



## FootPrint 9 —

### ROLE OF LEADERSHIP—QUALIFICATIONS

Those who are leaders in the church have an awesome responsibility before God which must not be taken lightly. **1Peter 5:1-5**. God has set forth principles in His Word as to what a leader **must be**, not what he *should* be; **1Timothy 3:1-13**; **Titus 1:5-9**; and this includes the role of women, as well as those who have chosen to pursue an alternate lifestyle that is outside of God's order for or in His church.

Leaders in the church are representatives of Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church. As such, they must have characters that are closely resembling that of the Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Christ is our ultimate example; those in leadership positions are expected to exemplify Christ in every aspect of their lives, so as to encourage others to pattern their lives after Christ's life in order to become more and more like Him each day.

The Bible says, "by their fruits, ye shall know them." Leadership is not something to be taken lightly or that just anyone is qualified for. That's why the principles set forth by Paul to Timothy in **1Timothy 3:3-7** form the initial standard of qualification for leadership. That includes being blameless (a man of whom nothing negative can be said against him in behavior, habits, character traits, speech, diet or lifestyle); the husband of one wife (not a womanizer or one who flirts with the opposite sex, or same sex, devoted entirely to his wife—second only to Christ and the church); vigilant (circumspect, not given to acting or speaking on impulse or without research to determine all relevant facts before making decisions); sober (self-controlled, temperate); of good behavior (pleasant demeanor, not critical or negative); given to hospitality (glad to welcome people into his house or church, giving freely of himself to guests, service-minded); apt to teach (has solid foundation in the principles of spiritual truths, foundations of faith, the life of Christ, standard of diet and lifestyle; able to answer questions amicably; willing to teach on the spot as God enables, able to convey message effectively and in short

order, not given to oratory or long-winded speeches); not given to wine (no alcohol or other things we know we should not be consuming that interferes with God's work); no striker (one who likes to get into arguments, debates, to the point of hostility and causing offense in order to make a point); not greedy of filthy lucre (not a lover of money, or of gaining a profit at any expense, or would do anything in order to get a little more); patient (not one to quit, but to quietly endure for Christ's sake; not one to strike back if offended or hurt but to suffer as Christ did); not a brawler (instead he must be a peacemaker, one who enjoys the peace of Christ in his life on a consistent basis and shows others how to accomplish the same); not covetous (rather, he demonstrates contentment, peace, and patience); one that ruleth his own house well, having his children in subjection with all gravity (has demonstrated by how he runs his household that he is qualified to run a church—how he treats his wife, how supportive she is of him; how respectful are the children; are they taught the principles of the Scripture that will be taught in the church [if you can't teach a child, how will you teach an entire church?]); not a novice, but someone who has been converted for some time and has demonstrated significant growth as a Christian in his character (a novice has no foundation, no life experiences, no time for character development or training by God in the affairs of his spiritual life, thus disqualifying him, at least at the outset of his spiritual life from having a position of leadership). Moreover, he must have a good report from those who are without (must be setting an example to the world as much as he does to the church exhibiting character traits that are aligned with those of his Saviour); is able to reach out in love to those in the world in order to bear witness to them. We can add to this list not being a power-monger (not looking to take over in order to advance his point of view over that of another, or just for the sake of being in a position that has a certain degree of power), possessing a meek and humble spirit that will not easily take offense, and one with a passion for souls and the love of God to go with it.

## **ROLE OF LEADERSHIP—ROLE OF WOMEN**

**The role of women in the church has changed drastically over the past 50 years, due to cultural shifts brought about by women seeking equal rights and an equal footing with men in the workplace as to pay and responsibility. The same can be said for those who have chosen to pursue alternative lifestyles. There is an inherent right with those actions, in and of themselves. These individuals have an absolute right to choose how they wish to live, and to be treated with equal respect in the workplace and society. God has given each person the right of free choice. He has presented how He would prefer people**

**to be and live. But He does not interfere with each person's right to make their own choice, whether to follow Him with all of their might, soul, and strength, or to do things their way, including how they choose to acknowledge God in their lives, if at all.**

