

The

# Presbyterian Witness

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## The Presbyterian Witness

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Striving for the purity and peace of the Presbyterian Church in America is the responsibility of all her members and officers. Therefore, the purpose of this magazine is to enhance the purity of doctrine, purity of life, unity in the Spirit, and diligence in mission of the Presbyterian Church in America.

God raised up our denomination to be a standard bearer of “the truth as it is in Jesus,” “the whole counsel of God,” as faithfully expressed in our historic standards. Our goal is that through our faithfulness to the Great Commission, “the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” (Isaiah 11:9).

We love the PCA and long to see it continue to be more and more reformed by the Word of God in its thinking and living. It is to that end that we pray God will use our magazine.

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### A Note to Our Readers:

Please remember that, while *The Presbyterian Witness* is free of charge, the donations of readers and supporters is our only source of the funds necessary to continue this publication. Your prayers and financial support are greatly appreciated.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Byron:

As you know, Ross House Books is the publishing house that publishes the books of the late Rousas John Rushdoony. We have an interesting dilemma.

Years ago, Ross House Books produced a book called *Roots of Reconstruction*, a compilation of Dr. Rushdoony's *Chalcedon Report* articles from 1965 (the beginning) to 1985. We currently have a very large quantity of them in inventory and have had to purchase extra storage space to accommodate them. Why is this a problem? Because we need to clear that space for the upcoming 5 volume Pentateuch Series—Genesis through Deuteronomy—the first volume of which is at the printer. We intend to have the second volume (Exodus) out before year's end, with the remaining volumes in print by the end of 2003. We simply must make room for these new books.

Our regular price for this 1100+ page volume is \$20. As a special consideration to your readers, we are willing to ship, postpaid, individual copies for \$12.00 and offer higher discounting for quantities. Mail your individual orders to:

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In His Service,  
Andrea Schwartz  
Ross House Books

: : : : : : : :

Dear Sir:

Readers who desire to receive my used book lists can e-mail me at [JLOF@aol.com](mailto:JLOF@aol.com).

Sincerely,  
John Lofton

# Women's Leadership in the Church

## An Interview with Dr. George Knight

By Byron Snapp

George Knight is a teaching elder and member of the Matthews OPC Session in Matthews, North Carolina.

Q. Why is women's role in church leadership continually pushed, even in some Reformed churches?

A. Reasons may vary in each case. However, as a general rule, it is probably a concern to make sure that women are not left out of roles in which supporters believe they should be involved. They probably have not adequately considered the prohibition passages in the New Testament and recognized their continuing relevance.

Some, such as a Fuller Seminary professor, have argued that they have had students come to them and say, "You defended the rights of blacks, a minority group. Now is it not your responsibility to defend the rights of another minority group--women?" It is conceivable that a concern for a minority group may be wrongly influencing people who are advocating women in church leadership roles.

As we continue to talk we will see some very clear passages that recognize the equality of men and women made in God's image and redeemed by our Lord Jesus Christ. Yet the same writers indicate that there are distinguishable roles for men and women.

Q. What is the root issue in this discussion?

A. The root issue, from my perspective, is whether or not God by His creation activity and the instruction given in His Word shall determine how our worship is ordered and how our men and women shall conduct themselves in it.

I think if we make any other thing the root issue without taking into account what God has done or said we may end up taking a wrong position. This would violate the regulative principle of worship which states that God alone prescribes how we are to worship Him.

Q. In some churches the argument has been given that it is okay for women to teach men if they are not ordained because they are under sessional authority. How would you respond?

A. I think that argument has this to commend it. Those who rule the church are the Session. The Session decides who should be participating in the worship service.

I do think we must remember that the Session is to be governed by what the Word of God teaches. The question then is "Does the Word of God allow women to teach men, even when the women are under sessional authority?"

I am struck by the fact that when Paul writes his words of instruction to us in I Timothy 2:11 he says, "I do not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man" and concludes by saying "she must be silent." I think the significance here is that people in the church at Ephesus could have written back to Paul and said, "Paul, the Session here is allowing women to do that."

The Session should not allow women to teach men if Paul prohibits a woman teaching the Word of God and Biblical truth to men. Paul's prohibition does not allow a Session to be granted the authority to extend the permission to someone whom Paul has forbidden to teach men.

Sometimes they argue that the teaching that is prohibited here is preaching by an ordained person. It is one of the main implications of the text, but it is not all Paul forbids. In I Timothy 2:12 he forbids an activity, not an office or an ordination. To simply restrict this to ordination, particularly when you have the words "she should learn in quietness and full submission" preceding and "she must be silent" following, is not indicated by the passage.

Q. What Scriptures speak most directly to this issue? How would you summarize their basic thesis?

A. The interesting thing is to notice that Paul is dealing with the same problem with which we are facing. Let me back up one step. They right understood that Christian males and females are one in Christ with regard to salvation. They misunderstood by believing that there was therefore no difference in the roles of men and women in the church. Thus, all the Apostles needed to instruct the people to keep them from making the wrong deductions.

I think the passage in I Timothy 2 is quite helpful because it is dealing with what a woman may do in the life of the church in regard to teaching the Word of God. Thus I Timothy 2:11-14 is very helpful.

A similar passage is I Corinthians 14. Here Paul deals with the question again in vv.33-38. Both I Timothy 2 and I Corinthians 14 command that women be silent in the church in reference to speaking and teaching. They are not to teach men. Therefore, they are not to teach the entire congregation because men would be in the congregation. Both of these passages describe the activity in which women should not be involved. They do not say women should not be office bearers only. Office bearing is a prohibition. However, it is not the only prohibition.

I Corinthians 14:33 makes the argument that God is not a God of disorder but of peace. Paul explicitly says “in all the church of the saints.” The instruction in I Timothy 2 and I Corinthians 14 is not given only to the two congregations but to the entire church in the first century. Of course, there is no reason for it not to apply to us today.

The reason these passages are given is because Paul is teaching how God created woman from man to be a helpmeet for him. Remember that he said in I Timothy 2 that Adam was formed first and then Eve. He is appealing to the creation order.

In I Corinthians 14:34 he appeals to the law of God “as the Law says.” Presumably, he is appealing to the same passage he had written earlier in I Corinthians 11:2ff and also in I Timothy 2--that God created woman from man. The I Corinthians 11 passage deals with the question of headship.

Note I Corinthians 11:2-16. In verses 8 and 9 he argues for the headship of man by saying this: “For man did not come from woman but woman from man.” He goes on to say in verse 9: “Neither was man created for woman but woman for man.” He has done that to argue that husbands or males in the congregation have authority both in marriage and the life of the church. He writes in I Corinthians 11:3, “I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ and the head of the woman is man, the head of Christ is God.”

It is interesting to notice in I Corinthians 11:3 that Paul argues from the example of the Trinity. God the Father exercises authority over Christ, His Son, not only in sending Him from the perspective of the Trinity in operation even prior to Christ’s coming to earth but also in Christ’s doing

what the Father asks Him to do and saying what the Father asks Him to say. When Paul calls on us to emulate that practice of headship, he is calling us to emulate the practice that the Father and the Son practice for us and make clear that we are to follow.

There are two arguments given by the Apostle. We should follow the divine pattern. We should do this knowing which person fulfills which role in the pattern, remembering that God made woman from man and for man.

I think it is helpful to notice that what the apostle Paul argues for in the life of the church is the same argument he uses for headship in the marriage relationship. Man is head over the woman because headship is established by the creation order. God created woman from man. You find the marriage relationship and the question of headship as it manifests itself in the life of the church having one and the same doctrinal root – that of God’s creation order. This establishes how men and women should relate to one another. I think this gives the summation of the argument for us.

We argue that the Scriptures speak of men and women as equal by creation and redemption but have distinguishable roles that are given by God Himself. We also see some distinguishable roles in the curse announcements. The woman is going to experience the relevance of the curse in her motherly duties—her giving birth. The man is going to experience the significance of the curse in his particularly male responsibilities in earning a livelihood. This is not to say men are not involved in childbirth or that women are not equally involved in gaining income, as Proverbs 31 indicates.

