

WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

*A symposium on the
service and status of women
among the Disciples of Christ.*

ELIZABETH A. HARTSFIELD

HOWARD ELMO SHORT

LEWIS S. C. SMYTHE

DANIEL C. TROXEL

MOSSIE A. WYKER

Lexington, Kentucky

THE COLLEGE OF THE BIBLE

1953

261.2
D61
IN
261.2
P2m Box



ALMA LUTZ COLLECTION

The Church and Woman

FOREWORD

At the present time the church throughout the world is seriously concerned about theoretical problems caused by its most numerous supporters, the women. As Disciples of Christ we have been unduly influenced by the democracy of the country in which we came into being. As Americans we have allowed women to occupy the same place in the affairs of our churches as we have in the affairs of our government—actually the women held important positions among the Disciples of Christ before they did in the national government of our nation. Therefore, reflecting as we do the opinions and ideals of the American people as a whole, the Disciples have given their women opportunities for service and withheld the same opportunities in the same contradictory manner as has our nation. As a people we have had serious concern for the role of women, some of our churches have solved the problem with a defiant "Let them be silent," literally interpreting the Pauline commandment; whereas others have simply let the workings of democratic action take its inconsistent course.

In the recent past our people have cooperated with other Christians in all phases of the ecumenical movement, and have been rethinking our historic positions in the light of the thinking of our other brothers in Christ. This symposium is an attempt to bring together in one readily available booklet some of the thought of the Disciples on several aspects of the status and service of women in our brotherhood. It is not complete, but we hope that this will serve as a nucleus around which we can crystallize our thinking on this topic.

The contributors to this symposium, in spite of the fact that they are *authorities*, are representative Disciples, and as such they offer no final decisions or judgments, yet the main thought of our people is expressed here in a manner that would be approved by the vast majority of Disciples who truly are concerned with our *raison d'etre*—"We are all one in Christ Jesus."

R. M. PIERSON

CONTENTS

*"Shall the Sisters Speak?" Replies of Some Early
Leaders of the Disciples of Christ*

ELIZABETH ANN HARTSFIELD

*The Service and Status of Women Among the Disciples
of Christ*

23

HOWARD ELMO SHORT

Social-Economic Status of Disciple Women Leaders

33

LEWIS S. C. SMYTHE

*The Status of Women in the Church in New Testament
Times*

49

DANIEL CURTIS TROXEL

The Church Women's Opportunities

60

MOSSIE ALLMAN WYKER

"SHALL THE SISTERS SPEAK?"

Replies of Some Early Leaders of the Disciples of Christ

ELIZABETH ANN HARTSFIELD*

The Disciples of Christ had scarcely become a recognized group in the religious world before they were compelled to face the question, "Shall the Sisters Speak?" At first it was asked by scattered individuals and did not receive too much attention. With the passing of time it was to become increasingly important. In fact, it is still being considered today. New emphasis has been given it in the recent study of the service and status of women in the church which was initiated by the National Council of Churches' general department of United Church Women.

The Disciples of Christ women were one of the first groups to consider this study in recent months and a study committee was formed to consider the service and status of women in the Disciples of Christ churches today. It is hoped that this article may serve as a background for this study.

As we study some of the attitudes of early leaders in the Disciples of Christ regarding the place of women in the church we find many things that sound strangely familiar. Some of the things that we consider very modern have been said before and some of the things that we thought outmoded are being said today. For the most part early publications of the Disciples of Christ have been used as source materials.

For some of the early church leaders the answer to the question "Shall the Sisters Speak?" was very simple. On August 5, 1840, a gentleman from Ohio, who signed himself as "J. C. A.," wrote Alexander Campbell the following letter:

A question has been agitated in some of the churches of a delicate nature, and seemed likely to produce much disaffection. I would be gratified and I believe the brotherhood satisfied, could you be induced to give us an essay on the subject in the *Harbinger*. The question is, Have the sisters a right to teach? If so, Who? When? Where? In other words, Have the sisters a right to deliver lectures, exhortations, and prayers in the public assembly of the church of God?¹

* Treasurer, The College of the Bible.

1. *The Millennial Harbinger*, 1840, p. 521.

Alexander Campbell's answer was one of the shortest ever to be penned by him and perhaps, to his way of thinking, one of the most final and complete. He replied: "Paul says: 'I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man; but to learn in silence.' (I Tim. ii. 12.) I submit to Paul, and teach the same lesson."²

The brother who wrote the letter may have been satisfied but there were others who were thinking differently. In the same year a committee was appointed to study the question, "Should all children under six years of age, be placed under female instruction?" The report of the committee was given in *The Christian Preacher*, which was a monthly magazine devoted to Christianity published at Mt. Healthy, Ohio. Among other things the committee reported:

Polite by nature, and ever graceful in movement, female instructors give to their pupils an ease and elegance in manner which can never be otherwise acquired. They are the only teachers of good manners, who naturally join example with precept. . . . Because of their natural sprightliness of character, and the superior shape of their tongues, females talk with greater facility, and with more clearness than males. It is most probable that all persons learn more during the first six years of their lives than they ever learn afterwards. . . . They should therefore during this time, be placed under the best teachers. There is a peculiarly sweet and persuasive eloquence in woman's language, to which man's rougher voice can never attain, and there is a charm in the conversation of educated women, which orators would do well to imitate. Females always pronounce better than males, and I never knew, or heard of but one female stammerer. Females very rarely used profane language. . . . It appears, then, that all children under six years of age should be placed solely under female instruction, and your committee is of the opinion that every female instructor should have a *very small class of such scholars*: all of which is respectfully submitted by

Silas W. Leonard³

Not only had the question of teaching been raised but there were those who had studied Acts and they knew that Paul had referred to the work done by women in the early church. There had been times when the women had conducted prayer meetings and Paul

2. *Ibid.*

3. *The Christian Preacher*, Vol. V., 1840, pp. 269-270.

had referred to them as co-laborers. If Paul's injunction that women keep silent was to be carried out then how could they sing hymns and pray in the worship services? In the thinking of many it was all right not to permit the women to preach but they were a little uneasy about not permitting them to sing and pray. So it was not surprising that in 1857, Mr. Campbell received another letter from Mr. M. Riddle, Jr., of Ohio, asking for some word in the *Harbinger* concerning women in such acts of worship as praying, singing, breaking of bread, etc. Alexander Campbell replied that he was too busy to go into detail but he did enlarge on his former answer and went one step further in saying:

. . . As to sisters in Christ's family, Paul has decided that they should *learn* in the church. "Let your women be silent in the churches: for it is not permitted them to speak in the congregation, and to be in subjection, as the law also saith: for it is indecent for a woman to speak in the assembly. Did the Word of God come out *from you* (woman) or did it come out *to you* only?" Wesley's version I Cor. xiv. 34-40. The Lord has not commissioned women to take any precedence over men. As for singing and praying they are equal in all the public acts of devotion—so far as *communion* is concerned; but in taking the lead or precedence in any of these in the Christian assemblies is not allowed by Paul. His judgment in this matter is paramount and final.⁴

In 1863 William Pinkerton of Lynchburg, Highland County, Ohio, wrote Alexander Campbell concerning the peculiar duties and privileges of women in Christian assembly. Mr. Pinkerton was willing to admit that women were an important part in the body of Christ and that they had been real helpers in the early church. He concluded his article with the following:

. . . In his letter to the Phillippians, Paul again speaks of women as co-laborers, saying: "Help those women who labored with me in the gospel." Did Paul need this assistance in the proclamation of the gospel? Or did they not labor privately for the spread of the gospel, while he spoke publicly? Or did they not aid him in the work by bestowing acts of kindness upon him?

But Paul utters three or four sentences in his first letter to the Corinthian congregation, and the first of Timothy, which I

4. *The Millennial Harbinger*, 1857, p. 415.

have found it difficult to reconcile with the practice of those women who think it their duty to preach the gospel:

1. "Let your women be silent in the assemblies."
2. "I do not suffer a woman to teach, or to usurp authority over the man."
3. "If they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home."
4. "It is a shame for a woman to speak in the congregation."

Is not the apostle evidently aiming to correct a disorderly and unbecoming movement among the female members of the congregation at Corinth? Are there, not, in almost every congregation, one or more forward and shameless women, who, if allowed full public privileges, would do much harm by their much speaking and shameless boldness? Indeed, was it consistent with that ornamental modesty, or "shamefacedness," which Paul admired and recommended, that women should be forward to speak, unless they had some special revelation?

Modesty is, indeed, the crowning virtue of woman. And the Apostle, consulting Christian propriety, and what was for the best, advised that women refrain from public speaking. Therefore, he says to the Corinthians: "Let your women be silent in the assemblies, for it is not allowed them to speak, but to be in subjection, as the law also says. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home; for it is a shame for a woman to speak in the congregation." And thus he writes to Timothy: "Let the woman learn in silence, with all subjection. But I do not suffer a woman to speak (publicly), nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence."

I know that when some women, who are naturally insubordinate, and who do not like to "obey their husbands in everything," read these sentences of Paul (if such ever happen to read them), they feel as if somebody wanted to infringe upon their rights; that Paul was encouraging men to domineer over their wives. They feel, indeed, altogether unwilling to submit. Now it is to just such women that this prohibitory language of Paul applies. Women who know their place, and who have modesty, humility and submissiveness to keep it, find no fault with Paul. They know that they need no such advice.⁵

At about the same time, W. K. Pendleton, co-editor of *The Millennial Harbinger*, was asked the following question: "Do the Christian Scriptures authorize females to lead in prayer, or to engage in exhortation, in the meetings of the church for social wor-

5. *Ibid.*, 1863, pp. 421-22.

ship?" Mr. Pendleton's answer was quite lengthy. He began by defining "social worship," "private worship" and "public worship." These definitions were to provoke much correspondence in the months following. His reply in part read:

To avoid all ambiguity in our response, we state at the outset, that we understand by "meetings in the church for social worship," public meetings of the congregation, not private gatherings of a few select friends, and these meetings for prayer and exhortation for the benefit of and before the whole assembly. It is necessary to introduce this definition of the terms of the query in the outset, for what we shall say will not be true of, and is not designed to apply to, those private prayer-meetings which are sometimes held by pious sisters in one another's houses, and in some cases, where there is no church and regularly provided edification and worship for the public. It will be understood that we do not allow the word "social" to mean *private*, nor take the word "church" as equal simply to a select gathering of special friends, simply for their own private enjoyment and worship. We can readily conceive of such meetings conducted entirely by females, without any violation of the Scriptures, and with the very happiest results, even though some brethren should be present.