**However, those shifts have nothing to do with the church, true spirituality, or character, that is, the character of Jesus formed within the individual, and everything to do with God's point of view, which is the only one that matters in the life of a true believer. The Bible has specified how the church must be organized—God's Word does not shift like the wind or change its standards to accommodate cultural trends. Thus, what God says is the sole principle by which His church will operate if it intends to stay within His will and preach the Three Angels' message, the last message to be given, to a dying world in these last days.**

God has made abundantly clear in His Word that men, and men only, are to occupy the position(s) of pastor or elder. Nowhere in God's Word was a woman ever named, called, appointed or otherwise, by any apostle or Jesus Himself to the position of pastor or elder or even disciple. It was not by accident that Paul used the male pronoun "he", "husband" etc., when describing the qualifications for such. That does not mean that women do not play a vital role in God's church, because they do. They are the underlying support for the leadership of the church, just as surely as they were a major support group to Christ in His earthly ministry. See, for example, Aquila and Priscilla working together to train Apollos, "expounding the word of God unto him more perfectly." **Acts 18:1-2, 24-26**. But God has set forth His order, that the "the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." **1Corinthians 11:3**.

We can see from this passage that Christ recognizes the headship of His Father, even though He is as much God as the Father. And if Christ is to be the Head of the church, **Colossians 1:18**, then we too must be obedient to His order of things, regardless of what society or culture thinks or says.

Paul explains in **1Timothy 2:13, 14** by indicating that it was the woman who was first in the transgression, being deceived. Adam was not deceived. He knew when he partook of the forbidden fruit that it was sin and something he was not to do. Thus Adam was first in innocence, Eve, first in sin. Out of his desire to remain united to his bride, Adam partook, and because he was the one given rulership and dominion, it was not until he partook willfully, that the curse of sin fell on both of them. So also, Christ, out of His love for His creation and desire to be united with them, allowed Himself to be made sin for us Who knew no sin, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. **2Corinthians 5:21**.

Remember in our previous discussion that we are to be a peculiar people. That means that we do not follow the paths that society may take because the way a society or culture goes is not going to be the path that God has called us to walk in. Society is not based on God, His Word, or the principles of Historic Adventism; far from it. If we truly fear God and desire to do His will, we have no business allowing society to have any influence as to how we fulfill these roles in obeying God. If anyone occupies a position that God did not appoint, then any fame, popularity, success in growing a ministry, etc. that a person may enjoy for a season, is not of God. And if it is not of God, then it is of Satan, no matter how good he/she may sound, appear or think; and such will not be found in eternity because of disobedience to God's order. It bears repeating that the Bible has laid out the order for church organization and whether male or female, we need to follow that order in obedience to His will.

*“Summoning a meeting of the believers, the apostles were led by the Holy Spirit to outline a plan for the better organization of all the working forces of the church. The time had come, the apostles stated, when the spiritual leaders having the oversight of the church should be relieved from the task of distributing to the poor and from similar burdens, so that they might be free to carry forward the work of preaching the gospel. ‘Wherefore, brethren,’ they said, ‘look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.’ This advice was followed, and by prayer and the laying on of hands, seven chosen men were solemnly set apart for their duties as deacons.*

*“The appointment of the seven to take the oversight of special lines of work, proved a great blessing to the church. These officers gave careful consideration to individual needs as well as to the general financial interests of the church, and by their prudent management and their godly example they were an important aid to their fellow officers in binding together the various interests of the church into a united whole.*

*“That this step was in the order of God, is revealed in the immediate results for good that were seen. ‘The word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.’ This ingathering of souls was due both to the greater freedom secured by the apostles and to the zeal and power shown by the seven deacons. The fact that these brethren had been ordained for the special work of looking after the needs of the poor, did not exclude them from teaching the faith. On the contrary, they were fully qualified to instruct others*

in the truth, and they engaged in the work with great earnestness and success.