The Genesis account is certainly interesting in singling out the distinguishable roles of men and women when it pronounces God’s curse upon their sin. They know they have died spiritually and are separated eternally from God unless He delivers them. They also experience this in their callings.

Q. Is it right to conclude that a successful attack in male leadership roles in the church can adversely effect the role of male leadership in the home?

A. It is almost inevitable that this will occur. Male leadership in marriage and male leadership in the church are based upon the same passage—God created woman for man and woman is to be a helper for man. Therefore,

if one denies or ignores this in the church it will probably have some boomerang effect on the marriage relationship.

Q. A number of arguments are often raised in support of women's leadership over men in the local church. How would you answer the following? Some say that women should be ordained to the office of deacon but not elder.

A. Before I answer that question I need to confess to your readers that I once argued that way in a statement I submitted to defend my doctoral work in Amsterdam. I argued that deacons are not teaching nor are they exercising authority over any man when they minister to the needy. That was the conclusion I made as a young man by deducing things from Scripture without rightly observing the whole counsel of the Bible.

I did not take into account the Apostolic ban in Acts 6. There the congregation was to elect seven males from their midst. The Greek word *anthropos*, which means human being, is not used in Acts 6. Instead Luke used *andres*, a word which distinguishes men from women. We catch the significance of this as we note who were elected—seven men. They were men with Greek sounding names because the Apostles were concerned for the Greek-speaking Jews. They went out of their way to select Greek-speaking or perhaps bilingual Jews who could minister to both groups equally well.

Notice that the task of the deacons was to minister to the widows. If ever there was a time to elect women to the office of deacon, then surely this would have been the time. Those elected would be ministering to female widows. The congregation heeded the admonition of the Apostles who instructed them to choose seven men.

The actions of the Apostles have guided us since that time. They also guided Paul when he charged us to elect deacons in I Timothy 3. It is interesting that when one looks at the qualifications for deacons in I Timothy 3 they are described in verse 8 as “men worthy of respect.” That word *man* is probably no more than a translation choice. In verse 12 they are described with a male characteristic. The deacon must be the head of one wife. He must manage his children and his household well. I think this is indicative of the fact that the Apostle has already precluded women from serving in a role of teaching men or having authority over men in I Timothy 2:11-12. That is why he speaks of the deacon in those terms.

Notice the title *deacon* is given to these men in I Timothy 3:8-12. There is a reference to wives. I think that is the way we should translate the Greek word. It can be translated *wives* or *women*. I think it is introduced here because verse 11 is leading to verse 12 where the family characteristics of the men are being described. Before going to these characteristics, Paul sets down what should characterize their wives in their involvement in assisting their deacon/husbands in this diaconal task. Thus they are given certain qualifications. They are to be women worthy of “respect, not malicious gossips, temperate, trustworthy in everything.” They are designated as wives, not deaconesses. The ones holding the office are men. The wives assist them.

We must recognize the Biblical principle that in worship and in the government of the church we should do what God prescribes in His Word. We see Him prescribing males as deacons in Acts 6 and I Timothy 3. We do not find women called deacons in the sense of those who are associated with elders anywhere in Scripture.

We do find one reference to the word used in a general sense. This word *diakonos* means servant in the Greek—an able servant who serves in ministry or outside the ministry or one who is serving in a special way alongside the elders. This reference is in Romans 16:1, “I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant in the church in Cenchrea.” It is interesting to note that almost all the translations have used the word *servant*. The translators recognize that the Apostle Paul never uses the word *diakonos* for women in the sense of a deacon who serves alongside an elder, bishop or overseer. It is improper for them to presume that this person is an officer in the church. Instead, they recognize that she is a servant within the church. I think that is the proper way to render verse 1 of Romans 16.

It is also in accord with other usages of the word *servant* in Romans. In Romans 13:4, Paul instructs regarding those who rule for God in the state as “God's servant.” Later in the same verse he again refers to “God's servant.” In both places, as well as in verse 6, the word *servant* is used. Here the word does not describe a deacon, but one who is serving God in the realm of civil government. Thus, Paul uses this word to describe Phoebe who serves God in the realm of the church.

Now we have dealt with all the passages that possibly could be argued from in regard to women as officers in the local church. In Acts 6 “men” were to be chosen by the congregation for the office. In I Timothy 3 they are to

be the husbands of one wife. Their wives are to have certain characteristics.

It seems to me that if the Bible describes only men as deacons, then we should follow the Bible's instructions. We should not presume to know more wisely than the twelve or the Apostle Paul regarding who should be in that office.

Q. Another argument that is sometimes raised is that women need to worship God actively in public worship services, thus they should be involved in leadership such as reading the Scripture prior to the sermon and leading the congregation in prayer.

A. I agree with the premise that women should be involved in worship. I would not agree with the conclusion. If this is true, we could also say that unordained men and children need to be involved in worship leadership. All need to be involved in worship, but this does not necessitate that they are to be leading through Scripture reading or congregational prayer. It seems to me that when we speak of the public reading of Scripture in worship and leading the congregation in the congregational prayer, we are dealing with a leadership role.

Usually, the individual who reads the Scripture and the one who leads the congregation in prayer is the same one who preaches. I believe that it is exercising authority to lead in these capacities in the worship service.

It can be argued from I Corinthians 11 that the women are praying in the congregation as well as prophesying. I think that the praying that is in view here in verse 4 is in a situation in which individuals in the covenant community in the congregation are called upon to pray. In these situations women can pray as well as men, by all indications of I Corinthians 11.

Let me add that, by reference to women prophesying, the text does not indicate that women have the right to teach men. Paul grants the woman the right to prophesy in I Corinthians 11. He repudiates her right to teach or speak in the sense of teaching in I Corinthians 14 as well as in I Timothy 2. I think that why Paul allows a woman to prophesy is because she is not teaching or exercising authority.

First, she is not instructing from revelation previously given from God. She is simply giving what God has placed in her by direct revelation. She is simply saying something, not teaching it. Secondly, I think we need to

recognize that she is not exercising authority over men because she is not saying, "This is what you must do," or "This is what you must believe." She is simply saying, "This is what God has spoken."

I think the word of prophesy was granted to women in the Apostolic Age, but teaching was not. Paul distinguishes between these two. We had best not confuse the matter by presuming that prophesying is another form of teaching. This would be joining what Paul has separated.

Q. Some argue for women's leadership in worship because of the priesthood of believers.

A. I do not think her participation in leading in worship is due to the priesthood of believers. We do not have women or children giving the sermon. They are part of the priesthood of believers. We do not ordain them to be ministers and ruling elders. Ministers have as one of their main functions the leadership in worship services. Thus we are not violating the priesthood of believers.

The priesthood of believers means that believers should participate in worship. All who are believers, men and women alike, should participate in worship. It does not mean that we have the right to take the pulpit or give the pastoral prayer or the sermon. The priesthood of believers grants the high participation in worship not the higher authority to lead others in worship.

Q. Is a female choir director allowable in a church that does not permit women to lead the congregation in worship?

A. I believe that the role of guiding the choir is not the kind of leadership that Paul is prohibiting. I believe this is true because of several analogies. I do not think we prohibit women from playing the piano which guides the congregation and helps them in their singing. I do not think that in churches where only psalms are sung *a capella* that women are prohibited from pitching the tone or giving notes that will help the *a capella* singing.

As long as the choir director, whether male or female, has what is sung approved by the Session or the pastor as being in accord with Scripture and appropriate for the worship service, then I think this is an appropriate role in which a woman can serve the church without exercising authority.

Q. What are some helpful books you would recommend on this subject?

A. There are many fine books written by a number of men. I will mention some with which I am most familiar. I wrote *The Role Relationship Between Men and Women* which is published by Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company. I contributed two chapters to the work published by The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. This is a very good organization with which one should have contact. They have published numerous works on this subject. They published *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*. It was edited by John Piper and Wayne Grudem. I contributed the section entitled "Husbands and Wives as Analogues of Christ and the Church Ephesians 5:21-33 and Colossians 3:18-19" and the section entitled "The Family and the Church: How Should Biblical Manhood and Womanhood Work Out in Practice?"

