

FIRST CORINTHIANS

Feminism And The Ordination Of Women I Corinthians 11:3

Since the 1960s a revolution has been going on in the American culture. Originally it was called Women's Liberation but is now referred to as The Feminist Movement. The feminists claim this is a man's world and women are trapped in it. Women have been subjected and enslaved by man confined to bearing children, keeping house, sleeping with her husband and enhancing his life to the total exclusion of her rights and privileges as a person. Women in America have been oppressed in a male-oriented culture. Feminists cleverly repeat words like "imprisoned", "enslaved", "subjugated", "dominated" to emotionally stir women to action.

Feminism is rapidly changing our culture, our government, our schools, our homes, our churches and our religion. Like it or not, feminism has deeply affected our evangelical churches and, while not as radical, many Christian women call themselves Christian Feminists not realizing they too are tools in destroying Biblical Christianity.

FEMINISTS AND EQUALITY

The Issue

Originally feminists stated they only wanted equality with men in all things - equal sexual rights, non-discrimination on jobs, equal wages for equal work, adequate opportunities for advancement, legal abortion, no fault divorce and child care centers for all.

After 37 years of feminists' propaganda and many social victories, the modern day feminists wants more than equality or democratic rights (which they have fairly well attained), they want power. Power to control government, schools, the work place, the human body, sexuality and ultimately religion.

According to Rebecca Jones, the wife of a PAC professor at Westminster West in California, the feminists want: 1) protection against male abuse; 2) resistance of male domination; 3) rebellion against all male authority; 4) dismissal of male/female distinctions; 5) destruction of all patriarchal structures and 6) absolute authority through the rejection of the male God; that is, God the Father.

Feminists like any social movement has its radicals, moderates and conservatives, but this movement has become a "catch all" for multiple millions of women who are frustrated with marriage and dislike being a wife and mother. Most of the radical feminists in our day are outspoken witches and lesbians committed to a new religion for a new millennium with women at the helm.

The Answer

Husband and Wife. God made them male and female (Gen 1:27-31). Each sex was to have a certain biological function. After the Fall, God stated that women would be the child bearer and man the breadwinner (Gen. 3:16, 19). So we see that in God's plan, woman was designed to be a wife and mother and man was to be husband and father. This has been the basic pattern for all cultures and when it has been violated a society has fallen.

Man is not complete without a woman (Gen. 2:18). Woman is to be man's complement. Man's biological function was to sire children (Gen. 1:27); his romantic loyalty was to his wife (Gen. 2:24); and his vocational function was to till the soil, a provider (Gen. 3:19). Woman's biological function was to bear children; her romantic role was to love her husband, and her primary vocational role was to follow the leadership of her husband (Gen. 3:16).

Woman is to be submissive to her husband and the husband is to love his wife. Wives submit to your husbands as to the Lord. Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church. (Eph. 5:22, 25). Submission of a woman to her husband is a necessity; however, she does not have to be subject to all men simply because she is a woman. Yet, no woman should consider marriage unless she is willing to submit to her husband, and no man should consider marriage unless he is willing to love his wife. The man is the leader. Leadership does not imply superiority of the husband over the wife, for a woman may be intellectually advanced to her husband, but man is still the head because God has appointed it so. Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God (I Cor. 11:3). Headship never implies inferiority, for while I Corinthians 11:3 teaches that man is to be the head of a woman, it also teaches that God the Father is the head of Christ. Yet, Christ is not inferior to the Father, but He voluntarily subjected Himself to the Father.

Woman As A Mother. Whenever possible, a woman with small children should be at home with them. Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live. Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God (Titus 2:4-5). A wife, mother and homemaker is God's ideal for a woman. Feminists have convinced most women that staying home with the kids makes one a second class woman not being fulfilled as a total person. Interestingly enough one of the marks of a baby boomer is that the husband makes enough money so the wife can stay home with the kids. If women are bored at home with children, it is a spiritual problem.

"That special power of loving that belongs to a woman is seen most clearly when she becomes a mother. Motherhood is the gift of God to women. Yet we can destroy this gift of motherhood, especially by the evil of abortion, but also by thinking that other things like jobs or positions are more important than loving, than giving oneself to others. No job, no plans, no possession, no idea of freedom can take the place of love. So anything that destroys God's gift of motherhood destroys His most precious gift to women -- the ability to love as a woman" (Mother Teresa, Letter to the Fourth Conference on Women).

Working Women. There is nothing in scripture which would keep a woman from having a profession, career or owning a legitimate business as long as this did not interfere with her first responsibility to be a wife and mother. A woman may go as far up the ladder in the professional world as her God-given talents will take her. The ideal woman of Proverbs 31 was able to carry on business ventures while tending for her family. Lydia also was a business woman (Acts 16:14-15). She was in the clothing business. She and her whole house were baptized so we know she had children (maybe even small children) but could carry out her private business.