*“To the early church had been entrusted a constantly enlarging work--that of establishing centers of light and blessing wherever there were honest souls willing to give themselves to the service of Christ. The proclamation of the gospel was to be world-wide in its extent, and the messengers of the cross could not hope to fulfill their important mission unless they should remain united in the bonds of Christian unity, and thus reveal to the world that they were one with Christ in God. Had not their divine Leader prayed to the Father, ‘Keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as We are’? And had He not declared of His disciples, ‘The world hath hated them, because they are not of the world’? Had He not pleaded with the Father that they might be ‘made perfect in one,’ ‘that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me’? **John 17:11, 14, 23, 21**. Their spiritual life and power was dependent on a close connection with the One by whom they had been commissioned to preach the gospel.*

*“Only as they were united with Christ could the disciples hope to have the accompanying power of the Holy Spirit and the co-operation of angels of heaven. With the help of these divine agencies they would present before the world a united front and would be victorious in the conflict they were compelled to wage unceasingly against the powers of darkness. As they should continue to labor unitedly, heavenly messengers would go before them, opening the way; hearts would be prepared for the reception of truth, and many would be won to Christ. So long as they remained united, the church would go forth ‘fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.’ Song of Solomon 6:10. Nothing could withstand her onward progress. The church would advance from victory to victory, gloriously fulfilling her divine mission of proclaiming the gospel to the world.*

*“The organization of the church at Jerusalem was to serve as a model for the organization of churches in every other place where messengers of truth should win converts to the gospel. Those to whom was given the responsibility of the general oversight of the church were not to lord it over God's heritage, but, as wise shepherds, were to ‘feed the flock of God, . . . being ensamples to the flock’ (**1Peter 5:2, 3**); and the deacons were to be ‘men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom.’ These men were to take their position unitedly on the side of right and to maintain it with firmness and decision. Thus they would have a uniting influence upon the entire flock.*

*“Later in the history of the early church, when in various parts of the world many groups of believers had been formed into churches, the organization of the church was further perfected, so that order and*

harmonious action might be maintained. Every member was exhorted to act well his part. Each was to make a wise use of the talents entrusted to him. Some were endowed by the Holy Spirit with special gifts—'first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.' **1Corinthians 12:28**. But all these classes of workers were to labor in harmony. Solemn are the responsibilities resting upon those who are called to act as leaders in the church of God on earth. In the days of the theocracy, when Moses was endeavoring to carry alone burdens so heavy that he would soon have worn away under them, he was counseled by Jethro to plan for a wise distribution of responsibilities. 'Be thou for the people to Godward,' Jethro advised, 'that thou mayest bring the causes unto God: and thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do.' Jethro further advised that men be appointed to act as 'rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.' These were to be 'able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness.' They were to 'judge the people at all seasons,' thus relieving Moses of the wearing responsibility of giving consideration to many minor matters that could be dealt with wisely by consecrated helpers.

"The time and strength of those who in the providence of God have been placed in leading positions of responsibility in the church, should be spent in dealing with the weightier matters demanding special wisdom and largeness of heart. It is not in the order of God that such men should be appealed to for the adjustment of minor matters that others are well qualified to handle. 'Every great matter they shall bring unto thee,' Jethro proposed to Moses, 'but every small matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee. If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace.'

"In harmony with this plan, 'Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And they judged the people at all seasons: the hard causes they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves.' **Exodus 18:19-26**.

"Later, when choosing seventy elders to share with him the responsibilities of leadership, Moses was careful to select, as his helpers, men possessing dignity, sound judgment, and experience. In his charge to these elders at the time of their ordination, he outlined some of the qualifications that fit a man to be a wise ruler in the church. 'Hear the causes between your brethren,' said Moses, 'and judge righteously between every man and his

brother, and the stranger that is with him. Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's.' **Deuteronomy 1:16, 17.**

"King David, toward the close of his reign, delivered a solemn charge to those bearing the burden of the work of God in his day. Summoning to Jerusalem 'all the princes of Israel, the princes of the tribes, and the captains of the companies that ministered to the king by course, and the captains over the thousands, and captains over the hundreds, and the stewards over all the substance and possession of the king, and of his sons, with the officers, and with the mighty men, and with all the valiant men,' the aged king solemnly charged them, 'in the sight of all Israel the congregation of the Lord, and in the audience of our God,' to 'keep and seek for all the commandments of the Lord your God.' **1Chronicles 28:1, 8.**