Readers can contact them at the following address:

Council of Biblical Manhood and Womanhood  
2825 Lexington Road, Box 926  
Louisville, KY 40280

Their toll free phone number is 1-888-560-8210. Their website is [www.cbmw.org](http://www.cbmw.org).

I believe your readers will find their resources very helpful. Currently with an order of \$50.00 or more they are giving out an audio message by their current president, Bruce Ware. The message is entitled "*Gender Roles In The Home*."

Q. Do you have any closing words?

A. It is important to recognize what Paul says on the matter. I would like to read a passage as my concluding comment. It is found in I Corinthians 14. Here he has argued against people who, because of their view that they have been moved by the Spirit, are wanting to prophesy or speak in tongues. Women are wanting to speak in church. All feel they can argue from a prompting. Paul writes that God is a God of order. He says that tongues speakers should not speak unless they have an interpreter. Only a few prophets should speak in order. Women should not speak at all because of the creation order.

Then he asks these questions of them as he concludes this section. These are the verses I want to read (vv.36ff). He asks the Corinthians who are arguing the other way. (He is having to correct his own converts.) "Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached? Anybody that thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted let him acknowledge what I am writing to you is the Lord's command."

I would encourage people who read this material to acknowledge that what the apostle Paul has written is the Lord's command. We need to heed this command for the good of our families, our marriages and our church life.

## **Conservative Colleague to Apostasy Advocate by Carl Bogue**

Mr. Bogue pastors Faith Presbyterian Church in Akron, Ohio. This article was originally published in "From Faith to Faith." Reprinted with permission.

In my library I have a little paperback book published in 1974, entitled *Confessions of a Conservative Evangelical*. Inscribed in the front cover are the words: "To Carl and Rosie, with affection and appreciation. Jack Rogers." I recalled it in particular as I read the current edition of *The Presbyterian Layman*, a conservative publication of the liberal Presbyterian Church (USA) which began publication around the time United Presbyterian Church (USA) was debating the Confession of '67, an attempt to replace the old Confession by adding to it. About that same time Dr. Rogers finished his doctorate at the Free University of Amsterdam where I was then a student with the same major professor. Jack was also a leader of the opposition working against the C 67, as the modernist confession was called.

I raise this context to point out that two roads diverged in the theological woods, and we did not take the same road. While you may not immediately see the point, it is your story as well, especially you who were members of Faith Presbyterian Church from its beginning. In my first year in the Netherlands, Jack Rogers returned to put the finishing touches on his published dissertation, *Scripture in the Westminster Confession*, and prepare

for his formal defense. He asked me to read it and offer any criticisms, suggestions, etc. I took the task to heart for this friend and colleague. I was saddened to find many things which appeared to me as not only inaccurate historically, but also which reflected a broadening theological mentality.

I made a detailed list of all these points and was further disappointed to find that he seemed unmoved by any of them. Following the path of our professor, G. C. Berkouwer, he had a weakened view of Scripture and inerrancy, taking the position that while the "story" of the Bible is infallible, the "husk" which contains this "kernel" of inerrant truth, is not inerrant. Well, that is a whole theological discussion in itself, but it put my friend clearly in what was then being called the "neo-evangelical" camp. These broad evangelicals were influenced by parts of modernism, even while fighting aspects of it.

The book I referred to in the beginning shocked many of Dr. Rogers' friends when they read it and found how far he had moved and how he misrepresented the "conservatives" he was leaving behind. He claimed to have been "a straight, uptight, conservative Christian" who had "been so obedient to authority...that I have been afraid of freedom." He saw being conservative as that which "confuses Christianity with our culture," and he preferred a new name, "evangelical" (pp. 10-11). He even said at that early stage, "Jesus was a feminist" (p. 116).

As an aside let me mention another fellow student at the Free University who did a dissertation on women in the Old Testament and became a professor at Calvin College. He also advocated feminist issues and took the party line that Paul was a product of his culture, what Rogers would call a "conservative." In the late 70's I was on the campus of Calvin College and had a chance to visit with this CRC pastor and professor. I pressed him on that interpretation, and asked how he could oppose sodomy by those who defended it in the same way, that Paul was a product of his culture. His only response was a shrug, which seemed clearly to suggest that probably that too would become a proper interpretation.

But back to Jack Rogers. As many of us were leaving the UPC in 1975, despairing of any reformation in that church, Dr. Rogers began teaching in a neo-evangelical seminary, writing books against inerrancy, and pleading for the UPC not to follow an extreme liberal agenda, but to attach itself to a neo-orthodox theology, a healthy "centrist" position. He has for some years been associated with PCUSA seminary in San Francisco, and even

more recently has been more sympathetic to tolerating homosexuality.

This lengthy pilgrimage brings us back to where I began, the current issue of *The Presbyterian Layman*. On the front page, under the headline, "GA Waffles on Lordship of Christ," with a sub-headline, "Fidelity-chastity standard rejected," was the full color, smiling picture of Jack B. Rogers, new moderator of the apostate Presbyterian Church (USA). In 40 years conservative colleague to apostasy advocate!

Most of what follows, as a continuation of this story, is taken from the current issue (July 2001) of *The Presbyterian Layman*, which will document something of the new lows for the PCUSA. The lead article tells of the election of Rogers:

The direction of the General Assembly was established when more than 55 percent of the commissioners elected Jack B. Rogers as moderator on the first ballot. Rogers, whose campaign for the office included a commitment to work for the "moral equivalent of marriage" for homosexual couples, came out slugging. He denounced the Confessing Church Movement (a growing protest movement cwb).

In criticizing this conservative voice, Rogers said, "I do not accept the implication that you can just pick verses out of Scripture and say, 'This is the clear word of God and nobody can argue with it.'" Rogers called the Confessing Church Movement "a threat to the peace, unity and purity of the church."

The real headline grabber, of course, concerned sodomy.

The General Assembly [lifted] the ban on ordaining gays and lesbians. In a 317-208 vote, the denominational delegates voted to delete the language in the PCUSA Book of Order requiring ordained church officers "to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman, or chastity in singleness." The resolution also called the 1978 "authoritative interpretation" of the Book of Order, which barred "self-affirming practicing homosexuals" from ordination, to be of "no further force or effect."

More serious, perhaps, than even such depraved views on sex, is the denial of the exclusive Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Three overtures asked the commissioners to declare that no one gains salvation outside Jesus Christ. They declared instead that Jesus has "unique authority" and that he is "uniquely savior." *Christianity*

Today called the statement "namby-pamby at best" and concluded, "Jesus may not be the only way to salvation, the denomination essentially said, but he's the only way we're sure of."

In the months following the General Assembly, Dr. Rogers, in his capacity of moderator, has apparently turned up the rhetoric, declaring an all-out war on conservatives within the PCUSA. Speaking this winter in Pasadena, California, Rogers accused the Presbyterian Lay Committee of "militant fundamentalism," clearly comparing this long-standing voice in the old-line church to the terrorists associated with Osama bin Laden. He's not speaking of the PCA or the OPC; he's speaking of evangelicals within his own denomination. And all this he does with a blind eye to the apostasy continuing to destroy the PCUSA.

The following remarks and quotes are from an editorial in *The Presbyterian Layman* entitled "An Apostate Assembly."

When asked to stand up for the one who said, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but by me," the General Assembly majority hedged. Such statements contain "confusing language, sloganism, and premature simplicity," said a commissioner. . . .

"I have deep concerns about declaring Jesus as the only savior," said a youth advisory delegate. "This might portray intolerance on the part of the PCUSA toward people of other faith traditions."

Another told the General Assembly that he believes religions are just human understandings of God which, "like fruit with different flavors, are all essentially the same."

A presbytery executive said, "I firmly believe Jesus is my personal lord and savior, but I do not feel that I have the right to say that other people may not find God in other ways."