We add to this the following very condensed summary of the teaching of the early church on this subject, taken from Coleman's *Christian Antiquities*, p. 118:

"There were fanatical sects even in the ancient church, such as the Montanists and Collyridians, who authorized and encouraged women to speak, dispute, and teach in public. But the sentiment of the church has uniformly been opposed to such indecencies. What impudence, says Tertullian, in these heretical women to teach, to dispute, to exorcise, and even to baptize! *De. Bap. 17*. Let no woman speak in public, nor teach, nor baptize, nor administer the sacrament, nor arrogate to herself any office of the ministry belonging to the other sex. *De Virg. vel c. 9*. Let not a woman, however, learned or holy, presume to teach men in public assembly—is the injunction of the Council of Carthage, IV. 99. Let all the female sex, says Chrysostom, forbear from assuming the responsibility of the sacred office, and the prerogatives of men. *De Sacerdotio, L. II*. The Apostolic Constitutions declare it to be a heathenish custom, *Lib. 3, c. 9*: and Epiphanius has a particular dissertation, in which he shows at large that no woman, from the foundation of the world, was ever ordained to offer sacrifice, or perform any solemn service of the church."

These are strong but true words, and we trust will be duly

pondered by all who labor for unity among the Lord's people in faith and practice.⁶

This letter defining worship and quoting from the church fathers was to bring a quick response from Mr. Randall Faurot, then of Philadelphia. He felt that had it been wrong for women to pray in the presence of men as Brother Pendleton had indicated then the Holy Spirit and the Apostles had done wrong in instigating and allowing it. Mr. Faurot felt that the quotations taken from the early church fathers "did not militate against these positions, but serve to show that their heads, as well as *divinities*, might still be *doctored* to advantage."⁷

A few months later another letter was received from Mr. Faurot. Mr. Pendleton published it but not until he had made the following comments in a note preceding the article:

In the midst of so much anarchy and radicalism in the political world, it is not strange that a little of these revolutionary elements should creep into the church; but we have too much confidence in the general steadfastness of our brethren, to fear that they can, to any hurtful degree, be led off from the very plain letter of the Scriptures by such special pleadings as the advocates of this feature of woman's rights are inventing, to justify their efforts to confuse and subvert the apostolic order of our public worship. "God," says Paul, "is not the author of confusion but of peace. In all the congregations of Christ's people, the women must keep silence; for they are not permitted to speak in public, but to show submission, as it is said also in the Book of the Law. And if they wish to ask questions, let them ask it of their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful to women to speak publicly in the congregation." While we listen to Paul, in these plain and explicit utterances, it will need no comment of mine to save us from being led astray, in giving a respectful though silent hearing also to the following from Bro. Faurot.⁸

Bro. Faurot's article was summed up in the following:

Last at the Cross, first at the sepulcher, first to announce the resurrection to the disciples, prominent in the first great prayer meeting (Acts 1:5), aiding in the establishment of the church, ever ready to aid the Apostles, in their work (Rom. 16:12),

6. *Ibid.*, 1864, pp. 325, 329, 330.

7. *Ibid.*, 1864, p. 371.

8. *Ibid.*, 1864, p. 415.

and encourage the saints, woman is identified with the history of our holy religion, too intimately for any one to say her voice was never mingled with "her lord's" in *prayer* and *praise*. To this she owes her redemption from the degradation of heathenism, and elevation to the rank of man's *help-meet*, and who, shall deny her the privilege of praising her Lord, and speaking of his goodness to her.⁹

Thus much was being written by various individuals as to the place of women in the churches but for the most part it was widely scattered and had not become a movement. William Thomas Moore in *A Comprehensive History of the Disciples of Christ* feels that it was well for the movement as a whole that the women took no active part in it during the early years of its formation. They went to church, they helped to sing, and did make private contributions which were always welcome but for the most part, they were silent. Mr. Moore felt that the movement had to pass through several important stages and it would have been most unfortunate if, in addition to other disturbing questions, the question of the position that women were to occupy had come to the front before "the time was ripe."

However, several things were to contribute to the "ripeness of time" and among the women themselves, who had heretofore been silent, some significant things began to happen. There were at least three things that contributed to this awakening among the women. The first was that women had entered industry. This was to open great areas that had been closed prior to this time. The place of the woman had been in the home and there she had accepted certain limitations. With her entering industry there came new freedom—especially economic freedom which came with the new resources that were hers for the first time.

The second contribution to the awakening among women was that they were admitted to schools of higher learning. The education of women was taking place even though the motives of some educators might be questioned. The following is the comment made on the admission of ladies to Bethany College:

The admission of ladies into Bethany College seems to be steadily growing in favor, and the experiment is proving itself to be a gratifying success.

9. *Ibid.*, 1864, p. 417.

Bethany College has given us many great and good men whose influence is felt and acknowledged at home and abroad; why should she not give us, also, noble and queenly women, educated and prepared to stand in their sphere, the peers of the men who are already filling the high places of usefulness throughout the land. Our daughters have a noble and God-given work in life and it is their right to be admitted to all the advantages in preparing for it that we have provided for our sons. Educated mothers will prove our surest guarantee for an educated posterity, and with intelligence, virtue, refinement, and religion around our hearthstones, we need not fear for the character of our public life. A noble and intelligent people can only spring from mothers trained in the high qualities of a Christian education.¹⁰

Even when women were permitted to attend colleges, they often did so under strange conditions. One young lady who attended Bro. J. W. McGarvey's class in September 1895 at The College of the Bible writes of her experiences:

The doors of the College of the Bible were opened wide enough for the slender Miss to squeeze through "that is, if," demanded Brother McGarvey, "she sit on the back seat, next to the door;" and "if at the close of each session—when I nod my head to her, she arises at once and leaves the room before I dismiss my class—also if on days when I decide our text is questionable and she finds a note written by me on her desk—she quietly withdraws, before the class begins—yes—if—also she always arrives—after the men students are all seated and we have started well in the lesson—and if—she speaks to none of the men students."¹¹

It was no secret that the same Brother McGarvey did not believe in women speaking from the pulpit. When explaining the presence of the first women students in The College of the Bible to the Board of Trustees, he wrote in part: "We trust the Board will approve the innovation. Someone remarked, after we had admitted some of these, that we will soon be turning out female preachers: but I replied, that by the time they study the Scriptures with us they will learn that women are not to be preachers."¹²

10. *The Christian Standard*, August 26, 1882, p. 269.

11. *Letter*, Transylvania Library from Mrs. Gustine Courson Weaver, McKinney, Texas.

12. *The President's Annual Report*, The College of the Bible, Lexington, Kentucky. June 5, 1905.

The education of women was to open to them new areas of influence and was to play an important part in their assuming leadership at this time.

A third factor that helped women receive recognition and begin to assume leadership in the churches was the Civil War. While the men had been away, the women had done many things for them. They had cared for the soldiers, assumed leadership in the church and had carried on in the absence of the men. And in most instances they had carried on surprisingly well.

All of these factors were to contribute to what Mrs. Ida Withers Harrison was to later call the "fullness of time" in the history of the place of women in the churches. Individual women and women in organized groups were to come to the fore and make significant contributions in the history of the Disciples of Christ.

Very little if anything had been written by women in the periodicals concerning the place of women. This is easily understandable, for no woman would dare to write what she thought—and if she did, no paper would publish articles written by women. Therefore, it is suggestive of a new era to find a series of articles in *The Apostolic Guide* which were written by a woman. These articles—twelve in the first series—were written by a lady who signed her name as M. R. Lemert of Hebron, Ohio. She must have been individualistic by nature because nothing can be found concerning her in any of the histories of the woman's work which was to begin at about the same time and which will be mentioned later in this article. The only knowledge of her is found in the articles themselves. She had been a member of the church for fifty-five years and was eighty years old at the time the articles were written. Mr. Dewese was asked to review the series of articles. He makes one reference to the "bad treatment" that (Miss?) Lemert had received. It is not known whether this treatment was received at the hands of the members of her church or her community nor why it was received. There is no doubt that she was well ahead of the times in her convictions concerning the rights and place of women. From her father she had learned that she should do the whole will of God but she had also been taught to be silent in the church because she was a woman. Of her series of articles she says:

For years I have tried to get my subject before our leaders, through our papers. Some mocked, some encouraged; but the

leaders in general ignored. In vain, I called on our preachers, teachers, professors, presidents, leading minds, to speak out; I finally decided to coerce—provoke some reply—to “beard the lion in his den” or get bearded in the effort. In order to do this, I must have the liberty of the press. I wrote to more than a half-dozen stating my intention and asking use of their columns. Bro. Allen (Ed. *The Apostolic Guide*) though thinking me wrong, replied that the cause had nothing to fear from the most critical examination: “Write your pieces and send them on and I will order them published.” Gladly I complied.¹³

The “pieces” to which Mr. Allen referred consisted of twelve lengthy articles. These were reviewed by Mr. B. C. Deweese, at Mr. Allen’s suggestion, and (Miss?) Lemert answered Mr. Deweese in three more articles. All in all the series which was entitled “Shall the Sisters Speak?” received quite a bit of space and especially so since they were the first to be written by a woman.

(Miss?) Lemert was very apologetic for having written the articles but she felt that she must. She had often attended services where there was no minister and she felt that she could not refrain from speaking “words of life” to those assembled. She had no sooner finished speaking than she would remember the words of Paul about women keeping silent in the church and she would be filled with remorse. Six years prior to the writing of these articles she had been asked to write an essay on the subject, “Shall the Sisters Speak?” She determined to study the Scriptures carefully to ascertain the truth as found in the Old and New Testaments.

Her conclusions after six years of careful study and prayer had resulted in the series of articles. Her thesis was:

The doctrine that seals woman’s lips in the church assembled—that affirms that Paul (in I Cor. xiv. 34-36) prohibits the free religious use of woman’s tongue is a heresy—a mere assumption involving consequences dire. It impeaches the wisdom of God. It accuses him of acting in bad faith with women—of mocking her. It also impeaches Paul—accused him of transcending his mission; of contradicting himself—pulling down what he has built up—in short, of committing moral suicide. Further, it deranges or destroys the divinely constituted relation of the sexes, in that it exalts the man above God, in demanding supreme honors of woman; it rejects

13. *The Apostolic Guide*, 1886, May 14 issue.

woman as helper, and brings her, as a religious being down on a level with traditional animals.¹⁴

The above thesis (Miss?) Lemert sought to elucidate in the articles which followed. She had studied well. Bro. McGarvey had written an article about this time in which he had said the silence of women was absolute and universal even to the singing of praises. “Transactions in the garden” made the silence applicable to all ages and to all nations in all ages. He had also said, “Christ had not permitted women to speak in the churches as teachers of men, neither had the law of Moses.”¹⁵ To this reference to the law of Moses, (Miss?) Lemert begins with Deborah who had taught in Israel for forty years and records the names and records of both men and women in Old Testament times who prophesied. She felt that Paul was seeking to correct a situation that existed in Corinth when he spoke of the women keeping silent. If Paul believed that women should be modest—so much so as to forbid their singing—how then could he have permitted them to confess Christ and be baptized? Certainly the acts of confession and baptism were more personal than singing.