"To Solomon, as one called to occupy a position of leading responsibility, David gave a special charge: 'Thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve Him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek Him, He will be found of thee; but if thou forsake Him, He will cast thee off forever. Take heed now; for the Lord hath chosen thee: . . . be strong.' **1Chronicles 28:9, 10.**

"The same principles of piety and justice that were to guide the rulers among God's people in the time of Moses and of David, were also to be followed by those given the oversight of the newly organized church of God in the gospel dispensation. In the work of setting things in order in all the churches, and ordaining suitable men to act as officers, the apostles held to the high standards of leadership outlined in the Old Testament Scriptures. They maintained that he who is called to stand in a position of leading responsibility in the church 'must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.' **Titus 1:7-9.**

"The order that was maintained in the early Christian church made it possible for them to move forward solidly as a well-disciplined army clad with the armor of God. The companies of believers, though scattered over a large territory, were all members of one body; all moved in concert and in harmony with one another. When dissension arose in a local church, as later it did arise in Antioch and elsewhere, and the believers were unable to come to an

*agreement among themselves, such matters were not permitted to create a division in the church, but were referred to a general council of the entire body of believers, made up of appointed delegates from the various local churches, with the apostles and elders in positions of leading responsibility. Thus the efforts of Satan to attack the church in isolated places were met by concerted action on the part of all, and the plans of the enemy to disrupt and destroy were thwarted.*

*“God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.’ **1Corinthians 14:33**. He requires that order and system be observed in the conduct of church affairs today no less than in the days of old. He desires His work to be carried forward with thoroughness and exactness so that He may place upon it the seal of His approval. Christian is to be united with Christian, church with church, the human instrumentality co-operating with the divine, every agency subordinate to the Holy Spirit, and all combined in giving to the world the good tidings of the grace of God.” **Ellen G. White, Acts of the Apostles, pg. 89-96 (1911)***

Another example we have is Ellen White. She never pastored a church nor was appointed, elected or otherwise asked to fill the position of pastor or elder. Did that mean she did not teach or preach? Did that mean she did not fill a major role in the formation of the remnant church? Was she not a prophet? Did she not speak as an oracle of God? Just because she was not a pastor or an elder did not prevent her from fulfilling God’s will and call upon her life, nor make her of any less importance in the building of God’s kingdom than anyone else.

We must bear in mind that God loves each of us equally. When the Bible says there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male or female, that we are all one in Christ, **Galatians 3:28** that is exactly what it means. We are all a part of His body; where culture is rendered irrelevant because all it does is cause division, not unity; and each of us, as a part of His body, has a role to fulfill in building up that body into the image of Christ. We are all equally important regardless of the part we perform. But God has assigned us different roles that we must fulfill according to His plan—not our own—and certainly not society’s. Let’s wise up and do what God says cheerfully and gladly, for then the church will have unity, power, and effective leadership which is so essential in these last days of chaos and utter confusion.

“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 **1Corinthians 14:34, 35**, and **1Timothy 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 **1Corinthians 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. **1Corinthians 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."*

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, **1Timothy 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, **1Corinthians 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 woman'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 **1Corinthians 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.

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 **1Corinthians 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"

(**2Kings 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 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." **E. J. Waggoner, *Signs of the Times*, May 12, 1887**

## **ROLE OF LEADERSHIP — RESULTS OF FALSE LEADERSHIP**

No one wants to hear that they are lost and without eternal hope, regardless of how "straight" or "otherwise" one may be. But the Bible is clear that, "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, **to dishonor their own bodies**

***between themselves:*** Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. ***For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.***  
**Romans 1:21-28.**

And as the curse of sin progresses in the world, the insanity of mankind will only increase until they are all madmen, possessed by demons and acting out their worst feelings and imaginations without control. We are already seeing direct signs of this fact in much greater frequency and much greater intensity than ever before.