And the president of a PCUSA seminary parsed references to the Trinity, suggesting that such words were "confusing and difficult to explain."

I bring this report, if you will, not merely for some sadistic pleasure in blasting the old-line church, but to remind us all of the great need to be diligent and struggle for the purity of the church. Those with roots in Allenside U.P. Church will recognize the same issues we encountered, albeit in a far less comprehensive form. Some who fought with us in those

days, are now themselves in the service of the enemy. In 40 years conservative colleagues to apostasy advocates! If you ask, "How can a church or pastor fall so far in 40 years?" just remember the oft-repeated refrain in the Bible: "Then the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord." Sin is a terrible thing; it destroys and brings death and the culture of death. Those who profess to be followers of Christ fight for the purity of the church and "take [the kingdom of heaven] by force." Others will, in due time, apostatize from the faith. The PCA, and other fine churches, are not immune. Hold fast!

## **The Role of Women in Ordained Offices in the Church by Tracy Davis**

Mr. Davis pastors Berachah Church in Hampton, Virginia.

The role of women in the church is no small task to define. What seemed to be such a clear-cut issue 100 or even 50 years ago is now a landmine field with no distinguishable path on which the evangelical church can navigate. Evangelical feminists<sup>1</sup> have questioned traditional interpretations and assumptions of various Scriptural passages which have for so long been foundational for defining role relationships between men and women.

This is not to say that having traditional interpretations and assumptions questioned is a completely evil thing. Jonathan Edwards, the great American pastor of the eighteenth century, resolved "after afflictions, to inquire, What am I the better for them? What good I have got by them, and what I might have got by them."<sup>2</sup> In other words, Edwards resolved in afflictions (which would certainly include attacks on interpretations) to take the good, learn from it, and throw out the bad. If evangelical feminism forces the church to reexamine and reaffirm its assumptions in clear twenty-first century language, then the church is better for it. Francis Schaeffer once said that the church's "responsibility is not only to hold to the basic, scriptural principles of the Christian faith, but to communicate these unchanging truths 'into' the generation in which it is living."<sup>3</sup>

It is my goal to set forth what, in my estimation, is the proper role of women in regards to ordained offices in the church. In order to do so, I will first show that role distinctions are set forth in Creation and reaffirmed in the Fall. However, one might affirm these conclusions but then point out

Galatians 3:28 as a removal of role distinctions as a result of the New Covenant. Therefore, I will attempt to give an exegesis of that crucial statement in Galatians. Finally, I will turn to the specific offices in the church, namely elder and deacon, and see if role distinctions extend to them.

## Role Distinctions Rooted in Creation and the Fall

Distinctions based on maleness and femaleness are not simple cultural contrivances to which the New Testament writers capitulate. Rather, these distinctions are rooted in the very created order. In 1 Timothy 2:12-13 the Apostle Paul wrote, “I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve.” The prohibition given in verse 12 is supported by the explanatory clause in verse 13. Why does Paul not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority? **For** or because Adam was formed first. By inserting the explanatory conjunction “*gar*” Paul elevates his prohibition from cultural limitations to Creation order.

Some have suggested that Paul only wishes to convey personal opinion in his usage of “*epitrepo*”.<sup>4</sup> However, this understanding misses the force of how Paul uses this word. He uses the word three times in his letters, here and twice in 1 Corinthians (14:34 and 16:7).

In 1 Corinthians 16:7 Paul does use “permit” in conjunction with his personal desire. But his personal desire to have a prolonged visit with the Corinthians is linked with the “permitting” of Christ. His personal desire is overridden by the Lord’s “*epitrepse*”. His usage of “*epitrepo*” in this passage refers to his personal desire in submission to the “permission” of Christ.

The forcefulness of the word becomes clearer when examined in 1 Corinthians 14:34, which is a parallel to 1 Timothy 2:12.<sup>5</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:34 says, “the women should keep silence in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as even the law says.” As in 16:7, “*epitrepo*” is used in relation to God. In 16:7, Paul’s desire to visit the Corinthians is linked to the “permitting” of Christ; here Paul’s prohibition (they are not permitted to speak) is linked to the law of God.

The prohibition in 14:34 presents a problem because Paul supports it by

appealing to the Law. However, he does not follow the statement with a specific quote from the Law as he does in other places.<sup>6</sup> What complicates the issue even further is that there is no specific command in the Law for women to be silent or submissive. So, one is forced to ask the question, what “law” does Paul have in mind?

It seems as if Paul is appealing to an understood principle of male leadership, which is implied throughout the entire Law. Peter seems to appeal to this same understood principle in his first epistle when he urges wives to be submissive to their husbands and then holds forth Sarah’s submission to Abraham as an example (3:1-6). He concludes that section by saying, “You have become [Sarah’s] children if you do what is right.” (In the context “right” refers to being submissive to husbands). So what was “right” for women under the Law was to recognize God-ordained, male leadership.

In 1 Corinthians 14:34 Paul is not expressing his personal opinion by his usage of the word “*epitrepo*”. Rather he is saying that his establishment of male leadership in the church is rooted in the purposes of God. This is supported further by the phrase, “the things I write to you are the Lord’s commandment” in verse 37.

So when in 1 Timothy 2:12 Paul says, “I do not permit a woman to teach...” his meaning of “permit” contains within it the permitting and authority of God. This is supported in 1 Corinthians 14:34 by Paul’s appeal to the Law and here by his appeal to the Creation order.

Male leadership should exist in the church because the creation of man before the creation of woman implies male leadership. (See Appendix for reasons why Creation points to male headship.) Paul further undergirds his prohibition in 1 Timothy by appealing to the reaffirmation of male leadership in the Fall (v. 14). “Adam was created first . . . and it was not Adam who was deceived. . . .”

## An Objection: Galatians 3:28

Evangelical feminists raise an objection at this point, namely, Galatians 3:28, “*there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*” Paul Jewett, in his book, *Man as Male and Female: A Study in Sexual Relationships from a Theological Point of View*, says that this passage is the

“Magna Carta of Humanity.”<sup>7</sup> His main premise is that the Bible is contradictory on the question of the relation of men and women in Christ and the church. The Biblical narratives and Jesus’ attitude to women are incompatible with female subordination, but Paul, following rabbinic exegesis, teaches subordination in certain New Testament passages. To some extent Paul does redeem himself because he does write this wonderful statement in Galatians 3:28. However, Paul did not implement his Christian insight thoroughly, which has left the church with the man/woman question. The church must press on, according to Jewett, to the full implementation of his Galatians’ insight, abandoning his shortcomings in his other epistles.<sup>8</sup>

Under the Old Covenant there were distinctions based upon gender in regards to leadership. However, with the coming of Christ and the New Covenant, those gender based distinctions were done away with and now, in Christ, there is neither male nor female.

At first glance this line of reasoning might seem valid. Yet upon closer examination of the context of the Galatians’ passage it becomes obvious that this is not what the Apostle had in mind.

Verse 28 is in the middle of a pericope beginning with verse 26 and ending with verse 29. In the verses prior to verse 26 Paul shows why we no longer need to be under the supervision of the Law. The purpose of the Law was to point us to Christ and justification by faith. The explanatory conjunction “*gar*” at the beginning of verse 26 indicates that what follows is an explanation and expansion of justification by faith.

In verses 26ff Paul mentions four effects or results of being justified by faith in Christ. In verse 26 justification by faith entitles the believer to be called the child of God; “for you are all sons of God through faith... (26)” In verses 27 and 29 justification by faith places the believer in union with Christ; “you were baptized into Christ...you have clothed yourself with Christ...you belong to Christ (27,29).” In verse 29 justification by faith alone makes the believer the child of Abraham, an heir according to the promise.

Then, in verse 28, justification by faith removes barriers based on race, social rank, and sex. The question is, “In what way?” In the first distinction (Jew/Gentile) Paul is pointing out that both are heirs of the promised blessings. In the second distinction (slave/free) Paul points out

that in Christ the slave is not of lesser value in regards to his status than one who is free.