In the entire series (Miss?) Lemert takes every known argument propounded by the advocates of the silence of women and seeks to answer them. She felt that such thinking was contrary to the spirit of Christ and was in deadly hostility to Bible teachings and practice.

(Miss?) Lemert’s articles and replies from Bro. Deweese were to call forth some comments from readers of *The Apostolic Guide*. Though little or nothing is known of her, she deserves some recognition for having been bold enough to say what she thought in the face of opposition. She had studied long, carefully and prayerfully and then had spoken her piece.

At about the same time some other things were happening that were to prove tremendously important in the history of the Disciples of Christ. On April 9, 1874, after her private devotions, the thought came to Mrs. Caroline Neville Pearre that she should organize the women of the church for missionary work. With Mrs. Pearre the thought was to become a deed; in a few weeks she had organized the Woman’s Missionary Society of her home church in

14. *Ibid.*, January 4, 1886, issue.

15. *Ibid.*

Iowa City, Iowa. No sooner was this done than she began to correspond with women in Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Missouri, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. The ladies to whom she wrote organized local groups and there was soon a need for an organization that would represent the womanhood of the whole church. At that time the American Christian Missionary Society was the only general society among the Disciples of Christ. Mrs. Pearre conceived the idea that it would be wise to organize the women's work at the next annual convention of this group. She wrote Thomas Munnell, Corresponding Secretary of the American Christian Missionary Society, and he answered with words "that will ever make his name memorable among the women of our church: 'This is a flame of the Lord's kindling, and no man can extinguish it.'"¹⁶

A call was issued for a meeting of the women at the General Missionary Convention in Cincinnati, October, 1874.

In response to this, about seventy-five women, from nine different states, met on the 21st day of the month, in the basement of the Richmond Street church. Can we doubt that these pioneers in woman's work in our church, felt like the women of old, as they hurried to the tomb of their Lord, when that chill thought struck them, "Who shall roll away the stone from the sepulcher?" They could literally apply the words of Paul to themselves, that they met "in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling." At that time, there was no woman among them, experienced in public work; they were untrained in speech, in the conduct of business, in audible, articulate prayer. But though these obstacles bore heavily upon them, like the women on that Easter Morn long ago, they still pressed on to their goal.¹⁷

Mrs. C. N. Pearre was easily the leader in the group. It was an important hour when Mrs. Pearre briefly gave the purpose of the meeting and appointed a committee to draft a constitution. Later the constitution was presented and adopted. Indianapolis was recommended as the Headquarters of the Board and the following officers elected:

Mrs. Maria Jameson, Indianapolis, Indiana, President

16. Ida Withers Harrison, *The Christian Woman's Board of Missions*, p. 28.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

Mrs. J. B. Thomas, Baltimore, Maryland	}	Vice-Presidents
Mrs. Joseph King, Allegheny City, Pennsylvania		
Mrs. W. T. Moore, Cincinnati, Ohio		
Mrs. N. E. Atkinson, Wabash, Indiana		
Mrs. S. E. Jones, Newtown, Kentucky		
Mrs. E. J. Dickinson, Eureka, Illinois		
Mrs. Enos Campbell, St. Louis, Missouri		
Mrs. James E. Garton, Des Moines, Iowa		
Mrs. T. F. Campbell, Monmouth, Oregon		
Mrs. Sarah Wallace, Indianapolis, Indiana, Recording Secretary		
Mrs. C. N. Pearre, Indianapolis, Indiana, Corresponding Secretary		
Mrs. O. A. Burgess, Indianapolis, Indiana, Treasurer ¹⁸		

In the afternoon of the same day the Christian Woman's Board of Missions met in the hall where the General Convention was in session and the newly elected officers were presented and warmly received.

Isaac Errett, editor of the *Christian Standard*, made the following resolution which was passed:

Resolved, That this convention extend to the "Christian Woman's Board of Missions" recognition and hearty approval, assured that it opens a legitimate field of activity and usefulness in which Christian women may be active and successful co-operants of ours in the great work of sending the gospel into all the world. We pledge ourselves to "help these women" who propose to labor with us in the Lord.¹⁹

As long as Mr. Errett lived he was to cheer, encourage, and help these women. He had always been free from the prevailing sentiment which relegated this best element of the churches to a condition of silence and comparative idleness. He realized that they were an immense power for good—not only in carrying out their own work—but in the influence of their example of zeal and devotion upon the hearts and activities of the brotherhood in general.

J. H. Garrison, editor of the *Christian (Christian Evangelist)* was another who was to emphasize the importance of enlisting the women. He, too, gave time and space in his paper to tell of the work of the women and to encourage them in every endeavor.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32.

19. J. S. Lamar, *Memoirs of Isaac Errett*, Vol. II. The Standard Publishing Company, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1893.

W. T. Moore, editor of the *Christian Quarterly*, and Thomas Munnell, one of its co-editors, were two others who were actively supporting the work of the women in the church. Before the women were organized Thomas Munnell had written at length in the October 1869 issue of the *Christian Quarterly* on "Woman's Work in the Church." Mr. Munnell did not feel that women should preach from the pulpit but he did feel that she should be permitted to do any work that a Christian ought to do and the attitude of the church in not permitting her to do these things was pagan and un-Christian.

W. T. Moore, editor of the *Christian Quarterly* and pastor of Central Christian Church, Cincinnati, Ohio, delivered a sermon on "Woman's Work in the Church" on Lord's Day morning, September 11, 1870. This sermon was published by unanimous vote of the congregation. In conclusion he said:

Will you waste the precious time that God has given you in chasing the butterflies of fashion and folly, when you may be engaged in the grand and glorious work of leading the world to Christ? Surely no true women would hesitate for a moment which course to choose. But you may ask, how is all this to be done? You may say that you are willing to work—willing to do anything that will be of service in the Lord's cause, but then there is no one who will instruct you what to do or where to do it. You feel cut off in a large degree from the active agencies of the Church. True, you feel it to be your duty to occupy your place at all the public meetings of the congregation. But you receive little or no encouragement to do anything else. You look around in vain for any organized movement among the sisters that will insure success. You say, give us encouragement and put us to work in a way where we can help one another, and then we will be, in deed and truth, "helpers" of those who proclaim the Gospel of Christ. This, my sisters, is just what we are trying to reach in this Church. You have already shown your willingness and ability to work in the Lord's cause, and it is the purpose of the officers of the church to provide for your more efficient usefulness in the future. This example, I trust, will soon be followed in all the churches, and then I shall have an increase of faith in the early triumphs of the Gospel.²⁰

There was another group whose attitude toward women in the

20. W. T. Moore, *Woman's Work in the Church*, A Sermon, Bosworth, Chase and Hall, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1870.

church was "whether we like it or not." It was expressed in the following article written by Benjamin B. Tyler in the *Christian Standard Supplement* of October 14, 1882:

If Christian propriety and the current interpretations of the words of an ambassador of Christ have kept women out of the pulpit, she has nevertheless spoken in all of our meetings for public worship.

From the time of the protracted prayer meeting in the little upper room in Jerusalem, in which women took part and of which the Christian Church was born, woman's influence has been great.

Brethren, whether we like it or not, the women have been in the songs that we sing, speaking in all of our meetings for worship.

Among us, as a people, this potent influence for good has not been used as it ought to have been used, and as I believe in the future it will be used.²¹

It goes without saying that not all of the leaders were favorably impressed with the formation of the Christian Women's Board of Missions. It was to meet opposition. W. T. Moore, writing in 1909, feels that it was good that the organization faced opposition at the beginning of its existence. This opposition caused the leaders to plan carefully and wisely and such planning was to enhance their usefulness in the days ahead.

With the formation of the women into a national organization was to come the formation of state groups. An example of the ridicule that many of the women faced is shown in an article which appeared in one of the leading church papers following the organization of the Kentucky women. It is taken from an address given at Winchester, Kentucky, in 1904 by Mrs. A. M. (Ida Withers) Harrison, president of the group:

I found in the issue of that paper immediately following the formation of the Woman's Missionary Society the leading editorial, occupying three columns, in large type, on extravagance in dress and tyranny of fashion among women. The writer exhorted the women to abandon the "hooking, lacing, strapping, cramping, loading, painting, curling, that deform the bodies and dwarf the minds and spirits of our wives, sisters, and daughters. Can such worship? Even if they had the spirit they are incapable of the physical exertion." Three or

21. *The Christian Standard Supplement*, No. 41, 1882.

four numbers after, a contributor, a minister, took as his text "A Woman's Missionary Society," and threw cold water "on women organizing for general missionary work for preaching the gospel" and exhorts them rather to turn their attention to dress reform, and to caring for their homes and children. He wrote with fine scorn, "Just imagine a procession of sisters, dressed in modern style, marching in Lexington to their yearly meeting, carrying banners inscribed, 'Woman's Missionary Society' with the motto, 'The poor have the gospel preached to them!'"²² The argument that modern dress would prevent their laboring to have the gospel preached to the poor seemed shallow logic to the maligned society so one of the members plucked up spirit to defend their right to do missionary work; but the preacher-critic crushed her by saying "that she came holding in one hand a constitution, saying her object is to cultivate a missionary spirit, and holding in the other a lot of red pepper," and kindly advised her that the best way to convince him and other doubting brethren of the necessity of such a movement is by what she can do, not by what she can say.²²

Another very interesting criticism is made by Professor I. B. Grubbs of The College of the Bible:

Let me say that so perfectly manifest is the meaning of Paul that only those who take offense at his teachings on this subject will, on the one hand, resort to unhermeneutical methods and sophistical arts to evade the force of his language; or, on the other, indulge in unworthy flings at the apostle himself. And now shall we apologize for this teaching of an inspired apostle of the infallible Christ who in the exercise of divine wisdom called and qualified this grandest of human teachers to illumine the world by turning men "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God"? We may do so whenever it can be shown that the spirit of any age is superior to the Spirit of God.²³

An interesting observation is made here. From many articles in the *Christian Standard* about 1870-1885, it is apparent that it was one of the most liberal papers in the brotherhood at that time. However, as this article is being written, there appeared in the August 8, 1953, issue of the *Christian Standard* an article on "Women's Place in the Church." The author feels that women should keep

22. Mrs. A. M. Harrison, *Sketch of the K. C. B. M. from its Organization in 1882-1904*, Winchester, Kentucky, 1904.

23. I. B. Grubbs, *Exegetical Analysis of the Epistles, with notes*, John Marcrom Publisher, Chaplin, Kentucky, 1893, pp. 79-80.

silent and quotes as one of his main arguments the quotation of Professor I. B. Grubbs above.