“Nevertheless it is a fact that the nations did forget God; and **Romans 1:22-32** is an accurate description of their condition in consequence. The truthfulness of this description is attested by the heathen themselves. They deified the most profligate men and women, and worshiped vice instead of virtue. Their gods were male and female, and mythology, i. e., the history of the gods, is little else than a record of licentiousness. The Baal and Ashtoreth of the Canaanites, were the Jupiter and Venus of the Romans and Greeks, and every heathen nation had gods corresponding to them. The temples erected to them were magnificent brothels, and their priestesses were prostitutes. Licentiousness was not simply allowed, but it was commanded as an act of religion. Among the Babylonians it is said that, ‘once at least in her life, every woman was obliged to prostitute herself in the temple of Bel.’—American Cyclopaedia, art. Babylon. Heathenism ‘had made lust into a religion, and the worship of its gods a school of vice, penetrating all classes of society.’

“As it is not our object in this discussion to give simply our views, but to give the reasons for the views which we hold, we shall invariably quote from authorities, so that the reader may examine for himself. Let the reader first read **Romans 1:18-32**, and then compare it with the quotations that follow. Professor Stuart, in his ‘**Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans**,’ says on the **twenty-seventh verse of the first chapter**:—

“The evidences of the fact here stated by the apostle are too numerous and prominent among the heathen writers to need even a reference to them. Virgil himself, ‘the chase Virgil,’ as he has been often called, has a Corydon

amabat Alexin [Corydon loving Alexis], without seeming to feel the necessity of a blush for it. Such a fact sets the whole matter in the open day. That at Athens and Rome patosraotia [sodomy] was a very common and habitual thing, needs no proof to one who has read the Greek and Latin classics, especially the amatory poets, to any considerable extent. Plutarch tells us that Solon practiced it; and Diogenes Laertius says the same of the stoic Zeno. Need we be surprised, then, if the same horrible vice was frequent in the more barbarous parts of Greece and the Roman Empire?"

"In the heathen worship there were "mysteries," to which only the initiated were admitted. These were celebrated in the inner temples, and it is doubtless of them that the apostle Paul speaks when he says: 'For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.' **Ephesians 5:12**. If the things recorded in **the first chapter of Romans** were done openly [as they are today], what must have been the depth of the wickedness that was done in secret, and of which it is a shame even to speak? But let it be understood that the heathen themselves felt no shame for any of their practices [nor do any today]. They gloried in them, as things which brought them nearer to the gods. The more licentious they were, the more nearly they resembled the gods which they worshiped. The worst abominations were done in secret, not out of a sense of shame, but to show that certain ones had advanced beyond the common people in matters of 'religion.' On this point, Professor Stuart, in commenting on **Romans 1:24**, says:—

"The imputation is, that in apostatizing from the true God, and betaking themselves to the worship of idols, they had at the same time been the devoted slaves of lust; which indeed seems here also, by implication, to be assigned as the reason or ground of their apostasy. Everyone knows, moreover, that among almost all the various forms of heathenism, impurity has been either a direct or indirect service in its pretended religious duties. Witness the shocking law among the Babylonians, that every woman should prostitute herself, at least once, before the shrine of their Venus. It is needless to say, that the worshipers of Venus in Greece and Rome practiced such rites; or that the mysteries of heathenism, of which Paul says 'it is a shame even to speak,' allowed a still greater latitude of indulgence. Nor is it necessary to describe the obscene and bloody rites practiced in Hindostan, in the South Sea and the Sandwich Islands, and generally among the heathen. Polytheism and idolatry have nearly always been a religion of obscenity and blood."

"Summing up the evidence against them, Paul says that they were 'filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of

God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful.' **Romans 1:29-31**. And to crown all, he adds that they not only did these things, but had pleasure in those who did them [as they do today]. Nothing could exceed such depravity. As Professor Stuart says:--

"It is often the case, that wicked men, whose consciences have been enlightened, speak reproachfully of others who practice such vices as they themselves indulge in. Few profligate parents, for example, are willing that their children should sustain the same character with themselves. But when we find, as in some cases we may do, such parents encouraging and applauding their children in acts of wickedness, I we justly consider it as evidence of the very highest kind of depravity.