In the third antithesis (male/female), distinction in sex has no relevance to the status of believers in Christ. The reason is given in the final phrase of the verse, “for you are all one in Christ.” The point is that in regards to position in Christ and justification by faith there is no distinction. The issue of leadership in the church is not one addressed here in this passage. What is addressed is one’s standing before God, not of roles within the church.

A question that needs to be asked of evangelical feminists is this: If Galatians 3:28 removes every distinction based on sex, then is not one of the implications an endorsement of homosexual activity (while another one being women in every leadership position in the church)? If in Christ there is no male or female, what would be wrong with same sex marriages? I’m sure they would argue that other passages forbid that type of behavior and that those passages should govern and limit the interpretation of Galatians. Yet in regards to women in leadership roles they argue that Galatians should govern the interpretation of the passages limiting leadership to men. An absolute removal of distinctions between maleness and femaleness based on Galatians 3:28 denies the immediate context and the other clear teachings of Scripture.

The coming of Christ and the New Covenant does not remove the principle of male leadership established in Creation and reaffirmed at the Fall.

## **Specific Offices in the Church: Elders and Deacons**

Having set forth broad, overarching principles concerning male leadership in the church, I shall now turn to specific offices, namely those of elder and deacon. Can women serve in these offices?

It seems rather clear that the office of elder is limited to men alone. In 1 Timothy 3:1-6 Paul sets forth the qualifications for elders. Two of those qualifications are “to rule, to govern” (v. 5) and “to teach” (v. 2). These are the two responsibilities that Paul forbids women to have in 2:12; “I do not allow a woman to teach or to have authority.” Therefore, by the very nature of the office, women are limited from occupying it.

The use of pronouns in these verses limits the office to men. In verse 1 Paul says, “if anyone desires...” While the translation of “*tis*” as “anyone” is grammatically correct, “*tis*” should be translated “any man”. This is in keeping with the other masculine pronouns used throughout this passage.<sup>9</sup>

Another indicator that the office of elder is limited to men is the parallel between the church and the family. This parallel is brought out numerous times in 1 Timothy. Paul repeatedly uses the analogy of a family in order to enable Timothy to have a better understanding of the appropriate order and responsibilities in the church. He calls Timothy his “son,” which expresses both his affection and the discipling relationship between them (1:2, 18). He instructs Timothy to treat an older man “as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters” (5:1-2). If a widow has children or grandchildren, they should look after her (5:4). But if the immediate family is not there, the larger Christian family is to care for her (5:5, 16).

The prominent family theme comes out clearly in 3:14-15, “I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these instructions to you so that, if I am delayed, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth.” These verses serve as the thrust of the entire epistle. “These instructions” (the epistle) are given so that people should know how to behave **in the household of God**.

This use of household imagery naturally points toward inferences in regards to leadership in the church. Leadership in the family is given to the husband and father.<sup>10</sup> The church as God’s household demands male leadership as well. This is brought out explicitly in 3:4-5, “He must manage his own household well, keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way; for if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how can he care for God’s church?” A man’s leadership within his home is a model for his leadership within the church.<sup>11</sup>

From the general structure of 1 Timothy, as well as from specific texts, it becomes clear that the office of elder is limited to godly men.

The second office, that of deacon, is not so easily distinguishable. Is this office open to women? The grammar of verse 11 is ambiguous.<sup>12</sup> William Hendriksen does point out that the grammar of this passage does not support the translation of this phrase, “in the same way, their wives...” as

the NIV does (although, it seems that the phrase could be translated that way in light of the context, see below). The same verb coordinates the three: the overseer, deacons, and women.<sup>13</sup> His conclusion is that “these women are here viewed as rendering special service in the church, as do the elders and the deacons.”<sup>14</sup>

However, he does point out that because there is no separate paragraph in describing their necessary qualifications, but that these are simply wedged in between the stipulated requirements for deacons, with equal clarity indicates that these women are not to be regarded as constituting a third office in the church, on a par with and endowed with authority equal to that of deacons.<sup>15</sup> His conclusion is that “these women are the deacon’s assistants in helping the poor and needy. These are women who render auxiliary service, performing ministries for which women are better adapted.”<sup>16</sup> What exactly does he mean by “assistants...render auxiliary service...performing ministries”? Is he saying that these women are female deacons, ordained and installed in the same manner with the same authority as their male counterparts? There seems to be some ambiguity in his conclusions.

John MacArthur, on the other hand, in his commentary on 1 Timothy is not ambiguous when he says that “women” here points to women in general, not to the wives of the deacons. He gives three arguments for supporting his claim. First, the use of “likewise” argues strongly for seeing a third and distinct group here in addition to elders and deacons. Second, there is no possessive pronoun or definite article connecting these “women” with deacons. Third, Paul gave no qualifications for elders’ wives, so why would he do so for deacons’ wives?<sup>17</sup> Although MacArthur is correct in these points grammatically, he fails to take into consideration the larger context of 1 Timothy or consider the responsibilities of deacons laid out in 1 Timothy 3:3-13.

Wayne Grudem points out that while the deacons’ specific responsibilities are not laid out, their qualifications may point to some of their functions. They seem to have had some responsibility in caring for the finances of the church, since they had to be people who were “not greedy for gain” (v. 8). They might have had some administrative responsibilities of the church as well because they were to manage their children and their households well (v. 12). They most likely ministered to the physical needs of those in the church or community who needed help (this is implied in the word *deacon* as well as Acts 6).<sup>18</sup> The office of deacon does infer some level of

authority. Therefore, in light of 2:15 it would seem that women would be disqualified from the office.

How then is one to understand “women” in 3:11? MacArthur is right in pointing out that there is no possessive pronoun linking these women with the male deacons, but he draws the wrong conclusion. There is no absolute need for the pronoun because contextually it seems to be clear that “women” refers to the wives of the deacons. If the deacons were involved in house-to-house visitation and ministry, then it would be natural that their wives must not be slanderers (3:11). It would not be good for deacons if their wives spread confidential matters around the church. It seems that verse 11 is somewhat of a parenthetical thought that Paul sets forth in the midst of giving qualifications for deacons.

George Knight points out that “*gune*”, both singular and plural, has the general meaning “woman/women,” but is also often used to mean “wife/wives”. Both usages occur in the pastoral epistles and especially in 1 Timothy. Here it seems likely that the term is used in v. 11 the same way that it is used in the immediately following verse, and as it was used in the preceding occurrence in v. 2, as “wife.”<sup>19</sup> It would seem odd to change the meaning of the word when the immediate context clearly points to its usage and translation.

The office of deacon, as well as the office of elder, is limited to men.

Up to this point I have set forth what women cannot do in the church, namely serve in the offices of elder and deacon. What then, is the role of women? It seems quite clear from the witness of the New Testament that women do play a vital servant role. The gospel of Luke seems to stress the role of women in the life and ministry of Jesus. The Pauline epistles mention numerous women who assisted him. For example, he commends to the church at Rome Phoebe as a servant (16:1).<sup>20</sup> In Titus he says that older women are to teach younger women.<sup>21</sup> Women are not to be non-participants in the life and ministry of the church. There are many ministry/servant opportunities for them. However, in regards to the two official ministerial offices, they cannot serve.

It is essential for the church to be established on bedrock Scriptural principles in regards to the role of women rather than having its feet firmly planted in the air of cultural relativity.

<sup>1</sup> By using the term “evangelical” as opposed to “secular” feminist I mean those feminists who maintain a commitment to Jesus Christ and who affirm the truthfulness and authority of Scripture, but rather give new interpretations of the Bible to support their cause.

<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Edwards, *The Life and Diary of David Brainerd* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989), p. 24.

<sup>3</sup> Francis A. Schaeffer, *Escape from Reason* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1968), p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> *The Bible in Basic English*, “In my opinion it is right for a woman not to be a teacher...” Phillips Translation, “Personally, I do not allow...”