The criticisms though severe contained a bit of humor as shown by the following:

A Miss Smiley has been preaching to very large audiences in the Episcopal Church at Cincinnati. May we in this country be delivered from women preachers. We heard of a preacher's wife once, who, whenever she heard a hen trying to crow, would pounce upon the unlucky female chicken and wring its neck. We do not say, however, that exactly the same policy should be pursued toward female preachers.²⁴

And A. P. Terrell in *The Apostolic Guide* of July 2, 1886, expressed himself in no uncertain terms. "I never heard but two women lecture, and I trust it will never be my displeasure to hear another. The whole thing is disgusting to me whether the lecture be delivered in behalf of temperance, politics or religion."²⁵

Despite all of the criticisms leveled at them, the work of the women went forward. They believed that God had a work for them to do and they did it to the best of their ability. The growth of the work is shown by the following comparison of receipts from the first convention held in Cincinnati in 1874 until 1908 when they met in New Orleans:

1874	Cincinnati	\$ 430.00
1875	Louisville	770.35
1876	Indianapolis	1,749.00
1877	St. Louis	2,033.77
1878	Cincinnati	2,919.42
1879	Bloomington	3,551.24
1880	Louisville	5,050.96
1881	Indianapolis	7,483.50
1882	Lexington	9,319.60
1883	Cincinnati	10,364.55
1884	St. Louis	14,418.55
1885	Cleveland	16,620.09
1886	Kansas City	18,283.63
1887	Indianapolis	26,226.01
1888	Springfield	27,665.26
1889	Louisville	36,279.17
1890	Des Moines	42,116.81

24. *The Gospel Advocate*, March 24, 1881, p. 187.

25. *The Apostolic Guide*, July 2, 1886.

1891	Allegheny	40,973.87
1892	Nashville	48,222.68
1893	Chicago	51,232.06
1894	Richmond	59,277.04
1895	Dallas	58,611.83
1896	Springfield	57,622.20
1897	Indianapolis	62,600.81
1898	Chattanooga	68,185.87
1899	Cincinnati	101,343.54
1900	Kansas City	106,722.76
1901	Minneapolis	135,441.58
1902	Omaha	139,034.00
1903	Detroit	147,086.85
1904	St. Louis	167,084.73
1905	San Francisco	175,408.98
1906	Buffalo	206,553.12
1907	Norfolk	281,637.54
1908	New Orleans	295,630.11 ²⁶

Space does not permit nor is it the purpose of this article to complete the history of the women's work to the present time. Suffice it to say that those who laid the foundations planned better than they knew and the work has continued to go forward to the present day. Today it is being carried on by the Department of Christian Women's Fellowship of the United Christian Missionary Society.

From a place of comparative silence in the church of the Disciples of Christ, the women have come to hold a very real place in the life of the Brotherhood. The end is not yet and they continue to seek to use the talents that God has given them that His Kingdom may come on this earth.

26. W. T. Moore, *A Comprehensive History of the Disciples of Christ*, Fleming H. Revell Co., New York, 1909.

THE SERVICE AND STATUS OF WOMEN AMONG THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

Report of the National Committee

HOWARD ELMO SHORT*

Interest in the service and status of women in the churches has had new emphasis in the past year, and has led to the formation of numerous committees to study the matter. While the details are a matter of fresh record, it is well to set them down in permanent form, together with the report of the committee appointed to study the matter for the Disciples of Christ.

Several factors have combined to bring the issue to the fore at the present time. One of the "concerns of the churches" discussed by the first Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam in 1948 was "The Life and Work of Women in the Church." As a result, the Commission on Life and Work of Women in the Church was set up. The results of the study of this Commission have been compiled and interpreted by Kathleen Bliss in a full-length book, *The Service and Status of Women in the Churches* (London, SCM Press, 1952). The Commission has also published a study outline: *A Study of Man-Woman Relationship* (London, SCM Press, 1952). A visit of Mlle. Madeleine Barot, new secretary of the Commission, to America in January, 1953, gave special emphasis to a study of the will of God for women. She emphasized, however, that the wholeness of the church, rather than the "rights of women," is the chief concern.

The matter was soon taken in hand by American women. At the meeting of the Board of Managers of United Church Women, a General Department of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, in May 1952, it was voted:

- (a) That the Board of Managers approve a study of the status of women within the constituting communions of the National Council of Churches.
- (b) That the Board of Managers authorize a committee of the General Department of United Church Women to guide the study and plan for a report to the 1953 Assembly.

* Professor of Church History, The College of the Bible.

- (c) That the above mentioned committee request each national denominational president of women's groups with a national woman executive of her denomination, to participate in this project by appointing three women and requesting the appointment of the three theologians within her communion to make this study.

In a letter of October 29, 1952, written to the appropriate leaders in the twenty-nine constituent bodies of the National Council of Churches, Mrs. James D. Wyker, chairman of the General Department of United Church Women, stated that a national committee had been appointed, and urged the immediate appointment of denominational committees.

Miss Jessie M. Trout, vice-president of the United Christian Missionary Society, was given the responsibility of convening the committee of the Disciples of Christ. In Mrs. Wyker's letter of October 29, 1952, she quoted the decision of the Board of Managers of United Church Women which is printed above, and then added: "It is now agreed that in addition to the above-named members of the Committee, 'two male administrators' should be included."

In compliance with the suggestions on personnel, the following members of the Committee were named:

Miss Jessie M. Trout, Chairman
 Mrs. Marguerite Harmon Bro
 Mrs. Harold L. Lunger
 Mrs. Chester E. Martin
 Dr. Gaines M. Cook
 Dr. A. Dale Fiers
 Dr. W. E. Garrison
 Dr. Perry E. Gresham
 Dr. Howard E. Short

On February 2, 1953, Miss Trout asked the members of the Committee "to make an early study of the will of God for women." The reports of this study were used as the basis of discussion during one session of a meeting of the state presidents and executive secretaries of Christian Women's Fellowship, the state chairman of business women's guilds, and the national staff of Christian Women's Fellowship. The meeting was held at Clifty Falls State Park, Madison, Indiana, in February 1953, and the discussion was led by Mrs. James D. Wyker. A paper by Mrs. Arthur E. Landolt, to

which Dr. Dwight E. Stevenson and others had contributed suggestions, was read at this same meeting and gave further impetus to the desire to formulate a statement of the subject. Following this discussion hour, a committee was appointed to draw up a statement of the conclusions of this group of representative women of the Disciples of Christ. Their report is of sufficient interest to be printed as a part of this permanent record. It follows:

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE SERVICE AND STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCHES

In order to further the movement toward more complete cooperation in the total program of the church for the advancement of the Kingdom of God, the national department, the state presidents and guild chairmen of the Christian Women's Fellowship of the Disciples of Christ, in a joint meeting at Clifty Falls State Park, Madison, Indiana, February, 1953, initiated a study on the "Service and Status of Women in the Churches."

Believing "that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34-35), we desire to further the concept of "the priesthood of all believers." "The grave situation in the world today—can only be met by a truly unified church that uses all the talents of all its members, whether clerical or lay, male or female." (*Women in American Church Life*, by Inez M. Cavert.) Therefore, we present the following statement:

We define full membership in the churches of the Disciples of Christ to mean that, after confession of faith and baptism, and in accordance with the teachings of Jesus, members are permitted to participate in all functions of the corporate church, with equal opportunities for service and election to any office. We interpret this to include the following:

THE LOCAL CHURCH

1. The recruiting of women for the ministry with full opportunities for service.
2. Opportunities for service as elders, deacons, members of the church board, church officers and committee chairmen.

THE STATE

We desire to cooperate to the fullest with other state leaders and boards. Therefore, we favor coordination of state programs through such groups as planning commissions, coordinating councils or joint committees. Until women are accorded full membership, we believe our best work can be done through complete autonomy of women's work.

POLICY MAKING BOARDS:

We believe that women should have adequate representation, hold office and participate in the entire program of the district, state and national policy making boards or committees.

CONVENTIONS:

We believe that women should have adequate representation on executive and planning committees, and on the program as speakers.

SALARIES:

We believe in the principle of equal pay for equal responsibilities. All personnel should be included in pension fund and similar benefits at local, state and national levels.

This is the first report of a standing committee, and we recommend to the representatives of the state that they also initiate study within the state Christian Women's Fellowship board, and report back to the committee prior to the next staff meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

KATHERINE J. FITZGERALD
Chairman of Committee

Committee members:

ALLENA GRAFTON	DOROTHY CHICK	BESSIE HART
ELIZABETH LANDOLT	ETHEL S. THOMAS	JEN WHITE
MABEL CROWN	MARY ELLEN LARUE	MILDRED HULSE
JESSIE M. TROUT	VELVA DREESE	

The National Committee met in Indianapolis, April 17, 1953. After a day of discussion, various members of the committee were assigned the task of drawing together the consensus of opinion on the separate topics under discussion. These written reports were then assembled as the completed statement to be presented to the Biennial Assembly of United Church Women, meeting in Atlantic City, New Jersey, October 5-8, 1953, on behalf of the Disciples of Christ.

The report is herewith appended, in its final form:

SERVICE AND STATUS OF WOMEN IN DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

The following report on the service and status of women in the churches of Disciples of Christ is the result of a study made at the request of the General Department of United Church Women. Happily, however, it coincides with a study being made by a standing committee set up by a conference of the communion's women leaders which met at Clifty Falls State Park, Madison, Indiana, February 24-March 1, 1953. Some of the statements in this report are from the first findings of that standing committee.

I. INTRODUCTION

The problem of the service and status of women in the churches varies according to the theology and church polity of different communions. If however Disciples of Christ base their position on New Testament teachings,

their position must show a belief in the equality of men and women in the service of Christ and His Church. Their belief in the priesthood of all believers must include a recognition of women in any service of the church. In theory this is what Disciples of Christ believe but the problem lies in the practical working out of this belief. This study endeavors to set forth the teaching of the New Testament, the goals for women's participation (if the Biblical standards were followed), present status of women in churches of Disciples of Christ and suggestions for an interim strategy until the Biblical standards are understood and accepted.

II. WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT GOD'S WILL FOR WOMEN

Surely the will of God for women is no different than for men; he wills that all of us fulfill our destiny and purpose, as His children. In the Bible we learn that the *genus homo* consists of male and female. Both are necessary for the completeness of "man."

Leslie Weatherhead, in his little book, *The Will of God* (Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1944), has suggested that it is God's "intentional will" to pour out continuous and everlasting goodness and love for all men and women, boys and girls, without regard to merit, and that he expects the same response manifested by all his children to one another.

Paul's statement to the churches of Galatia is a significant one for this study. He writes: "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:27, 28). It is true that the Apostle was not speaking about the exercise of specialized functions in the church, but of the access of all kinds of people to salvation! The inference of equality "in the church," however, is very strong.

If one were to choose to ignore this listing of men and women together, by Paul, he might also try to make a case for separation of the other pairs into higher and lower classes. Jews and then Greeks, free and then slaves. Such attempts are preposterous. God's will for a woman is the same as for a man—absolute devotion to service. If she has different abilities, well and good but this is not the point of argument here. We are "all one in Christ Jesus."

