands. These women give their whole time, and are told that they receive nothing for their labors because their husbands receive their wages. I

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tell them to go forward and all such decisions shall be reversed. The Word says, "The laborer is worthy of his hire." When any such decision as this is made, I will in the name of the Lord, protest. *I will feel it in my duty to create a fund from my tithe money, to pay these women who are accomplishing just as essential work as the ministers are doing, and this tithe I will reserve for work in the same line as that of the ministers, hunting for souls, fishing for souls.* I know that the faithful women should be paid wages *proportionate to the pay received by ministers.* They carry the burden of souls, and should not be treated unjustly. *These sisters are giving their time to educating those newly come to the faith, and hire their own work done, and pay those who work for them.* All these things must be adjusted and set in order, and justice be done to all. Proof-readers in the office receive their wages, two dollars and a half and three dollars a week. This I have had to pay, and others have to pay. But ministers' wives, who carry a tremendous responsibility, devoting their entire time, have nothing for their labor.--12MR 160, 161. {PaM 77.4}

Seventh-day Adventists are not in any way to belittle woman's work. *If a woman puts her housework in the hands of a faithful, prudent helper, and leaves her children in good care, while she engages in the work, the conference should have wisdom to understand the justice of her receiving wages.* {GW 453.1}

*Women, as well as men, are needed in the work that must be done.* Those women who give themselves to the service of the Lord, who labor for the salvation of others by doing house-to-house work, which is as taxing as, and more taxing than standing before a congregation, *should receive payment for their labor. If a man is worthy of his hire, so also is a woman.* {DG 112.4}

*The tithe should go to those who labor in word and doctrine, be they men or women.*-- 1MR 263 (1899). {DG 113.1}

The above sets the principles for many other things which when the priesthood and the law of the sanctuary changed, some things changed too for the Jewish economy was a type miniature shadow of the real substance. Also considering that we are a nation of priests in generic sense then there are the doing of some things that are not strictly as Judaism was. If there is anyone opposing women to teach in the church then they should reconsider the whole thing again in the sanctuary perspective. A change of priesthood from Levi to Judah and a change of the law of priesthood alters many things concerning the services related to the sanctuary.

Hope that this paper instead of generating debates, it will be a stepping stone towards studying more of the word of God and applying those things that bring salvation to our hearts and propels others to seek Christ.

God bless