<sup>5</sup> 1 Timothy 2:12 do not allow a woman to teach = 1 Co 14:34 women should keep silent

1 Timothy 2:12 nor to have authority = 1 Co 14:34 be in submission

<sup>6</sup> E.g. 9:8; 14:21. Fee says, “when Paul appeals to ‘the Law,’ he always cites the text, usually to support a point he himself is making. Nowhere else does he appeal to the Law in this absolute way as binding on Christian behavior.” Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), p. 707.

<sup>7</sup> Paul Jewett, *Male and Female: A Study in Sexual Relationships from a Theological Point of View* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), p. 142.

<sup>8</sup> John Piper and Wayne Grudem, eds., *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1991), p. 160-161.

<sup>9</sup> The requirement to be the “husband of one wife” in verse 2 points to this as well.

<sup>10</sup> See Ephesians 5:22-6:4.

<sup>11</sup> For an excellent handling of this issue see Vern Poythress, *The Church as a Family*, (Libertyville: The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, 1990).

<sup>12</sup> “the ‘*gunaikas*’ likewise must be...”

<sup>13</sup> “The overseer must be...Deacons similarly (must be)...Women similarly (must be)...” William Hendriksen, *Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus* NTC, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), p. 132-133.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, p. 132.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, p. 133.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>17</sup> John MacArthur, *Commentary on 1 Timothy*, (Chicago: Moody, 1995), p. 130.

<sup>18</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), p. 919.

<sup>19</sup> George Knight III, *Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* NIGTC,

(Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), p. 171.

<sup>20</sup> I disagree with Clowney in his understanding of the role of Phoebe. See Edmund Clowney, *The Church*, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1995), p. 212-213. Clowney seems to disregard the teaching of Paul in 1 Timothy 3.

<sup>21</sup> Titus 2:3-4.

## Appendix

### Eight Evidences in Genesis 1-5 that Man's Leadership is an Order of Creation and not a Result of the Fall

1. The creation of man and woman equally in God's image but with a representative leadership function implied for the man. Genesis 1:26-27

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

2. Man is created first, then the woman. Genesis 2:7, 18

Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him."

3. Man is given the moral teaching for governing the garden to pass on to the woman. Genesis 2:15-17

The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."

4. Woman was created "from man" and presented as a helper "fit for him". Genesis 2:18-23

Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." So out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what

he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper fit for him. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh; and the rib which the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."

5. Man names woman. Genesis 2:23

Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."

6. After the Fall, God calls the man to account first, not the woman. Genesis 3:7-9

Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons. And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?"

7. The curse of "desire" and "rule" show the futility of role corruption. Genesis 3:16

To the woman he said, "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."

Genesis 4:7

If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is couching at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it."

8. God named man and woman "man". Genesis 5:1-3

This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. Male and

female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created. When Adam had lived a hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth.

## Leaving A Legacy By Byron Snapp

This article first appeared in *The Chalcedon Report*, P.O. Box 158 Vallecito, CA 95251.

Were he alive, George may have discouraged my writing these remarks for public consumption. George Calhoun was the founder of Mt. Olive Tape Library (P.O. Box 422, Mt. Olive, Mississippi 39119). He did not care to be in the spotlight on life's stage. However, God raised him up and used him to be one of the most influential individuals in the revival of the Reformed faith in the latter part of the twentieth century. The Lord called him home July 28<sup>th</sup> after a long battle with a number of illnesses. Yet his influence will by God's grace impact this new century and beyond.

Some years after God saved him, George began to understand and love the Reformed faith. As a Sunday School teacher he had a great desire to be properly prepared to teach his class and spent time listening to cassette tapes of Biblical instruction. He began to collect tapes of sound doctrinal exposition and send out listings to friends. Over time requests to borrow tapes began to come in from throughout the United States and overseas. This formed the basis for Mt. Olive Tape Library, established in 1969. It currently holds thousands of tapes available for monthly rental. I know of nowhere else that houses under one roof so many tapes by such men as R. J. Rushdoony, Greg Bahnsen, Nigel Lee, Al Martin, Martyn Lloyd-Jones and Morton Smith, just to name a few.

My first recollection of George was seeing him behind tape recorders taping speakers at conferences in the early 1970's. For years he spent many of his days off and vacation days immersed in listening to and cataloging tapes he had received. He also traveled to conferences in time to set up his recording system and be ready to tape the first lecture. While many others were having fellowship with each other, George, with his servant's heart, was busy making sure the microphones were working and all the wiring was properly connected.

Over the years, as our friendship grew, I saw that George was aware of

something of his own sin. This made him more joyous and desirous of resting in the finished work of Jesus Christ. In fact, his growing knowledge of God's attributes propelled him to constantly increase the library's inventory for the purpose of building up Christians throughout the world.

In his last letter, mailed last year to those on the Library mailing list, he wrote the following:

And so, dear friends, I commit to you that sacred trust. "I have kept the faith." The same omnipotent God who raised up the Mt. Olive Tape Library to make widely accessible the teachings of the Reformed faith, whereby many thousands all over the world have been instructed, strengthened and comforted, will carry us forward so long as it pleases Him to do so. All our trust is in Him and His gracious provision—without Him we can do nothing. May we all be found faithful in Him and zealous for His glory and truth, even as "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever."

These words typified George's desire for the Christian community.

Through the years he had an able helpmate, his wife of over fifty years, Gracie. She shared his vision and faithfully supported his labors.

There are a number of applications that we can make from George's life and ministry.

The work of local officers and laymen remains extremely important in God's plan for the advancement of His kingdom. Many of Paul's inspired letters concluded with greetings to various laymen who were local laborers for the Gospel. Captured by the Reformed faith, George then captured thousands of reformed lectures on tape. He was committed to Gospel advance in time and history. Using the gifts and time God gave him he devoted himself to this task. His Reformed faith reminded him that God gives the increase. He had no money to spend on flashy marketing or expensive advertising. His work spread rapidly by word of mouth.

He used the methods by which he had learned the Reformed faith to help others. The Mt. Olive Tape Library was more than tapes. He also stocked the library with numerous books for readers to purchase. Just last year (in conjunction with Sprinkle Publications, P.O. Box 1094, Harrisonbug, VA 22801) he reprinted the very valuable *History of the Protestant Church in*

*Hungary.* This volume contains a wealth of information regarding the trials that accompanied the rooting and growth of the reformed faith in Hungary.

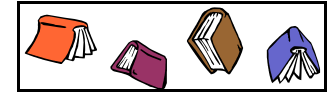
Like the sons of Issachar (I Chronicles 12:32) “he had an understanding of the times” in which we live. He realized the church’s greatest problem is an ignorance of God’s Word. He did not wait for someone else to do something nor was he content that some were seeking to disseminate the Reformed faith, as exemplified in the Reformed pastors and vocal laymen God has raised up. He knew that he too was responsible to instruct others. He gave himself to this task. He willingly held seminars at the library on aspects and applications of the Reformed faith to all of life.

He knew there were many who knew nothing of the Reformed faith and others who had no Reformed teachers in their locale. Many were unable to attend annual conferences. A number of people behind bars craved access to solid instruction. George’s heart beat with a passion for these people. He realized that his spiritual growth had been hindered for years until it was remedied by an understanding of a Christian worldview through the lens of God’s sovereignty.

Believing in the truth that God’s Word is not bound, he sent tapes to whomever requested them. He received grateful testimonies from the imprisoned and those who heard tapes overseas, on the seas, as well as close to his Mississippi office as to the effects of the taped messages in their lives.

George realized no Christian is completely reformed until he reaches heaven. In this sense George was aware, as we all should be, that we are not yet reformed but reforming. Even in his last hours he was mindful of indwelling sin. When he was near death he expressed his desire that the trials of his illnesses would be used by God to sanctify him and prepare him for heaven.

The number of George’s earthly days are complete. His work under the auspices of the Mt. Olive Board continues to be available. May the Lord be pleased to allow even a wider distribution of tapes in coming years for the advancement of God’s name and glory alone.



## BOOK REVIEWS

***Old Paths*** by J.C. Ryle. The Banner of Truth, P.O. Box 621, Carlisle, PA 17013; © 1999; 521 pp. Reviewed by Samuel Snapp.