"It is of such depravity as this that the apostle accuses the heathen. And justly; for even their philosophers and the best educated among them, stood chargeable with such an accusation. For example; both the Epicureans and the Stoics allowed and defended patosraotia [sodomy] and incest, numbering these horrid crimes among the aoiaphora, things indifferent."--**Comment on Romans 1:32**.

"This was the state of morals, not alone of the lower, uneducated classes, but of the philosophers,—those who instructed the youth in 'virtue.' That the apostle uses the term, 'without understanding,' with respect to the morals, and not the intellect, will be readily seen from the following quotations:—

"From the ignorance and uncertainty, which (we have seen) prevailed among some of the greatest teachers of antiquity, concerning those fundamental truths which are the greatest barriers of virtue and religion, it is evident that the heathens had no perfect scheme of moral rules for piety and good manners. . . . They accounted revenge to be not only lawful, but commendable. Pride and the love of popular applause (the subduing of which is the first principle of true virtue) were esteemed the best and greatest incentives to virtue and noble actions; suicide was regarded as the strongest mark of heroism, and the perpetrators of it, instead of being branded with infamy, were commended and celebrated as men of noble minds. But the interior acts of the soul,—the adultery of the eye and the murder of the heart,— were little regarded. On the contrary, the philosophers countenanced, both by arguments and example, the most flagitious practices. Thus theft, as is well known, was permitted in Egypt and in Sparta; Plato taught the expediency and lawfulness of exposing children in particular cases; and Aristotle, also, of abortion. The exposure of infants, and the putting to death of children who were weak or imperfect in form, was allowed

at Sparta by Lycurgus; at Athens, the great seat and nursery of philosophers, the women were treated and disposed of as slaves, and it was enacted that 'infants, which appeared to be maimed, should either be killed or exposed;' and that 'the Athenians might lawfully invade and enslave any people, who, in their opinion, were fit to be made slaves.' The infamous traffic in human blood was permitted to its utmost extent; and, on certain occasions, the owners of slaves had full permission to kill them. . . . Customary swearing was commended, if not by the precepts, yet by the example of the best moralists among the heathen philosophers, particularly Socrates, Plato, Seneca, and the Emperor Julian. . . . The gratification of the sensual appetites, and of the most unnatural lusts, was openly taught and allowed. Aristippus maintained that it was lawful for a wise man to steal, commit adultery, and sacrilege, when opportunity offered; for that none of these actions were naturally evil, setting aside the vulgar opinion, which was introduced by silly and illiterate people; and that a wise man might publicly gratify his libidinous propensities."

"Truth was but of small account among many, even of the best heathens; for they taught that on many occasions, a lie was to be preferred to the truth itself! To which we may add, that the unlimited gratification of their sensual appetites, and the commission of unnatural crimes, was common even among the most distinguished teachers of philosophy, and was practiced even by Socrates himself. . . . 'The most notorious vices,' says Quinetilian, speaking of the philosophers of his time, 'are screened under that name; and they do not labor to maintain the character of philosophers by virtue and study, but conceal the most vicious lives under an austere look and singularity of dress.'"—**Horne's Introduction, vol. 1, chap. 1.**

"Notwithstanding the unpleasant nature of the theme, we shall pursue it a little further, for it is absolutely necessary that we understand that vice and immorality everywhere prevailed [as it does today]. Speaking of the domestic life of the heathen, Dr. Philip Schaff, in his '**History of the Christian Church**' (**vol. 1, sec. 91**), says:—

"Monogamy was the rule both in Greece and in Rome, but did not exclude illegitimate connections. Concubinage, in its proper legal sense, was a sort of secondary marriage with a woman of servile or plebeian extraction, standing below the dignity of a matron and above the infamy of a prostitute. It was sanctioned and regulated by law; it prevailed both in the East and the West from the age of Augustus to the tenth century, and was preferred to regular marriage by Vespasian, and the two Antonines, the best Roman emperors. Adultery was severely punished, at times even with sudden