Woman's place in the service of the church is a matter to be determined upon sociological and psychological grounds, rather than upon theological grounds. This is the only way that the various references to women in the Bible, especially in Paul's writings, can have any meaning when taken as a whole.

In this light Paul's advice to Timothy about the "silence" of women in the church can be understood, as well as the Galatian passage just discussed (Timothy 2:8-15). We are all aware of the status of woman in the Roman world. Therefore, the utter freedom portrayed in the New Testament is spectacular. In the face of social custom and the generally accepted views of women, Paul was right to advise that women keep silent in public worship.

It is indication that the question had arisen, apparently, and nineteen centuries later our committee is still trying to explain the matter!

Paul was saying, in effect, that no woman, any more than a man, should do anything to bring dishonor or misunderstanding upon the church. Braided hair and public speaking would have done so, then. Paul's argument that Eve was the first to sin, but that "woman will be saved through bearing children" (I Tim. 8:15) surely does not carry much weight when compared with what he wrote to Galatia (Gal. 3:27-28). One would have to have his mind made up beforehand, to accept this and reject the other.

The Bible teaches us that women are capable of the same sins as men. They, also, have the same virtues, the same obligations and the same opportunities. The Mary and Martha incident is indicative of the fact that a woman should also choose "the better part," and not leave this to men while she does the serving. The woman at the well in Samaria, Magdalene, and others illustrate the fact that God deals with women as individuals, as responsible persons. The Ananias and Sapphira, and the Aquila and Priscilla incidents, indicate that a Christian woman is equally responsible with her husband, for Christian service.

There are 150 or more women specifically mentioned in the Bible, and some twenty-five of these have been associated with a definite occupation or service. Women are definitely appointed to a place in the church and in the world, as well as in the home.

Jesus gave women a high place, and was kind to them. Women accompanied Jesus and the twelve "through cities and village" while he preached and healed (Luke 8:1, 2). Luke refers often to the women. He tells us that women were among the 120 gathered in the Upper Room for prayer, after the ascension of the Lord (Acts 1:14). The experience on resurrection morn indicates that women are sometimes more sensitive to the truth than men. Also, the fact that Mary Magdalene ran to find Peter and John is indicative of the spiritual imperative in the world of women to be alert to their Christian responsibility.

There remains the question of specialized functions in the church. Granted that "women are people," and equally precious with men in the sight of God, does the New Testament place a limitation upon the kind of service they can render? It is our conclusion that there is no such restriction.

However, this question is tied to a deeper one, namely, "is there a priestly function in the church to which certain members are ordained and from which others are thus automatically barred?" The majority of the Christian world believes this to be the case. One must be "ordained," or receive "Orders" as some express it, to administer the sacrament of the Lord's Supper and baptism, and to preach. Interestingly enough, some of those who believe in the necessity of "Orders" will ordain both men and women, while others will not.

It is our concept of the New Testament that it teaches the priesthood of all believers. Not only is everyone his own priest, but he can teach his fellow man, or administer the Lord's Supper and baptism on behalf of the Lord.

This view, of course, is clearly apart from the accepted views of the wisdom and necessity of spiritual and academic preparation for those who would thus serve. We concur in such recognition of needful preparation for ministering. It is needed to a greater degree than in other walks of life. Such preparation does not lead to a "priesthood" to perform priestly functions, as far as we can see.

This leads us to the conclusion about the service of women in the various ministries of the church. If there is no priestly order in the church, then there is no divine mandate debarring women from such a status or from discharging the functions of priests.

There could be differences between men and women with respect to the forms of service and Christian institutions, even if a concept of Christian priesthood is rejected. However, it is our belief that the total trend of the New Testament record is in the direction of the broad principle that Christian service can be performed properly by *any believer* who is personally qualified (by spirit, physical and mental ability), and appointed, to perform it. This general proposition, together with the implications that must be drawn from it in the absence of valid restrictions, is the only permanently authoritative biblical teaching in regard to the service of women in the church.

III. GOALS FOR WOMEN'S STATUS AND PARTICIPATION

- A. In matters which concern the whole congregation each member (man, woman, youth) should have full opportunity for service according to qualifications, capacity and training in such matters as
 - Calling minister
 - Erecting and caring for building
 - Dividing money
 - Planning program
- B. In all functional and administrative relationships of the cooperative work outside the local church, women should have full opportunity for service according to interest, availability, and ability.
- C. In full-time employment by the church in such positions as ministers, and religious education directors, men and women should have equal opportunity, equal pay and equal security.

IV. PRESENT STATUS OF WOMEN IN CHURCHES OF DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

As stated above the Disciples of Christ recognize the priesthood of all believers. But the sanctity of tradition and the misplacing of emphasis on Paul's teachings seem to have seriously limited full acceptance of this belief. Furthermore Disciples have a reputation for distinguished achievement in equalizing opportunity for women in the church. Are we living up to it in practice? Are Disciples of Christ really making use of the vast reserve of talent and devotion of its women members?

A. In local congregations

Although there has been decided progress in recognition of women and

their talents, few congregations have given them equal representation on the governing boards. There are few women elders (Kathleen Bliss in her book *The Service and Status of Women in the Churches* (SCM, 1952), quotes a report on Disciples of Christ as follows: "The eldership is the point at which the strong tradition of sex equality in the Disciple churches breaks down. Only 1.1 per cent of Disciple churches reported women elders—a total of five women in three churches out of 277 reporting.")

Although many churches elect women to serve on functional committees, few elect them to the chairmanship of said committees with the exception of the missions committee.

There are still some large, influential churches that have no deaconesses and no women board members.

B. On policy-making and program planning boards.

In a recent study of some twenty national policy-making boards of our brotherhood, seven were found to have no women on them at all; three have one woman; two have two women with the remaining organizations having a plurality of men. The outstanding exception is The United Christian Missionary Society which has an equal proportion of men and women on its Board of Managers and Board of Trustees.

The above breakdown reveals a very inadequate use of women on more than half of the policy-making boards. Unfortunately also, two of these boards are concerned with writing and education, fields in which women in our churches have contributed so much. In fact there would seem to be no board in the brotherhood that needs to bar women because of sex, but on the contrary the acceptance of the business acumen and ability for detailed planning of capable women might be a very great asset.

For more than seventy-five years women have conducted a successful state program of missions and education for women. They have planned programs, raised large sums of money and directed a broad organizational program in an efficient, economical way. Because more than thirty years ago the national women's board united with other boards to form the United Christian Missionary Society, there are those in the states who urge a state unification. Women in general look with some suspicion on this trend because of the above-mentioned disinclination to recognize their ability on policy-making boards. After seventy-five years of successful administration women cannot be asked to relinquish their responsibilities without adequate representation in the new organization.

C. Participation in International Convention.

From a study of the programs of the International Conventions from 1940 through 1952, it was found that only ten of the major addresses were given by women. This included the president's address given by the woman vice-president who presided over the 1952 Convention because of the illness of the president and also addresses by two women of other communions. This means that only seven women leaders of the brotherhood were invited to give major addresses.

D. Ordination.

Ordination has been granted to women in our brotherhood quite readily as they fulfill the requirements for it. But as a professor has written: "... the women we ordain as ministers under present conditions are not regarded as are men ministers, with more solid prestige and authority, but are rather regarded still as just women in the pulpit, and discounted accordingly." (Hugh Ghormley, Sr.)

Seward Hiltner, writing in the May, 1952, *Pastoral Psychology*, says: "If you are a physician, psychologist, personnel director, Y.W.C.A. secretary, language scholar, housewife, college president, or stenographer, the churches and ministers will gratefully receive your contributions to pastoral psychology. But if you try to get inside the fraternity, you will find that life is real, life is earnest, female pastors aren't the goal." (p. 9.)

No, full opportunity for ministerial service for women has not yet come into being even among the Disciples.

E. Equal pay for equal responsibility.

In many ways the church which should lead follows far behind the business world in the matter of equal pay. The principle of equal pay for equal responsibility is not commonly followed at local, state or national levels. Women ministers, religious education directors, choir directors, state and national secretaries generally receive salaries lower than their men contemporaries even though a woman may have equal or better training or may have equal or more family responsibility.

V. PROPOSALS FOR INTERIM STRATEGY

Every member should have full opportunity for service according to his qualifications, capacity and training. Recognizing that this goal has not been reached and that progress must be made in realizing the objective of full participation of women, it is necessary to have an interim procedure whereby women may grow in their ability and willingness to serve in positions open to them, and whereby churches may realize the possibilities of the service they may and should render. The following suggestions are made.

- A. Women must assume responsibility for preparing themselves for the greater and varied services suggested previously and be willing to accept responsibility.
- B. Local churches—their ministers and leadership, must take initiative to explore new ways in which women may assume responsibility in the work of the church.
- C. In selecting the personnel for existing church organizations, women should be given full opportunity to share in program and policy making.
- D. In developing new patterns of state, national and local church organization, care must be taken to see that participation of women is preserved in such a way that there will be consistent progress toward the goal of full participation in the church.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The universal interest in the subject evidenced by the diverse groups who are discussing it is an indication that much progress is being made. Many of the most influential men leaders of the brotherhood are urging the necessity of the early recognition of women's rights and obligations to hold leadership responsibilities. Women are realizing that they must not ask nor expect recognition because of their "rights" as women but only if and when they are prepared for able and consecrated leadership. There is a mutual recognition of this next step in Christian growth and grace and both men and women must prepare for it.

It is not thought that the last word on the subject has been spoken, or that the conclusions of the committee are the only possible ones. They may not take into account every division of thought in the Brotherhood on the matter. Since only a portion of the Brotherhood assumes any practical relationship to the work of the National Council of Churches, the members of the committee quite obviously reflect only the views of such churches. Within any given church, there is likely to be as varying a view on this topic as on any other.

The writer was privileged to sit with the National Committee of the National Council in its session at the Grosvenor Hotel in New York, March 21, 1953. The preliminary report of the Disciples' Committee furnished material for some of the discussion, since it was the first report prepared. It was neither a matter of joy nor regret to discover that the various churches seem to have more divergence of opinion within their respective groups than the Disciples of Christ.

SOCIAL-ECONOMIC STATUS OF DISCIPLE
WOMEN LEADERS

LEWIS S. C. SMYTHE*

One woman wrote, along with her complete answers to our questions, "How do you expect this information to give any impetus to church women leaders?" We pass the question on to you. How important is it to know the economic status, the education, the occupation, present residence, and opinions of these women regarding working people's power and guaranteed economic security? How interesting are the questions as to whether they have ever married or not, how many children they have had, and to what other national organizations they belong? Another woman wrote, "Any woman that will tell you her age will tell you everything!" We took up the challenge because that intrigues any sociologist. We got her age; now we will have to see if we can learn "everything" about her! But without approximate age, questions about marriage, children, education, and occupation are meaningless. Sorry, we cannot tell who she is because we promised to keep all replies confidential!