Great Women. Throughout the Bible certain women are highly revered. Deborah (prophet and judge), Miriam (prophet and musician), Esther (Queen who saved the Jews), Anna (prophet), Mary (mother of Jesus), Lydia (business woman). There are others such as Naomi, Delilah, Rahab, Abigail, Elizabeth, Mary Magdalene.

FEMINISM AND RELIGION

The Issue

All feminists have an agenda, especially the radical feminists who make up about 5% of the total feminist movement. Yet, these radicals push an agenda which is very attractive to many women and every day a new type of religion is being formed in this country by women and most do not even know it. It is a revival of paganism and the Mother-cult through a goddess named Sophia. In actuality, it is a revival of ancient Gnosticism which caused such problems for the writers of the New Testament and the early church fathers.

Feminists basically hate men, and all male figures are wrong. Their goal is to destroy anything in our culture which is male oriented whether it is men or God the Father or Jesus Christ. They set forth the "androgynous being" who contains the characteristics of both male and female. They even claim Adam was originally an androgynous being but when God made Eve, He took most if not all the feminine characteristics from Adam. The goal of religion is to restore all people to the original Adam so as to produce an androgynous person for the new millennium, the Age of Aquarius.

"What is at stake is a real leap in human evolution, initiated by women ...to an intuition of being which. is an intuition of human integrity, of androgynous being (Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father: Towards a Philosophy of Women's Liberation*).

To bring in the new order of androgynous being, there must be a destruction of the patriarchal system (male or father authority) as found in the Bible. The way this will be done is by mocking male figures as inferior and even stupid and by setting forth homosexuality and lesbianism as the supreme (not just alternate) lifestyle. Virginia Mollenkott, a practicing lesbian who professes to be a radical evangelical says,

"Compulsory heterosexuality is the very backbone that holds patriarchy together." Homosexuality will break that backbone. "If society is to turn from patriarchy to partnership," we must learn that lesbian, bisexual, and gay issues are not just private bedroom matters of "doing whatever turns you on." They are "wedges driven into the superstructure of the hetero-patriarchal system." (Peter Jones, *Spirit Wars*).

Feminists say the closest a person can come to androgyny is through homosexuality, lesbianism and bi-sexuality, for in so doing both homosexual males and female lesbians play both the male and female roles. Feminists know if they can destroy the male persona that it opens the door wide for full-fledged feminism which is personal power to be autonomous of all structures and relationships the power of radical freedom to do whatever one pleases.

In order to gain absolute autonomy for all, especially women, there must be a destruction of the male God of the Bible God the Father. Therefore, there is an attempt to do away with any male names or characteristics for God. Madelebe L'Engle called God the Father, "The paternalistic male chauvinist pig Old Testament God." If God the Father can be made neutral or even feminine, then there is no God the Son and the door is left open to a new Savior who is Sophia, the female goddess, the new Savior for the new age of Aquarius (the third millennium). Sophia is the perfect symbol of the tolerant, inclusive, pro-choice society of tomorrow, able to welcome all forms of religion, all expressions of sexuality and all ethical choices. Sophia promises liberation from all restraints and radical freedom. Her ultimate goal is to destroy Yahweh of the Old Testament and to make a world religion and society dominated by women. Sophia is the "Mother of the Universe." She is the goddess of occult wisdom in every way opposed to the wisdom of God. Naomi Goldberg, a Jewish feminists witch says, "We women are going to bring an end to God." Ex-Roman Catholic priest Andrew Greeley says, "Women will remake God." There are pockets of women in all the mainline liberal Christian denominations today who worship the goddess Sophia.

How do we see the influences of Sophia in our society? At the movies and on the TV screen everyday, there is the image of the father idiot and the all wise mother (Cosby Show; Home Improvement, Mad About You). Homosexuality and lesbianism are exalted as alternative lifestyles. Witches, séances, warlocks and psychics are set forth in such a way to glorify the

occult (Channel 35 is now called the psychic channel). Many so-called churches change hymns, liturgies and even biblical texts in order to conform to a gender inclusive divine image. In the public schools and government controlled day care centers seemingly harmless programs of "gender equality" are being taught so as to blur sexual roles of men and women. Sex education in the public schools presents homosexuality as a legitimate alternate lifestyle. Many churches are re-doing hymn books to remove all names like "Father" or "King." Some evangelical colleges are now singing "Rise Up O Saints of God" rather than "Rise Up O Men of God" or "Faith of Our Fathers" is now alternately sung as "Faith of Our Mothers." Some are praying, "Our Mother which art in heaven." At the Harvard Divinity School, there is more Buddhist chanting and meditation than hymn singing. Even our government is committed to hiring homosexuals and lesbians.