destruction of the offender; but simply as an interference with the rights and property of a free men. The wife had no legal or social protection against the infidelity of her husband. The Romans worshiped a peculiar goddess of domestic life; but her name, Viriplaca, the appeaser of husbands, indicates her partiality. Besides, it must be remembered that the intercourse of a husband with the slaves of his household and with public prostitutes was excluded from the odium and punishment of adultery. . . . The women, however, seem to have been as corrupt as their husbands, at least in the imperial age. Juvenal calls a chaste wife a 'rara avis in terris' [a rare bird in the earth]. Under Augustus, free-born daughters could no longer be found for the service of Vesta, and even the severest laws of Domitian could not prevent the six priestesses of the pure goddess from breaking their vow. Divorce is said to have been almost unknown in the ancient days of the Roman republic. But the customary civil and religious rites of marriage were gradually disused; apparent open community of life between persons of similar rank was taken as sufficient evidence of their nuptials; and marriage, after Augustus, fell to the level of any partnership, which might be dissolved by the abdication of one of the associates."

"If the thoughtful reader has his mind almost involuntarily directed, by these statements, to the loose conditions of society in our own time, it will not be a matter of surprise. The last days, said our Saviour, will be as the days before the flood, when men "took them wives of all which they chose" (**Genesis 6:2**); and when we consider the ease with which divorce may be obtained, the pleasure that is taken in reading the details of scandal, as indicated by the prominence given them by the press, and the readiness with which men of known licentiousness are received in "good society," we see strong evidence that the end is near at hand.

"A few quotations concerning the religion of heathenism will give us a still deeper insight into the morals of the people. Says Schaff:—

"How could there be any proper conception and abhorrence of the sin of licentiousness and adultery, if the very gods, a Jupiter, a Mars, and a Venus, were believed to be guilty of those crimes? Modesty forbids the mention of a still more odious vice, which even depraved nature abhors, which yet was freely discussed and praised by ancient poets and philosophers, practiced with neither punishment nor dishonor, and likewise divinely sanctioned by the lewdness of Jupiter with Ganymede."--*History of the Church, vol. 1, sec. 91.*

"Another writer says:—



"As to the religion of heathenism, it is 'a wild growth on the soil of fallen human nature, a darkening of the original consciousness of God, a deification of the rational and irrational creature, and a corresponding corruption of the moral sense, giving the sanction of religion to natural and unnatural vices. . . . The gods are involved by their marriages in perpetual jealousies and quarrels. Though called holy and just, they are full of envy and wrath, hatred and lust, and provoke each other to lying and cruelty, perjury and adultery.'" - **McClintock and Strong's Cyclopedia, art. Heathen.**

"Dr. Mosheim, in the introduction to his "**Historical Commentaries**," gives us a view of the peculiar religion of each of the various nations, and in summing up says:--

"None of these various systems of religion appear to have contributed in the least towards an amendment of the moral principle, a reformation of manners, or to the exciting a love, or even a respect, for virtue of any sort. The gods and goddesses, who were held up as objects of adoration to the common people, instead of exhibiting in themselves examples of a refined and supereminent virtue, displayed in illustrious actions, stood forth to public view the avowed authors of the most flagrant and enormous crimes. The priests likewise took no sort of interest whatever in the regulation of the public morals, neither directing the people by their precepts, nor inviting them by exhortation and example, to the pursuit of a wise and honorable course of life; but on the contrary indulged themselves in the most unwarrantable licentiousness, maintaining that the whole of religion was comprised in the rites and ceremonies instituted by their ancestors, and that every sort of sensual gratification was liberally allowed by the gods to those who regularly ministered to them in this way."—**Chap. 1, sec. 20.**

"When even the religion which men profess tends to deepen their natural depravity, what good can be expected of them? No man can fully comprehend such wickedness; for the man who has had no experience in such debasing forms of sin cannot understand how anybody can sink so low; and the man who has descended to the depths of vice has his moral sense so blunted that sin no longer appears sinful [as it is today]. We might quote pages upon pages of matter similar to the above, but we do not wish to harrow the reader's mind with any more than is actually necessary to impress upon it the condition of the world into which the apostles were sent out as sheep among wolves [it is no different today for the true Christian].