But we can tell you the answers to these questions about 241 Disciple national women leaders as a group. They responded so enthusiastically that we received replies from 85 per cent of the 284 women listed in the *Disciples of Christ Year Book* for 1952.¹ The forty-three women who did not reply were distributed fairly evenly throughout the organizations included in the study. Consequently, the replies are thought to be highly representative of all groups included.

Unless we could compare our results with either the total membership of the Christian churches or with other women in the United States and Canada, the facts we gathered would be an interesting collection but not very meaningful. The editors of *Information Service*, now published by the National Council of the Churches of Christ, have graciously given us permission to use the relevant data regarding members of Christian churches across the

* Professor of Christian Community, The College of the Bible.

1. We wrote to 289 women but four had died in the meantime and one turned out to be a man listed as "Miss."

land that they published May 15, 1948.² Other comparisons will be made with studies of data published by the United States Bureau of Census. Here we can only report the descriptive results regarding these Disciple women leaders. In a later article we will present the relationship between the various facts about them.

The organizations included were all those affiliated with both the International Convention of Disciples of Christ and The National Christian Missionary Convention. The Negro Disciple women leaders were sent exactly the same letters as their white sisters. No distinctions were made in the *Information Service* study and we will make no distinctions here.³

MARITAL STATUS AND CHILDREN

Ever since women began struggling for their long-overdue emancipation, people have complained that the emancipated woman has not done her womanly duty in getting married and raising a family. When we compare the percentage of these Disciple women leaders married at different ages with that of all their sisters in the United

2. Vol. XXVII, No. 20, Part Two, 8 pages. Published then by the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, New York City. We used only questions for their tables II-V, and VIII and IX. The study was made for *Information Service* by Wesley Allensmith of Princeton University at the Office of Public Opinion Research of Princeton's Department of Psychology. Professor Hadley Cantril, director of the Office of Public Opinion Research, made available the ballots on file from four surveys, made in 1939 and 1940, in which the religious affiliation of respondents was included. This gave a combined sample of 12,421 cases well distributed throughout the American population. Their voting sample for "Christians" included 397 persons and their social sample contained 186 cases. These are small numbers to represent 1,824,062 members of the Disciple churches now! Furthermore, they were not too sure what their respondents meant by "Christian" church. But it was the only study of the social-economic status of members of the Christian churches that we could find. It has two advantages, however: (1) the sample was selected by their very rigid procedure, and (2) their questions were very carefully worded and their meaning fully explained in the above mentioned article. This study by *Information Service* is summarized and discussed in the "Appendix" to *Religion in 20th Century America* by Herbert Wallace Schneider, published by Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1952.

3. In the former study they did adjust their sample for states in which Negroes could vote or could not vote. This, in part, explains the different size of the samples from their study.

States in 1950, we find that for their comparatively higher educational level they have done very well about marrying. At 24 years of age they lag about five years behind their sisters in getting married, but that is probably due to the fact many of them attend college. In the upper age groups we have the usual number of widows and a few of these women leaders have suffered divorce.

1. WOMEN MARRIED AT DIFFERENT AGES*

Age	Disciple women leaders (235 cases)	U. S. Women, 1950†
14—17		6%
18—19	0%	32
20—24	17	68
25—34	64	89
35—44	74	92
45—54	82	92
55—64	80	93
65 and over	92	92

*"Married" includes widowed and divorced, that is, "ever married."

†Source: Ruth Shonle Cavan, *The American Family*, Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1953, Figure 39, p. 419, based on the United States Census for 1950.

Ruth Shonle Cavan's study of data of the United States Census showed the percentage of childlessness and the average number of children per mother for white women in 1940, ages 45 to 54. Because of the small number in our group we included all the women leaders 45 years and over. This means that in both instances we are comparing completed families but the families in our group were completed more years ago. Because it is children ever born in both studies they are comparable. It will be seen from the right half of Table 2 that less of these women leaders who have attended college have remained childless than other women in the population. But for the 156 women over 45 years of age in our group, 17 per cent were childless while 16 per cent of the American women 45-54 years of age were childless. Among those who have had children, that is 129 "mothers," the college graduates in our group have had practically as many as other women. It is because 95 per cent of the Disciple women leaders have graduated from high school that the average number of children born to each mother among them

is lower than for the general population—2.4 children compared with 3.5 for others. And 2.4 children born per mother means that those families are reproducing themselves. The number of children living now shows that 91 per cent of those ever born to these older women leaders have survived, probably to maturity. That means 2.2 children are now living for every mother over 45 years of age.

2. AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN AND CHILDLESSNESS ACCORDING TO EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF MARRIED WOMEN

Education of Married Women	Average Number of Children Per Mother		Percentage of Childlessness	
	Disciple women leaders, aged 45 and over. (156 cases)	U. S. white women in 1940, aged 45—54.*	Disciple women leaders, aged 45 and over. (156 cases)	U. S. white women in 1940, aged 45—54.*
College:				
4 or more years	2.3	2.4	23%	25%
1 to 3 years	2.2	2.6	16	20
High School:				
4 years	2.2	2.6	6	21
1 to 3 years	2.3	3.2	†	17
Grade School:				
7 or 8 years	‡	3.6	†	15
5 or 6 years	†	4.5	†	11
1 to 4 years	‡	5.0	‡	9
No schooling	‡	5.3	‡	9
All families	2.4	3.5	17	16

*Source: Ruth Shonle Cavan, *The American Family*, Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1953, Figure 47, p. 501, based on the United States Census for 1940.

†Too few cases for computing average or percentage.

‡No cases.

EDUCATION

The striking thing about the educational status of these Disciple women leaders is that the proportion who have graduated from college, 46 per cent, is more than seven times that of the American population in 1950, 6 per cent. (See Table 2.) And this does not show the number of years that many have spent in graduate work which they reported in their replies. Only 47 per cent of the 386 members of Christian churches included in the *Information Service*

study had graduated from high school or achieved more education.⁴ But 95 per cent of these Disciple women leaders had gone that far in their education. Of 177 women who reported what college they had attended, 48 per cent had attended a Disciple college.

3. EDUCATION OF DISCIPLE WOMEN LEADERS

Years of School Completed by Persons 25 Years Old and Over, including White and Non-White.

Years of School Completed	Per cent completing each educational level*	
	Disciple women leaders. (232 cases)	U. S. Population, male and female, 1950. †
College:		
4 or more years	46%	6%
1 to 3 years	74	14
High School:		
4 years	95	34
1 to 3 years	98	52
Grade School:		
7 or 8 years	99	80
5 or 6 years	100	89
1 to 4 years	‡	97
None	‡	—

*Cumulative percentage of those having completed at least the number of years indicated; thus 95 per cent of the Disciple women leaders had completed four years of high school or more education, including college for some.

†Source: *Britannica Book of the Year*, 1953, Table VII, p. 154. Published by Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., Chicago, Ill.

‡No cases.

WHERE WERE THESE WOMEN BORN?

These Disciple women leaders hail from nearly every state in the Union, from three provinces of Canada, and one each from China, England, and Ireland. The five states from which the largest numbers have come are Illinois, Missouri, Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky. (See Table 4.) The only other state reporting more than 100,000 Disciples in 1952 was Texas but women leaders from the Lone Star State are only little over half the number from each of the first

4. *Op. cit.*, Table III, page 4.

five. The real statistical comparison is the number of Disciple women leaders coming from each state per 100,000 Disciple church members. Measured in this way honors go to Nebraska, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Iowa, and Illinois. When we compared the state in which these women leaders were born with that in which they are living now, we found 92, or 38 per cent, are living in the state in which they had been born, while 149, or 62 per cent, were living in another state.

4. STATES IN WHICH EIGHT OR MORE LEADING DISCIPLE CHURCH WOMEN WERE BORN

(Based on 241 women studied.)

State	Disciple women leaders born in the state		Members of Disciple churches, 1952.*
	Number	Per 100,000 members	
1. Illinois	25	16	151,802
2. Missouri	25	15	164,491
3. Ohio	21	14	153,442
4. Indiana	20	11	191,979
5. Kentucky	18	13	134,508
6. Iowa	14	18	81,455
7. Kansas	13	14	95,077
8. Texas	12	10	121,413
9. Pennsylvania	10	22	44,734
10. Nebraska	9	30	30,229
11. Oklahoma	8	8	96,245
12. Tennessee	8	21	37,641
Total Disciple women leaders included above out of 241 studied	183		

*Source: 1952 Year Book of The Christian Churches, All Churches and Organizations Cooperating as Disciples of Christ, Indianapolis, International Convention of Disciples of Christ, p. 762.

PRESENT RESIDENCE

When we compared the present residence of these Disciple women leaders with the members of Christian churches included in the *Information Service* study, we found that only 2 per cent were

living on the farm while 28 per cent of the church members were located on a farm. (See Table 5.) A larger proportion, 83 per cent, of the women leaders live in cities over 10,000 in population, while 40 per cent of the church members live in towns and cities under 10,000 population.

5. PRESENT RESIDENCE OF DISCIPLE WOMEN LEADERS

Residence by farm and size of town or city	Per cent living in each type of place	
	Disciple women leaders (241 cases)	Members of Christian churches* (397 cases)
Farm	2%	28%
Under 2,500 population	5	14
2,500 to 10,000	10	26
10,000 to 100,000	30	18
100,000 to 500,000	38	11
500,000 and over	15	3
Total per cent	100	100

*Source: "Social- Economic Status and Outlook of Religious Groups in America," *Information Service*, Vol. 27, No. 20, Part 2, May 15, 1948, Table V., p. 5. Published by the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, New York City.

SIZE OF CHURCH TO WHICH DISCIPLE WOMEN LEADERS BELONG

We asked these women leaders to what church they belonged and then we looked up the size of the church, including resident and non-resident members, in the 1952 *Year Book*. Because we could find no study of the distribution of Disciple churches by number of members, we made a distribution of a sample of churches selected at regular intervals from the same *Year Book*. As will be seen by comparing the second and third columns in Table 6, while 31 per cent of the Disciple churches have 100 members or less only 6 per cent of these women leaders had their membership in those churches.⁵ On the other hand, 19 per cent of these women leaders

5. The average size of the churches listed in the 1952 *Year Book* was 230. But that average is unduly distorted by the churches with several thousand members. A more accurate picture is given by saying that half of the Disciple churches have less than 158 members. This agrees with our figure that 48 per cent of the churches have less than 150 members.

had their memberships in churches over 1,500 members although only 2 per cent of Disciple churches are that large. Are the memberships of these women leaders misplaced?