American society reached a watershed in 1993 when twenty-seven practicing gays and lesbians were named to posts in the Clinton administration. For Bruce Lehman, a Clinton appointee at the Commerce Department, this courageous gesture is "the first time in the history of mankind (that) a president has sought to break the taboo on this gentle people. These gentle people have a not-so-gentle agenda. It is clearly stated in the gay platform on the March on Washington in 1993. Their demands included: a gay civil rights bill; homosexual adoptions and the redefinition of the family; gay curricula in the schools; an end to gender dysphoria as a psychiatric disorder, homosexual polygamy; a lowering of the age of sexual consent for children; the obligation to force all organizations, including the Boy Scouts, to accept gays; medical insurance for sex-change operations; admission of AIDS-infected immigrants; passage of ERA; legalization of homosexual marriages (Peter Jones, Spirit Wars).

Let's make no mistake about it, the feminists' agenda is nothing short of a sexual and religious revolution which goes far beyond equality and civil rights. What is happening is a paradigm shift with great ramifications and a push for a new order for a new age the Age of Aquarius. The main obstacle feminists have is the true, Bible-believing Christians, and they will go to any lengths to wipe out this one obstacle. Be alert! Stand fast Christian! Sophia shows tolerance to everyone except Bible-believing Christians.

The Answer

The issue for the feminists who want to go after a new religion with Sophia as the Savior is a matter of what the Bible teaches. Will we believe what the Bible says about creation of man and woman and the role He has set forth for male and female in His creation? The only hope we Christians have is to trust the God of the Bible and use the inspired and infallible Bible as our only authority. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work (II Tim. 3:16).

The problem is that when people become atheists is not that they stop believing in God but they now start believing in anything. Remember to go after the new religion of the feminist will bring a woman or man to eternal punishment. The stakes are high and we must as Christians make our choices for Jehovah-God and His Son Jesus Christ.

FEMINISM AND THE SUBORDINATION OF WOMEN

The Issue

Feminists say women are free to pursue ordination. They can be pastors, elders, deacons, preachers, priests or whatever because they are free and equal with all men in everything. Ordination is no small issue. Eight of ten baby boomer Catholic women favor the ordination of women. The percentage is even higher for Protestant mainline boomer women. More than half of the conservative Protestant boomer women and three-quarters of conservative Protestant boomer men favor women's ordination.

Christian Feminists turn to Galatians 3:28 to support the ordination of women: There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28). The argument is that in Christ men and women are equal in every way, so women can be ordained. Female subordination has been abolished by the gospel and allows for women along with men to be ordained to the gospel ministry.

The Answer

Male and female are equal in Christ. Yet, there is an order of authority in the home and in the church. In Christ, husband and wife are on the same spiritual level, but God in His order of creation has placed the husband over his wife in authority (headship, leadership). A woman is both equal and subordinate to the husband (not inferior, less intelligent, or possessing fewer social or work skills).

Feminists argue that Galatians 3:28 allows for the doing away of male authority resulting in a 50-50 partnership between husband and wife. They say Paul allowed for slavery ("slave or free") but over time slavery through an evolutionary process basically passed out of existence. So why not also female subordination to men? Female subordination was a cultural issue in Paul's day but not in ours, and we today have no real need for subordination of women to their husbands.

The answer is that nowhere in scripture do we find a reason for the continuance of slavery for it was a social institution. However, the position of subordination for women to their husbands is quite different. The Bible writers in several places require that the order of creation requires women to be subordinate to their husbands based on the teaching of Genesis 1-3. Slavery was not based on God's creation but female subordination is and it continues in the new creation in Christ.

A practical and historical issue is that all the major prophets of the Old Testament, the Apostles of the New Testament and Jesus Christ Himself were men. Surely there is a plan in this pattern.

FEMINISM AND THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN TO THE OFFICE OF ELDER

The Issue

There is really only one passage which is key to whether a woman should or should not be ordained to the ministry. A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner (I Tim. 2:11-14).

All feminists take this verse as a first century cultural situation in which a woman was forbidden to teach and have authority over men. This was a particular local Ephesian problem with women being abusive in authority and giving in to the teaching of heresy which was exposed in First Timothy a deviant approach to sexuality. They say the Greek word for "authority" occurs only here in the New Testament and is a negative term which refers to the usurpation and abuse of authority not an appropriate use of authority. Furthermore, they point out that in verses 8 and 9 the lifting up of hands in prayer by men and the dress for women in public worship are certainly cultural so why not women teaching and having authority over men?