"Dr. Edersheim's great work, "The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah," [in it he says]:—

“Without tracing the various phases of ancient thought, it may be generally said that, in Rome at least, the issue lay between Stoicism and Epicureanism. The one flattered its pride, the other gratified its sensuality; the one was in accordance with the original national character, the other with its later decay and corruption. Both ultimately led to atheism and despair—the one, by turning all higher aspirations selfward, the other, by quenching them in the enjoyment of the moment; the one, by making the extinction of all feeling and self-deification, the other, the indulgence of every passion and the worship of matter, its ideal.

"It would be unsavory to describe how far the worship of indecency was carried; how public morals were corrupted by the mimic representations of everything that was vile, and even by the pandering of a corrupt art. The personation of gods, oracles, divination, dreams, astrology, magic, necromancy, and theurgy, all contributed to the general decay. It has been rightly said, that the idea of conscience, as we understand it, was unknown to heathenism. Absolute right did not exist. Might was right. The social relations exhibited, if possible, even deeper corruption. The sanctity of marriage had ceased. Female dissipation and the general dissoluteness led at last to an almost entire cessation of marriage. Abortion, and the exposure and murder of newly-born children, were common and tolerated; unnatural vices, which even the greatest philosophers practiced, if not advocated, attained proportions which defy description." **E. J. Waggoner, *Fathers of the Catholic Church*, pp. 9-26.**

Here we see exactly what is happening today in our world. Lip service is paid to God by many, but the overwhelming religion of the world is self-deification and every effort to satisfy every lust that comes upon a person with no restraint whatsoever. There is no transformation of the life, there is no change in behavior, there is no crucifixion of self and the flesh, there is no sacrifice of the heart, there is no desire to glorify God in Spirit and in truth across the board. Rather, the prevailing concept is that, “It’s all about me. I will do, I will think, I will say, I will act, according to my will and mine alone. If it makes me feel good, I will do it, regardless of potential consequences. I am god. I am in control of my life. Me, Me, ME.”

And because no one is taught in the home, public education system, or the church any longer for the most part, that there is such a thing as absolutes, particularly the truth of God’s Word, even those who profess the truth don’t really believe it, being fully persuaded of it that it is the truth, that it comes from God in Whom is no variance or shadow of turning, (**James 1:17**), and thus it stands as merely words from the mouth without substance in the life on a constant, continual

basis. It is presumption, based on the lies of Satan that carry more weight than the Word of God. Thus the world turns, **AS DOES ITS LEADERS**, as it did in the days of history, to anything and everything but God in order to achieve whatever their definition of happiness and success may be, with no regard for God, His Law, His Word, or His salvation that He alone can provide to even the most profligate of sinners, regardless of vice.

But none of that will be a part of His church. His church, the true spiritual church, consists of only those who are faithful to Him and His truth, no one else. No matter what building may be used, no matter what day of the week people will choose to meet, no matter what denomination may be professed, no matter what claims may be made within that gathering as to greatness or what message may be given, the true church is a spiritual church, directed by its Head, the Lord Jesus Christ, and guided by His representative, the Holy Spirit, in all things. They are clearly identified as those who “Keep the commandments of God [all of them as written by God Himself] and the faith of Jesus.” **Revelation 14:12**. No organization, no federation, no league, all papal in origin and nature, are a part of God’s true church. Only those who are fully surrendered to the Father in heaven, giving the Spirit of God free reign in their lives to direct their every step, every thought, every word, every action are a part of that church, and only those, whose character is transformed by the power of God unto salvation (**Romans 1:16**), and who live solely by faith, His faith, the faith of Jesus will ever have a part in the leadership of His body here on this earth.

Thus it is that this church welcomes all into its meetings for fellowship, those joining with us desiring to hear the truth of God’s Word so that their lives may be transformed by the inner working of the Holy Spirit. Anyone and everyone is welcome. But membership and leadership roles are reserved for those who have completely surrendered their lives to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and who are not engaged in the practice of any worldly behaviors, whether it be in what they eat, what they drink, or how they live. There is only one way that is acceptable to God and that is His way. His way is clearly revealed in the Bible and all we must do is surrender to it completely. He has done the work, He will do the work in us to change us into His likeness, but only when we surrender fully to Him.