J. C. Ryle was a bishop in the Church of England in the nineteenth century. He was widely known as the defender of the evangelical Reformed faith as set forth in the *Thirty-nine Articles of Religion of the Church of England*. He was a prolific writer authoring more than 200 tracts and numerous books. He was steeped in Scripture, and his works reflect his Biblical knowledge and insight. Ryle was quoted as saying "[The Bible] is still the first book which fits the child's mind when he begins to learn religion, and the last to which the old man clings as he leaves the world." He understood the importance of applying the Scriptures to every facet in every walk of life.

In *Old Paths*, J. C. Ryle points man back to the basics of Scripture in dealing with a variety of poignant topics. He does not mince words as he deals directly with such topics as the inspiration of the Scriptures, the state of man's Soul, how few are saved, man's sins, and conversion. Using Scripture as his source and mainstay, throughout each topic that is addressed, Ryle demonstrates that man needs to go no further than the Scriptures to find the answers to these pertinent issues. No other source is needed. Man should not be fooled into thinking that there is some new remedy to his situation, rather he should always run back to the "old paths" of the Scriptures as he wrestles with these serious issues of salvation, justification, sin, sanctification, repentance, etc.

The chapters in this book are arranged in such a way as to present the salvation message to any who would read it. There are a total of nineteen chapters. The first chapter lays the foundation for the rest of the book as it discusses the inspiration of Scripture. The reader has set forth for him a clear Biblical argument that the Lord did indeed inspire the Scriptures, and they are therefore infallible. It is then determined that the Bible makes no mistake in what it states in addressing the proceeding topics. The next five chapters deal with man's soul, the awfulness of sin, and how closely man should examine his own self to see if he is truly saved. The next 12

chapters delve into repentance, Christ's work on the cross, and the work of the Holy Spirit. The processes of justification and sanctification are clearly examined and set forth to the reader. Finally the book closes with a chapter on the perseverance of the believer.

J. C. Ryle is thorough in his explanations of the topics covered. He does not leave any unfinished and each chapter flows neatly into the next. All of the connections are made with Scripture. While the book is very orderly and follows a decided pattern, it probably is not one that would be read all at one sitting or over a couple of sittings. This work is full of weighty material that the reader will probably want to take time to digest. This would be an excellent book for an individual to work through during a devotional time or a Bible study as many deep discussions would likely result. However the book is read, it will no doubt drive the reader back to those wonderful old, unchanging paths of the Scriptures.

***Reading Scriptures with the Church Fathers*** by Christopher A. Hall. InterVarsity Press, P.O. Box 1400, Downers Grove, IL 60515; 225 pp; pbk; © 1998. Reviewed by Byron Snapp.

“Why Read The Fathers?” This question is explored in the first chapter. It is followed, in subsequent chapters, with an overview of the lives of eight leading church fathers in the East and the West. Accompanying these brief biographies are excerpts from some of their writings that exemplify not only their work but also their defense of Christianity against the false doctrines of their day. Men examined include Athanasius, Basil the Great, John Chrysostom, Ambrose, Jerome and Augustine.

From the quotations, readers can easily see the different hermeneutics used by men at Antioch when compared with the fathers at Alexandria. Hall explains by definition and sufficient examples the allegorical methodology of those at Alexandria as well as the more literal approach used at Antioch. Upon further examination Hall agrees that there was more of an overlap in the two than might first appear, although great differences in the two methodologies remained.

Both schools of thought were deeply committed to the unity of the Old and New Testament. They desired to understand the Scriptures through much study and prayer. Without the work of numerous commentaries and scholarship from which to draw, these early church fathers integrated

allegory and/or a layered approach to help them understand difficult passages. They believed texts often contained deeper meanings than the literal meanings that one could see more clearly. They also believed that all Scripture pointed to Christ. To answer Gnostic attacks on the Old Testament, the allegorical method of interpretation was used in order to show Christ throughout Scripture. Although the reader today can rightly shake his head at much of this exegesis we must admire their love for Scripture and their pastoral concern and attempts to defend truth against the onslaught of false teachings of their day.

The author reminds us of the benefits of studying the writings of the early fathers. They lived shortly after Christ and the Apostles and thus bring to us an understanding of that era and an involvement in the early churches. The reader can also see how false doctrine was opposed by early pastors. Hall clearly notes that his subjects were men who were actively involved with shepherding flocks. They were pastors and wrote from a pastor's heart.

This work provides a helpful introduction to the early church fathers and their hermeneutical methodology. In his discussion of the two schools of interpretation, the author takes written material from each school to show how a particular text would be interpreted. He also directs the reader to available English translations of the fathers' works. Readers are reminded that these men were imperfect like us. However they spent much time in the Word because of their desire to understand it. This reminder, in addition to the book's other assets, makes this volume a worthwhile read for those who need an introduction to the early church fathers and the times in which they lived.

***John Smith Gentleman Adventurer*** by C. H. Forbes-Lindsay with illustrations by Harry B. Lachman. Preston Speed Publications, 51 Ridge Road, Mill Hall, PA 17751; 195 pp. hbk or pbk. Reviewed by Byron Snapp.

Our familiarity with John Smith is often limited to his work within the Jamestown colony. However the author's account of Smith's life reveals that we know all too little of Smith's adventurous life and important contributions if our knowledge is limited to the time he spent in Jamestown. Smith's colonial leadership, demonstrated time and again in the midst of adversity, betrayal and infighting amongst the governing body, was but a

culmination of Smith's successful leadership commonly known by his countrymen.

Smith was born in 1580 during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. England was under the threat of a Catholic takeover by Spain. Europe had to guard against the terror of the Turkish threat. Thrilled by the miraculous defeat of the Spanish Armada, young Smith showed himself ready for a life of adventure and headed to London.

The adventure he sought was bounded by Christian ethics. This ethic served him well in the midst of cultures that thought little of this morality. Little did the teenager know that when he set off for London he would face shipwreck, robbery and starvation before he joined an army that faced the fierce forces of the Muslim Turks. In God's good providence, his determined perseverance prepared him well for his hand-to-hand combat in duels and in battle against the Turks. Smith's insight and ingenuity often provided the preparation and protection needed for his fellow soldiers to successfully avoid ambush and victoriously attack the Turks.

After such adventures it is not surprising to find Smith sailing with others to establish an English colony. That colony would quickly be invaded by disease, surrounded by Indians and experience additional problems due to colonial slothfulness and jealousy. Smith needed to employ all of his leadership gifts to negotiate provisions from the Indians and protect the colonists from enemies within their midst as well as from Indians a short distance away. These heroic efforts often went unappreciated among the colonists.

This well-written volume is fascinating reading for students and adults. Readers will quickly have their eyes opened to a world of adventure that marked Smith's day. In the midst of adventure that involves new twists and turns on almost every page, Smith evidences character and skill that can only be described as heroic. He stood uncompromisingly for truth. He did not flinch nor retreat in the midst of danger or when faced with almost certain death. Smith's willingness to sacrifice his life on behalf of others, and Pocahontas' willingness to sacrifice hers on his behalf, increase our respect for the importance of unselfishness even in the midst of great danger.

The author's writing style makes this biographic a real page-turner. He descriptions of Elizabethan London and culture bring added vividness to

our understanding of seventeenth century England. This is a volume from which adults can profit and can easily add to the list of books that are must reading for their children.

***Mighty to Save: Discovering God's Grace In The Miracles of Jesus*** by Richard D. Phillips. P & R Publishing Co., P. O. Box 817, Phillipsburg, NJ 08865-0817; 232 pp. with index; pbk; © 2001. Reviewed by Byron Snapp.

It is significant to realize that the miracles Christ did during His earthly ministry had a greater purpose than restoring the dead to life or the diseased to health. The main purpose of these mighty works was to emphasize Christ's teaching and to underline His divinity. The lame, the blind and the dead were physically helpless to change their condition without God's intervention. In the same manner all of Christ's hearers (and mankind) are powerless to change their spiritual condition without God granting faith, repentance and thus regeneration to the spiritually dead.