The Answer

The whole context of First Timothy is about public worship and how to conduct a local church. While men raising hands in prayer may be cultural, there is no reason why this should not happen all the time in worship services if we choose to be biblical. Furthermore, while women's dress may not be exactly the same as those of the Greeks, the principle is obvious that women are not to dress in the official meeting of the church so as to draw attention to themselves. The word "authority" is unique and women were abusing their authority and that was the problem. Yet, Paul gives a transcultural reason why women are not to teach and have authority over men. He goes to the creation in Genesis 1 and 2 to once again show Adam was formed first and then Eve. Adam was to have authority (leadership) over Eve. Then Paul appeals to Genesis 3 where Adam and Eve fell into sin. Eve was deceived and fell into sin but Adam chose to sin with his eyes wide open. This verse may imply because of her tender, trusting nature, a woman is more easily deceived and this wonderful characteristic may affect her ability to lead in the home and the church.

However, in the case of I Timothy 2:11-14, the Apostle does provide an explicit rationale for his prohibition and that rationale does not appeal to the cultural situation of the first century. Rather, he appeals to the order of creation. To assign a different or contrary reason for the Apostle's prohibition (than the one he gave) is not only to do violence to the Biblical text by unwarranted speculation, but also to do violence to the integrity of the Apostle himself. If Paul's "real" reason were not the reason he gave, we must convict the Apostle of hypocrisy and duplicity. Therefore, we must reject the notion that Paul's prohibition was motivated and bound by the cultural situation of his day (Ordination and Subordination by Frank Coho, James Dennison, John Gestner, Wynn Kenyon, R.C. Sproul).

The teaching and authority in I Timothy 2:11-14 seems to deal in the area of leadership.

A woman is not to be an elder (teaching or ruling) in the local church because elders are the final authority in the local church. Authority belongs to the man because of the creation. This does not say a woman must always be silent in church because I Corinthians 11:5 says a woman may pray and prophesy in church: And every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head (husband). This does not say a woman cannot teach women, children and even men outside the official meeting of the church. In my opinion, if she does pray, teach, preach or prophecy in the presence of adult men, she should have her head covered. This does not mean that a woman cannot have the spiritual gift of pastor-teacher, for a distinction must always be made between a spiritual gift and an office. The office of elder, teaching and ruling, has been assigned by God, based on the creation to men, born of God's Spirit, committed to Jesus Christ and the infallible Word of God. There are many women with the gift of pastor-teacher who should be allowed to use that gift in the local church.

FEMINISM AND THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN TO THE OFFICE OF DEACON

A strong case may be made from the Bible for women being ordained to the office of deacon. Romans 16:1 indicates Phoebe may have been a deaconess at the Church of Cenchrrea. I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant (deacon) of the church in Cenchrrea (Rom. 16:1). The passage in I Timothy 3:8-11 which gives qualifications for the office of deacon as relates to wives certainly can be translated in such a way to allow for the office of deaconess. Historically many sections of the visible church have allowed for women deacons. Ordaining of women deacons does not bother me personally because the office of deacon is not a judicial office but a serving office. Deacons do not rule but serve. Therefore, for a woman to be a deaconess, she would not be usurping authority over a man in spiritual matters.

While the Presbyterian Church in America does not officially recognize the office of deaconess, it does allow for women to be Deacon Assistants.

It is often expedient that the Session of a church should select and appoint godly men and women of the congregation to assist the deacons in caring for the sick, widows, orphans, prisoners, and others who may be in any distress or need (BCO 9-7).

CONCLUSION

If a woman cannot be ordained to the office of elder or deacon in the PCA what can she do? A woman can do anything in the local church except hold an official, ordained office.

A woman can be a Deacon's Assistant, can chair committees, can teach women, children and adult men outside the official meeting of the church, can exercise the spiritual gift of pastor-teacher without the official office of elder, can serve on any committees, can use her musical skills, can pray and prophesy, can usher, can evangelize and do many other ministries in the local church.

What a woman cannot do is hold an official position of authority over a man whether that be in the church or in the home. The PCA does not ordain women because they don't like women, nor because they are not as talented as men (many are more talented), nor because women are inferior to men (many women are far superior to men) but they do not ordain women because the Bible does not seem to teach it.

Through the exposition of texts and our refutation of various misinterpretations, we trust the reader can understand now why we cannot ordain women. It can be seen we hope, not only where we stand but also, and far more importantly, why we stand. We cannot do otherwise. We cannot ordain women because God, we believe, does not permit it (Ordination and Subordination).