

ARE WOMEN ORDAINED BY GOD TO PREACH THE GOSPEL?

A WOMAN, by reason of her faith, knowledge and good understanding, can rise to a place of honour in the Church but there are offices and privileges which God never assigns to women.

In certain church denominations women are allowed to stand in the pulpit before a mixed congregation to preach sermons or read out lessons, or say prayers on behalf of all others. When Dr. Billy Graham visited Nigeria some years ago, a certain woman mounted the pulpit at his campaign meeting at the Race Course, now Tafawa Balewa Square, Lagos, on Saturday January 30, 1960, and led, in an ill vocation or prayer, a vast congregation made up of bishops, apostles, evangelists, priests and so forth. However, in an open letter to the doctor evangelist published in the local newspapers then, the GKS showed from the Scriptures the impropriety of that practice.

There are those who send out their women to preach in the streets and from house to house. Some of these women do claim to have received the anointing of the Holy Spirit or to have been ordained by God to preach the gospel. Among those who regard themselves as prophetesses are some whose mission is to go along the streets ringing bells in the early morning to wake people from bed and shouting, "Wake and pray." in their tribal tongues. Thus we find that in certain church groups every other member is either a prophet or prophetess-and all claim to see visions and prophesy. So, people have been asking to know the true position of women in the Church.

We have often said that a number of wrong things are being done by many who claim to be Christians. This is so because the rules and doctrines of Jesus Christ as set out in the Scriptures are often relegated to the background and substituted with men's invented dogmas.

There is not a single instance in the Bible of a woman who was ordained by God as a prophetess to teach or lead His people.

Presumptuousness

Some women were improperly called prophetesses in the Bible simply because they played some roles in the affairs of God's people. Nobody can prove that God ordained any of them. Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron, was called a prophetess as recorded in Exodus 15: 20, just because she led the women of Israel (not men) in a victory dance after the Egyptians were drowned in the Red Sea. To show that she was not ordained to be a prophetess, God punished her with leprosy when she joined Aaron to assume that God was also using them, and they murmured against Moses. They said: "Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? Hath he not spoken also by us? "Because of this God was angry, and He said: "If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream... Wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses? And behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow..." (Numbers 12: 1-15). It is worthy of note that Aaron was not punished – indeed he was ordained a priest – but Miriam suffered for her presumptuous.

As regards men like Moses, Joshua, Daniel, David, Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah and a host of others, it is clearly shown in the Bible that they were ordained by God. But who can cite any instance to show that God appointed any woman at any time to lead or teach His people?

It is a shame for men to be led by women in God's Organisation, and above all, it is contrary to the will of God. Men ought to rule or lead women. It was when the Jews because of their sins were forsaken by God that women dominated them. And God said: "As for my people, children are their oppressors and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths." – Isaiah 3:12.

The Roman Catholic Church is aware of the position of women, and they do not allow them to fulfil the functions of priests. Answering a question as to why Rev. Sisters are not allowed to say mass, the Catholic Voice of July 1956, stated among other things: "Since our Divine Lord chose only men as His Apostles so only men can become priests." And a Catholic newspaper, the INDEPENDENT of March 10-16, 1968, stated: "Men only can receive the Sacrament of Holy Orders: this is the law of God. Christ called men only to the apostolate, and ordained men only to the priesthood..." Obviously, this is the truth and the Roman Catholic Church gets our support.

When the Church of Sweden proposed to ordain women priests, the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Fisher, warned the Archbishop of Sweden that "if Sweden ordains women priests, relations between the two churches will be broken off." (Vide the British Daily Sketch, January 15, 1959)

Foible of Watchtower

In the Salvation Army, they have women ministers who perform the same duties as men. For this, they were severely criticised by the Watchtower Society. In the Watchtower magazine issue of September 1, 1962, page 540, the Watchtower Society wrote: "An unusual feature of the organisation is the prominence accorded women...As a result; women have had much to do with the direction and policy of the Salvation Army, often taking the oversight of men. In fact, for thirty years Evangeline Booth served as the head of the Salvation Army in the United States, and for five years directed the entire world-wide organisation...In granting women equal ministerial privileges the Salvation Army does not follow Bible precedent..." (Emphasis ours)