In the book's opening chapter the author explains the meaning of Christ's miracles. This is followed by an examination of twelve miracles Jesus performed in His ministry. These include raising the dead son of the widow of Nain, the stilling of the storm and the driving out the legion of demons from the Gadarene demoniac. The texts that are explained are all found in Luke's Gospel. This is an added benefit. We are reminded that Luke was a physician. He would be particularly interested in the physical condition of the ill. The author also weaves in Luke's outline of his Gospel, enabling the reader to have a better overview of Luke's book.

Phillips' writing brings life to the victims of pain and demon possession. We see their despair and disillusionment. We see that Christ's compassion and power are far greater and more than sufficient to meet each physical and, more importantly, spiritual need. Throughout the book there is a consistent focus on Christ and on God's grace to sinners.

These miracles reveal Christ's ministry to lepers, the blind, the dead, the demon-possessed and to sea-savvy yet frightened sailors—a bunch of nobodies—on a storm tossed sea. Time after time Christ consciously and graciously intervened in the lives of the undeserving and the undesirable. Through this we are pointedly reminded that every dead sinner who has been awakened by God's grace is also undeserving of such grace and undesirable to a holy God. Yet it is upon such that God set His

unconditional love before the world was created.

Phillips' style is easy to read. This volume is full of sound theology, clear explanations and searching conclusions applicable to our lives. This volume can be read with the expectation of its being Christ-centered. Such expectancy will not be disappointed. The Christian can expect to gain a deeper understanding of Christ's ministry and of His glorious grace to His people throughout the ages. Non-Christians are clearly confronted with a Christ Who continues to save all sinners who call upon Him in faith and repentance.

***Abraham Lincoln: Redeemer President*** by Allen C. Guelzo. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 255 Jefferson Ave. S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49503; © 1999; 516 pp. including index. Reviewed by Byron Snapp.

He was fatally wounded on Good Friday. He died on Saturday. On Sunday any number of pastors were hailing the assassinated Lincoln as the redeemer president because he led so many people out of bondage into freedom.

In this fascinating biography, Guelzo provides the reader with a stimulating intellectual picture of Lincoln. Although Lincoln was strongly influenced by the Calvinism of his parents, there is no evidence that he ever embraced Christ Who is central to Biblical Calvinism. Instead, Lincoln was committed to divine providence that ordered all things in life. This doctrine was often viewed as a frowning providence but even that comforted him in dark days.

The volume opens with an explanation of the main political philosophies of the day—Jeffersonian vs. Jacksonian thought. Lincoln grew up in an impoverished agrarian environment and adopted the thinking of the Whig political party. He wanted a strong Union and interior development of railroads and canals. Such development would promote prosperous markets and the upward mobility of the working class. Guelzo does a fine job of explaining how Lincoln incorporated this thinking into his political career and how it was so apropos when one considers Lincoln's vocational change from the farm to law to politics.

Lincoln's opposition to settlers in the territories determining whether or not

their new state would allow slavery ultimately thrust him into the national political stage of the Republican Party. This party became his home following the demise of the Whigs. The author convincingly shows that Lincoln was not opposed to slavery itself as a Southern institution. He did not want it to spread into the territories because of his fear that it could

replace free labor in the Northern states and thus stymie the economic mobility of the working class.

As president, Lincoln used his war powers to incorporate many decisions into the national scene that would not have been in his domain had the nation been at peace. One example of this was his Emancipation Proclamation. Lincoln saw the conflict as a civil war, not a war between two separate countries, thus he did not think it extraordinary to free those enslaved in the South. However, this federal emancipation did not apply to the States that remained in the Union.

In his use of the war powers, he again was comforted in the divine providence that flowed from a God that could not be known. Lincoln's assassination abruptly ended his career before it was clear how the defeated states would be restored to the Union.

Guelzo has written a solid biography. He explains the philosophical, religious and political struggles of Lincoln's day and their impact on the President's thinking. In my opinion, the author shows that Lincoln was America's first modern politician. He was able to change positions on current issues, such as slavery, without suffering politically from either position. His executive enactments during the war increased the power of the central government. The effects of many of these actions remained intact after the War and laid the basis for further centralization.

Secondly, the reader will see that religion and politics do mix. In fact, Lincoln's religious beliefs undergirded much of his thinking as a politician. His religion had no room for Christ. It centered on the divine will of God being manifested in daily providence and in man's morality and works. When Christ's work is denied all that is left is man's work. With Finney's Arminian influence in Christianity, man's work in salvation received emphasis. Thus Lincoln's emphasis on the freedom of human decision fit in well with popular thought.

Lincoln was adept at employing Biblical quotations in his debates, speeches and writings. His use of them often carried a far different meaning than the

proper interpretation of the text would allow. However his usage resonated well with his audience. Thus the true meaning of the passage was secondary to his political goals.

As successful as Lincoln was on the domestic scene, his home life left much to be desired. Guelzo explores this facet of his life and shows its impact on Lincoln and the Washington scene.

This volume is well-researched. The author ably collates complex issues into a readable well-written volume. Its availability should be welcomed by those who are interested in Lincoln and his times. This volume is significant reading for those who want to explore Lincoln's religious beliefs. Readers may well be surprised at Lincoln's views on slavery and emancipation and his use of executive powers.

***The Gospel Mystery of Sanctification*** by Walter Marshall. Reformation Heritage Books, 2919 Leonard St. NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49525; © 1999; 247pp; hbk. Reviewed by Byron Snapp.

The publishers have reprinted this noted Puritan work, first published in 1692. Herein Marshall sets forth the importance of the believer's union in Christ as the basis out of which the Christian's ongoing sanctification flows. With this thesis, the author stresses the importance of obedience to God's law as the guide for our obedience. Simultaneously he is careful to deny that one's works serve as any grounds for the redeemed's salvation.

Marshall develops his argument with the use of twelve directions that the concerned reader is to use to examine his own life to see that his faith is in Christ's finished work, not in the person's ongoing work. Marshall develops each of his points in great detail and uses many quotations from Scripture. The focus on our union with Christ is much needed.

This volume will be of particular interest to those who appreciate the writing style of the Puritans and their use of a wealth of Scripture passages to support their theses. Dr. Joel Beeke's introduction provides a good overview of the volume and practical reasons for this work being reprinted for our day.

***Shall We Know One Another? And Other Papers*** by John Charles Ryle. Charles Nolan Publishers, Moscow, ID (charlesnolanpublishers.com); 64 pp; pbk.. Reviewed by Byron Snapp.

In these seven brief articles Ryle deals with a wide range of topics that should be important to every Christian. In addition to Scripturally answering the question set forth in the booklet's title, Ryle also Biblically examines such topics as the necessity and attainment of Christian contentment and the comforting reminder that God is ever present with His covenant people.

In a Christian worldview there are no unimportant issues when one thinks about pleasing God. Ryle winsomely reminds his readers of this fact in his very practical and pointed article entitled, "Do What You Can." Using Mark 14:8 as his anchor, Ryle sets forth the importance of serving God in daily life. He clearly underscores the Biblical teaching that faith does not save anyone, yet he just as clearly and accurately states that God's redeemed are to be a people who live to bring glory to God. These words are much needed in our self-oriented culture, a continual temptation to Christians.

My favorite section was Ryle's insightful comments on the impact of Christianity in Nero's household. With our knowledge of wicked Nero's hatred for Christians, we often forget that God's Spirit worked mightily and masterfully among Nero's servants. This is a necessary reminder for many Christians who see no benefit in working for a non-Christian employer. Additionally it is also a great encouragement pointing to the fact that God's Spirit blows where it will even into hearts that we would never expect to be granted faith and repentance.

Ryle handled great as well as often overlooked truths in a very practical way. This makes this booklet and his other writings highly recommended reading for our day. This booklet is valuable not only to read but also to hand out to those who are unacquainted with Ryle. We can read him with great profit and confidently expect others to see the spiritual value of meditating on the Biblical teaching that Ryle explains and applies so well.