6. SIZE OF CHURCH TO WHICH DISCIPLE WOMEN LEADERS BELONG

Size of church by number of members	Disciple women leaders	All Disciple churches, 1952*	
		Per cent of churches	Per cent of members†
Total cases	236 women	321 churches	88,250 members
Less than 50 members	‡	14%	1%
" " 100 "	6	31	6
" " 150 "	11	48	14
" " 200 "	15	60	21
" " 250 "	19	71	30
" " 500 "	35	89	55
" " 750 "	49	94	66
" " 1,000 "	60	96	75
" " 1,500 "	81	98	82
More than 1,500 members	19	2	18

*Source: Sample selected at regular intervals by taking first church listed on each page in *1952 Year Book of The Christian Churches*, pp. 353-744. All Disciple churches in the United States and Canada were included, Negro as well as White. This *Year Book* lists 7,931 churches with 1,824,062 members in 1952. (p. 762.)

†Calculated from above sample of churches by the technique used for computing a weighted mean.

‡No cases.

To further test that question we used the above sample of 321 churches to estimate the number of members in Disciple churches of different sizes. The resulting cumulative percentages are shown in the fourth column of Table 6. Now we see that 6 per cent of the women leaders are in Disciple churches with less than 100 members but those churches likewise contain only 6 per cent of the total membership of all Disciple churches. The proportion of women leaders in churches with more than 1,500 members, 19 per cent, is about the same as the 18 per cent of all Disciple members who are also members of those churches. The deficit in women leaders occurs in churches with 100 to 500 members which have only 29 per cent of the women leaders but have 49 per cent of the members.

ECONOMIC STATUS

On the basis of their own ratings we found only 2 per cent of Disciple women leaders to be "wealthy" and also 2 per cent to be "poor." (See Table 7.) Another 26 per cent said they were "above average" economically when compared with others in their own communities. This made a total of 28 per cent in what the *Information Service* called "upper class." But their study of members of Christian churches showed only 10 per cent in that favored position. The proportion of women leaders on the "average" economic level, 70 per cent, was twice that for church members, 35 per cent. But the most striking thing is that while 55 per cent of the church members were "poor," only 2 per cent of the women leaders were.

7. ECONOMIC STATUS OF DISCIPLE WOMEN LEADERS

Economic Status	Members of Christian churches* (370 cases)	Disciple women leaders (241 cases)
Wealthy	2%)	
)	10%
Above average	26)	
Average	70	35
Poor	2	55†
Total per cent	100	100

*Source: "Social-Economic Status and Outlook of Religious Groups in America," *Information Service*, Vol. 27, No. 20, Part 2, May 15, 1948, Table II, p. 3.

†In the *Information Service* study "Poor" was grouped with "Old Age Assistance" and "On Relief" to form a "Lower" economic category. There were no such cases among Disciple women leaders studied.

In a later article we will give full comparison of these four categories of economic status with monthly rentals of residences rented and market values of houses or apartments owned. But allowing for some deviations, probably due to the communities in which they lived, the answers given by these women leaders agreed fairly well with these more objective checks included in the list of questions. In general, these women are a home-owning group: 62 per cent owned their homes, 27 per cent rented, while 11 per cent had their

place of residence supplied either by the church, institution, or business where they worked.

OCCUPATIONAL STATUS

We have to use the term "Occupational Status" instead of merely saying, "Occupation," because, as some men would say, the married women have it both coming and going. If they are not employed, they are rated either on the basis of their husband's occupation, or, if not married, on the basis of their father's occupation. Some of the retired women are rated according to their former occupation.

The most striking thing shown in Table 8 is that 62 per cent of these women leaders could be classified as "Professional" as compared with only 10 per cent of church members in that group.⁶

8. OCCUPATIONAL STATUS OF DISCIPLE WOMEN LEADERS

Occupation	Disciple women leaders (236 cases)	Members of Christian churches* (365 cases)
Professional	62%	10%
Business	21	6
White Collar	11	14
Service	1	10
Skilled and Semi-skilled	2	26
Unskilled	†	5
Farm	3	29
Total per cent	100	100

*Source: "Social-Economic Status and Outlook of Religious Groups in America," *Information Service*, Vol. 27, No. 20, Part 2, May 15, 1948, Table IV, p. 5.

†Less than 0.5 per cent.

6. "Professional" as used in the *Information Service* study and here includes individuals who "perform advisory, administrative or research work which is based upon the established principles of a profession or science and which requires professional, scientific or technical training equivalent to that represented by graduation from a college or university of recognized standing." (Quoted from a publication of the U. S. Bureau of Census by W. Lloyd Warner, Marchia Meeker, and Kenneth Fells, *Social Class in America*, published by Science Research Associates, Inc., Chicago, 1949, page 132.)

Three-fifths of these women leaders rated that on their own achievement while only two-fifths depended on their husbands or parents for this classification. As might be expected, three-fourths of the women listed under "Business" depended on their husbands for this rating. However, a few women leaders were in business either with their husbands or as single women. "Business" as used here includes an "executive" or manager as well as a proprietor; also "small business" as well as large. The proportion of women leaders in this category, 21 per cent, was three and a half times that for church members, 6 per cent. In all the other categories the women leaders appear in smaller proportions than do the church members. The "Service" classification includes protective agents such as policemen, firemen, and soldiers, as well as domestic servants and others rendering personal services. One state woman leader listed herself as a "maid." The "Farm" category includes farm owners, large and small, and farm laborers. One woman valued her farm which she manages herself at \$300,000. The small percentage of women leaders and their families engaged in farming, 3 per cent, shows the same difference from that of church members, 29 per cent, as occurred for present residence in Table 5, 2 versus 28 per cent. These women leaders are simply not down on the farm! In our later study we will show how many came from families on the farm and in other occupations.

OPINIONS ON GUARANTEED ECONOMIC SECURITY

Now we turn to the two questions that searched the souls of these Disciple women leaders! One woman wrote a long letter saying that while all her life she had defended the philosophy that the government should guarantee people a good job and a decent living, she had now painfully come to the conclusion that the best the government could do was to provide equal opportunity for all. Here is where Hadley Cantril's "cafeteria question" (see Table 9), which asked these women to choose one side or the other, failed to satisfy some who thought there could be an integration of both points of view. But as will be seen in Table 9, 90 per cent of them voted in favor of putting the "Individual 'On His Own'." Only 67 per cent of the church members so voted and 30 per cent of them were for "Guaranteed Economic Security"—back in 1939 and 1940. The time factor is probably as important here as the differ-

ence between the women leaders and church members. When the data that was used in the *Information Service* study was gathered in 1939-40 the American people were still painfully conscious of the horrors of the Great Depression of the 1930's.

9. OPINIONS ON GUARANTEED ECONOMIC SECURITY

Should the government guarantee every person a decent and steady job and standard of living?	Disciple women leaders (236 cases)	Members of Christian churches* (185 cases)
Individual "On His Own"	90%	67%
Guaranteed Economic Security	7	30
No Opinion	1	3
Qualified	2	0
Total per cent	100	100

*Source: "Social-Economic Status and Outlook of Religious Groups in America," *Information Service*, Vol. 27, No. 20, Part 2, May 15, 1948, Table IX, p. 7.

OPINIONS ON WORKING PEOPLE'S POWER

Here was the Sixty-four Dollar Question that gave more trouble than the preceding one. Those who gave a "qualified" answer, 12 per cent, either questioned the meaning of the terms "working people" and "power" or else took a third position, namely, equal opportunity for all to participate in government. Some of the qualified answers favored "working people" in general but wanted to reduce the power and influence of labor unions or of their leaders. Others did not qualify their answers but did indicate that they were not sure of their decisions. But after the soul searching was over and the ballots were counted, 53 per cent of these Disciple women leaders favored continuing the same amount of power and influence that working people have in government now. Table 10 also shows that whereas 46 per cent of the members of the Christian churches in the *Information Service* study favored more power and influence for working people, only 25 per cent of the women leaders voting so decided. Many of those indicating "No Opinion" by marginal remarks said that "More," "Same," and "Less" were too simple categories with which to answer such a complicated problem.

10. OPINIONS ON WORKING PEOPLE'S POWER

Should working people be given more or less power and influence in government?	Disciple women leaders (233 cases)	Members of Christian churches* (186 cases)
More	25%	46%
Same	53	33
Less	3	13
No Opinion	7	8
Qualified	12	0
Total per cent	100	100

*Source: "Social-Economic Status and Outlook of Religious Groups in America," *Information Service*, Vol. 27, No. 20, Part 2, May 15, 1948, Table VIII, p. 7.

In discussing this question the article in the *Information Service* said that "the balance of opinion is best indicated by comparing the sum of the figures in the More and Same (categories) with those in the Less (category)."⁷ On that basis, the Disciple women leaders voted 78 per cent to 3 per cent, that is 26 to 1, in favor of giving the same or more power and influence in government to working people. And that in the summer of 1953! In 1939 and 1940 the church members favored the same or more power for working people by a ratio of only 6 to 1 (79 per cent versus 13 per cent).

PARTICIPATION

The women listed in the *Disciples of Christ Year Book* for 1952 as holding important positions at both the national and state level totaled 359. These women held 66 positions as officers, 40 as trustees or members of executive committees, 91 as directors or members of the board of managers, 89 as members of various commissions and committees, and 63 staff positions. But they represented only 39 per cent of the officers in Disciple national and state organizations, 16 per cent of the trustees, 22 per cent of the directors, 44 per cent of persons on commissions and committees, and 35 per cent of the staff. In summary, 30 per cent of all the positions listed in the *Year Book* in 1952 were held by women.

The 289 women we included in this study participated in a remarkable way in the World Council of Churches, the National

7. *Op. cit.*, page 6.

Council of Churches, and in Disciple organizations. One Disciple woman, Mrs. James D. Wyker, is a member of the Conference of U.S.A. Member Churches in the World Council. Nine Disciple women are members of the General Assembly of the National Council and one is on the General Board, again Mrs. Wyker. Then there are 89 Disciple women participating in a representative way in National Council Central Departments, General Departments, Divisions, Departments and Committees. Three Disciple women hold important staff positions in the International Convention itself, one woman is Second Vice-President, Mrs. Charles F. Bailey, another Recording Secretary, three are on the Board of Directors, and two are staff members. Mrs. George H. Stewart, from Missouri, is Chairman of the All-Canada Committee of the Churches of Christ. In the United Christian Missionary Society, Miss Jessie M. Trout is Vice-President, six women are Department Heads (or "Executive Secretaries"), four are Assistant Executive Secretaries, and 15 are National Directors. The big thing before the world in the set-up of the United Christian Missionary Society is that half, 60, of its Board of Managers are women. We did not include the missionaries because they are not "National," but they would add a large, able, and devoted group of women to our list of Disciple women leaders! But in the United States and Canada we found Disciple women holding 20 positions in the top coordinating organizations, 140 in the various agencies as Officers, Trustees, or Directors, and 41 on the staff of the agencies. Ten women served as Youth Officers. At the state level, 162 women served as Presidents, Secretaries, Treasurers, and other officers of women's organizations and Directors of Religious Education.

Including women serving in the World Council, the National Council, and Disciple organizations, we found 336 positions filled by women on a volunteer or representative basis. Of these 289 such positions and 95 staff positions, a total of 384 positions were held by the 289 women to whom we sent our list of questions.