It can be recalled that the question of women claiming to be anointed or ordained by God to preach from house to house is one of the doctrinal issues on which the first President of the God's Kingdom Society, Brother G. M. Urhobo, disagreed with the Watchtower Society and for which he was persecuted and is still being slandered by those people who call themselves Jehovah's Witnesses. Many of their women claim to be anointed, and the latitude given the women had caused trouble in that organisation. In the book, LIGHT Book One, the Watchtower Society stated: "One of the original incorporators of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society was a woman, the wife of the president thereof, and she insisted on editing The Watch Tower and, being resisted, led other women to take a wrongful course against the Lord's work ... Even to this day the same influence attempts to interfere with the Lord's work ... The Lord had pointed out that the woman has her place in the church, but her place is not to teach man nor attempt to influence man in his rightful performance of duty as

a servant of the Lord.” (Pages 30-31, emphasis ours) But we ask: If women are ordained by God to preach why should the wife of the President who claimed to be ordained be “resisted” for insisting on editing the Society’s magazine when she was not proved to be inefficient? If the women receive the same anointing which the men have and which put both sexes on equal spiritual status as the Watchtower Society is teaching there should be no reason why the women should be prevented from discharging the duties for which they are ordained. Here lies the foible of the Watchtower Organisation!

The Law

The truth, as the GKS has always maintained, is that God has never ordained or anointed any woman to be a preacher or teacher. If it were God’s will that women should hold such a post in His organisation, Jesus Christ would have: shown an example by choosing one woman, at least, to be an apostle. But he did not, and even when he selected other 70 disciples whom he sent out, two by two, no woman was included. (Matthew 10: 1-7; Mark 3: 13-19; Luke 10: 1-17) Though Jesus Christ had many women disciples, he did not send any of them to go about preaching.

It is contrary to the Christian rule for a woman to teach and lead men. St. Paul stated: “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. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.” (1 Timothy 2: 11-15) St. Paul did not say that women would be saved if they preached from house to house or in the street.

Women are described by St. Peter as “weaker vessels” and in modern terms they are known as the “softer sex”. To send them to go from house to house preaching is tantamount to exposing them to temptations. Modesty will restrain us from going into the details of certain reports about some women that have come to light in connection with their house-to-house preaching activities.

For allowing Jezebel who posed to be a prophetess to teach and to seduce men to commit fornication, the Church of Thyatira was rebuked. The Lord said: “Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication...” – Revelation 2: 20-23.

The Watchtower Society’s members cannot claim to be ignorant of these Bible facts. In their book, “Equipped for Every Good Work” (page 322), they commented on St. Paul’s epistle to Timothy thus: “... The woman is not to usurp authority over the man, but is to learn in silence and not be suffered to teach in the congregation or assembly. This is the Theocratic order.” (Emphasis ours) From this it would appear that they understand that women are not ordained to be teachers or preachers. But the practice among them up till today is quite the opposite of the “Theocratic order”!

Women must not make speeches in the congregation or assembly of the Lord’s people. Even if they have doubt on any issue, the law estops them from asking questions in the

church. As it is written: "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) It was on the basis of this authority we criticised Dr. Billy Graham when he allowed a woman to lead a congregation of bishops, deacons, and so on, in prayer at his campaign meeting.

In violation of the law of God quoted above, the Watchtower Society allowed Miss V. Dougaluk, Miss M. Hinds and Miss R. M. Dreyer to address an international assembly of "Jehovah's Witnesses" at the Yankee Stadium, New York City, U.S.A., on July 23, 1953. This was published in the Report of New World Society Assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses, Yankee Stadium – New York City, July 19-26, 1953 at page 29. In the same report it was published on page 77, that "U.V. Glass gave sound advice to the sisters" – female members. He said among other things that a woman should not be upset "when a brother tries to counsel her", He added: "She should comment at meetings, but should not try to be a 'one-woman meeting.' She will do better by giving others a chance to comment," Does this advice not run counter to the law of God as stated by St. Paul? The law says, "IT IS NOT PERMITTED UNTO THEM (women) TO SPEAK"! Why should she "comment at meetings"?

GKS Vindicated

In a recent publication, Life Everlasting in the Freedom of the Sons of God, the Watchtower Society treated at length "The Places of Man and Woman in God's Arrangement", and therein they have come to agree with the GKS at last that women had never been ordained by God as priests, prophets, apostles or bishops. The following extracts from the book are quite explicit:

"The one whom Jehovah God raised up to liberate the twelve tribes of Israel from Egyptian slavery was a man, Moses the son of Amram. The ones whom God chose to do priestly service to him in behalf of the nation of Israel were men, the man Aaron and his sons...God made no arrangement for priestesses..." (Page 248).

"Then the time came for Jesus to pick out twelve workers to be with him all the rest of his earthly ministry, whom did he pick? Men, twelve of them, and he sent them forth as apostles. Likewise, when he sent out seventy additional evangelizers, it was men that he selected for this privilege of service. (Luke 10: 1-17) In such choosing Jesus was following God's pattern. Some women in proper circumstances enjoyed some privileges in connection with Jesus, but not those of the twelve apostles and the seventy evangelizers." (Page 250, emphasis ours)

"It becomes plain that the Most High God Jehovah followed the same dealing with regard to the Christian 'Congregation of God,' or spiritual Israel, as he did with regard to the Jewish congregation of pre-Christian times, or natural, circumcised Israel. That is to say, God gave the preference to the males, the men, as regards official responsibilities within the theocratic organisation. This fact is emphasised for us in Ephesians 4:7-13... In that quotation from Paul's letters the words 'apostles,' 'prophets,' evangelizers,' shepherds and teachers are ALL in the masculine gender... In full accord with this, when the apostle Paul writes to Timothy about the qualifications for the service positions of 'overseers' and of 'ministerial

servants' in the congregation, he specifically states that they must be men... (1 Timothy 3: 1-10, 12)" (Pages 255- 256, emphasis ours).

Surely, the foregoing excerpts are a vindication of Brother Gideon Urhobo and the God's Kingdom Society. And we thank God.

Good Works

Although women have important duties to do in God's organisation, they must not be vested with authority to lead or teach men, neither must they be allowed to address the church.

The example of Jezebel is enough to warn any group of Christians to refrain from permitting their women to peddle with the word of God. There are other good works women should do in support of God's work so as to be saved.

In the days of Jesus Christ on earth, he praised very highly a certain woman for her good work when she poured very precious ointment on his head. The woman did not preach, yet Jesus said concerning her: "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her." – Matthew 26: 6-13.

We are not saying that a woman cannot talk God's word at all – either by teaching her child the fear of God or preaching to another woman. She can, and that does not make her to be ordained by God. St. Paul stated that the aged women should "teach the younger women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed." – Titus 2: 3-5.

Note that St. Paul says that the women should be "keepers at home" and not house to house trotters. Rather, it is women who have cast off their faith that wander about. Concerning such women, St. Paul wrote: "And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not." (1 Timothy 5: 13) The apostle then advised: "I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully." (Verse 14).

Some people think that it is by preaching only that one can be saved. This is very wrong and misleading. To put woo men forward, posing as having been ordained by God, to preach IS A SIN. We should learn from the fate of Miriam and Jezebel. As the Watchtower Society rightly put it in their criticism of the Salvation Army, "in granting women equal ministerial privileges the Salvation Army does not follow Bible precedent". And we add that any Church group which allows their women to preach in the streets and from house to house DOES NOT follow Bible precedent.

If we as Christians know that we are not to do our will but the Lord's, and if discipline and decency are to be maintained in the Church of God, it is very important that Christian principles and tradition as explained in this sermon must be adhered to. What is more, St. Paul says: "Let all things be done decently and in order." God is against lawlessness, presumptuousness and confusion. – 1 Corinthians 14: 33.40.