Their participation in other national organizations in addition to these church organizations was described by the 241 women answering our questions.⁸ One hundred and fifty-four, 64 per cent of

8. Where possible, local organizations, committees, and positions as officers were eliminated from the replies. Most of the answers indicated whether the participation was on a local, state or national level.

them, belonged to 386 other organizations, or an average of 2.5 other organizations. Of these 154 women, 63 held 105 positions on committees, or an average 1.7 committee memberships per woman. Fifty-nine women held 109 positions as officers in these other organizations, or an average of 1.8 offices per woman. Is it any wonder that they are busy? In our later study we will try to discover "Who belongs to what."

CONCLUSIONS

We have found that Disciple women leaders hold 30 per cent of all positions listed for Disciple organizations on the state and national level. As many as 46 per cent of them have graduated from college and 62 per cent of them have attained a professional level in occupational status, 36 per cent of them on their own. Only 2 per cent of them consider themselves poor but, on the other hand, only 2 per cent are wealthy, although 26 per cent were above average economically. In other words, 70 per cent of them are on an average economic level. Believe it or not, 78 per cent of them had achieved the holy state of matrimony sometime in their lives, beginning from those who are 19 years of age now. Including four who have step-children, 81 per cent of the women who have ever married have had children. Only 2 per cent live on the farm now while 53 per cent of them live in cities, or the suburbs thereof, with over 100,000 population. While 85 per cent of these Disciple women leaders hold membership in the upper half of Disciple churches, that is churches with over 158 members, their memberships are fairly well distributed in churches according to the total number of members.

Although these women leaders may think that we should be our brother's keeper, they do not think the government should be! Ninety per cent of them thought that the individual should be "On his own." But in spite of the fact that only 2 per cent of them were poor while a previous study of members of Christian churches showed 55 per cent poor, these women leaders voted 78 per cent in favor of the same or more power and influence in government for working people.

We found that in addition to holding 30 per cent of all national and state positions in Disciple organizations, 64 per cent of the

Disciple women leaders found time and energy to participate in an average of 2.5 other national organizations.

How do we answer the question of the woman quoted in our opening paragraph? While probably most of these Disciple women leaders have exercised their initiative and ability in climbing to the positions of influence that they hold, on the other hand most of them would probably admit that part of their good fortune in life has been the result of favorable circumstances. "From anyone who has been given much, much will be required, and of the man to whom people have intrusted much, they will demand even more." (Luke 12:48 A.T.) And I think that Jesus included the women in this statement!

THE STATUS AND WORK OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH IN NEW TESTAMENT TIMES

DANIEL C. TROXEL*

The place of women in the Church of today is not that which they occupied in the Church at its beginning. For that matter, the place of women in the state, and in the community is far different from that to which they were limited in New Testament times. For the human race has come to understand that differences of endowment and function among human beings do not signify either inferiority or superiority as a necessary consequence. It still can be said that in the Church "there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in everyone." (I Cor. 12:4-6.)

Precisely what these endowments and functions were for women to possess and use is not so clearly stated in the New Testament. It is certain that many devout women gave voluntary service, such as charity, to those whom the Church found an interest in assisting. Their status was undoubtedly unofficial. Perhaps social conditions prevented the Church from employing them in official capacities, except in a very limited way. The point to be made here is that difficulties confront us in seeking to know what if any official duties were assigned to them. It would be a mistake to read back into the earlier literature what came to be accepted practice at a later time.

Of course, every interpreter of the New Testament is in danger of having presuppositions on such an issue as this has proved to be in the past. A literalist, for example, tends to turn certain of the New Testament's statements into laws to be enforced, overlooking other principles which might modify his position if he would allow them to do so. Women have suffered many indignities at the hands of the literalist. This interpreter hopes to avoid such dangers by stressing personalities rather than categories, "and if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things." (Phil. 4:8.)

Still, it must be recognized that difficulties abound. First, there are many words which refer to feminine attributes: Wife, woman,

* Professor of New Testament, The College of the Bible.

mother, sister, mother-in-law, sister-in-law, daughter, daughter-in-law, damsel, virgin, widow, etc. Then, the Greek word *gune* (with accent on the ultima) means both wife and woman. Which English word is to be used in translating depends upon the context solely, and even so our English translations do not agree in making their choices between them. Further, this Greek word occurs about two hundred times in the New Testament, but does not occur at all in nearly one half of its books; it appears only once in four more; twice in one, and three times in another. Only nine books make it a matter of much concern: Ephesians eight times; I Timothy nine; Mark sixteen; Acts and Revelation nineteen each; John twenty-two; Matthew and I Corinthians thirty each; and Luke thirty-nine. Instead of the treatment of the entire New Testament, our task narrows down to a consideration of about one-third of it. Now, that we have determined where to look in the New Testament, our real task is to determine what is said—to weigh rather than count these words.

I. THE IDEAL FOUND IN THE GOSPELS AND ACTS

Since these writings were late in appearing, even later than Paul, it cannot be said that everything in them comes directly from Jesus, although, for the Christian, Jesus is the source of its basic ideals. It can be truly said that the ideals of Jesus are to be found within the Gospels. It is valid, therefore, to inquire about his consideration of women, and look to the Gospels for its confirmation.

A bit of background will be necessary if the ideal of Jesus concerning women is to be fully appreciated. The early Hebrews gave woman a secondary social status and rather limited rights. "In the older story of creation, she was even pictured as an afterthought, made not on an equality with man but as a by-product; and, along with the serpent, she was represented as responsible for Adam's fall and was specially cursed with travail in childbirth as a penalty."¹ Furthermore she was the property first of her father and then of her husband, and the ownership passed from the former to the latter for a financial consideration. Serious abuses arose in consequence of this transaction; polygamy, for example, where men could purchase as many wives as their assets would allow. Her lowly position was seen in the case of divorce. Her husband had all the rights,

1. Harry Emerson Fosdick, *A Guide to Understanding the Bible*, p. 102.

and could name his own reason. She was helpless if he treated her cruelly.

This is a dark picture, although it is mitigated by higher lights breaking through. "For one thing, personality will out and, in a society as simply organized as the clan group, women of notable gifts could not be and were not kept down. Such names as Miriam, Deborah, Esther, and Judith in Jewish history and tradition are typical of an important fact about woman's estate in Israel. Women could and did rise to leadership then as in all ages and no theory of status could prevent it."² Love, too, had its way and beautiful stories are told of romantic marriages. Laws were given to shield her from excesses which lust might dictate. At least her functions as wife and mother were being recognized for their social values.

In woman's long trek across Hebrew history there had been a growing tendency to improve her condition. In a society organized around the family, she became its center and cohesive power. How inconsistent it was to deny her her full personal rights! Customary attitudes gave way before the pressure of moral insights and high personal qualities. The prophets were the pioneers in urging this humaneness and inwardness of moral life which pointed the way to the elimination of barriers to the progress of women as well as of men.

Our four-fold Gospels have little to say about the status of women. References to them appear again and again in their pages, but always as human beings who are good or evil, wise or foolish such as are found in every society. There are no rights denied them simply because they are women. Yet there were no women among the twelve disciples, no woman writer of a Gospel, and no woman in any official capacity except that of offering her unselfish service to others. There are no standards for her that are not equally applicable to men.

One of the most significant incidents in the Gospels for our purpose is the one concerning divorce. (Mark 10:2-12.) When Jesus was asked by the Pharisees about the legality of divorce, he answered that Moses allowed it because of their hardness of heart. His appeal, however, was to creation. God created both male and female. They were made for each other. A man was to leave his parents "and be joined to his wife, so that the two became one.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 103.

So they are no longer two but one. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder." God created them for mutual and reciprocal relations. References to the traditional story of Eve's creation and of her seduction of Adam are completely lacking. Man was to withdraw his devotion from his parents and transfer it to his wife that the new family thus made would be a harmonious unit in order to fulfill its function. This union, under God's guidance, should not be disrupted by the intrigue of man. This ideal of Jesus has no intimation of duality about it. Man and wife are in a correlative relation, no superiority nor inferiority can have been implied.

Little is known of the female relatives of Jesus beyond his mother. On rare occasions when a glimpse of her is seen, there is revealed a character of a retiring nature of real charm and quiet strength. His sisters are mentioned by the people of Nazareth, although their names are not given as are the names of his brothers. (Mark 6:3.) Traces are given us of his keen appreciation of the beauty and happiness attaching to home life in a well ordered even if struggling family.

One can be pardoned for passing over a multiplicity of incidents and sayings of Jesus to women, for there are so many of them and so much of the same sort, applying the same deep principle in each case. For him religion had its support in an intimate personal relationship with God. This was the experience that was the origin of religion in every human heart; it was likewise religion's continued nutriment. This, as Matthew Arnold once so well said, is the method of religion, while love is its content. Jesus' strictures on the scribal application of the commandments of the law were on their outwardness, and their formality. His application was to the inner disposition, attitude and motive, while love's way was to break down every barrier of class, rank and status. These two factors would keep the heart right and supply the motivation for right social living. These two factors, when followed, gave value and worth to the individual human being, male and female.

Nowhere do we find in the mouth of Jesus a contemptuous word about women because she was a woman. Always did he consider her entitled to be a child of God equally with man. He did not fear contact with unclean women (Mark 1:29; 5:21-43; 7:24-30; Luke 7:38; etc.) He did not hesitate to talk with them in order to help

them. No better example can be given than that of the misplaced account in John (7:53, 8:11) of the woman taken in adultery. Jesus compelled both accused and accusers to search their own souls and forced them to pass condemnation upon themselves. They were treated alike, severely yet graciously, as might be expected from him who taught the ideal of equality.

The Gospel of Luke records the largest number of references to women of any New Testament book, mostly with a touch of tenderness. Its companion work, The Acts of the Apostles, with its story of the beginning of the Church, shows how women as well as men were won by the preaching of the Gospel. (Acts 1:14; 12:12; 16:13; 17:4, 12; etc.) The statement attributed to Peter "Of a truth I perceive that God shows no partiality, but in every nation any one who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him." (Acts 10:34-35), while it makes no express reference to women, it cannot exclude them. It thereby becomes a testimony to the ideal of universality irrespective of gender as well as of nation and race. Its origin can be clearly traced to the Jesus and discloses his influence upon his followers in their treatment of women.

So Jesus' ideal of the high personal worth of individuals without distinction of sex, race, or nationality is the pivotal center of New Testament teaching. Love, such as he had for God and neighbor, breaks down every barrier which exists between persons, and when relied upon in a God-like spirit progressively overcomes the deep cleavages with which tradition and custom have shackled mankind.

II. THE DILEMMA FOUND IN PAUL

Protestants are prone to stay in their tradition and find their criteria of faith in Paul. Some of his pungent sayings about women in the Church tend to stand out above and beyond all else said about them in the rest of the Christian scriptures. This emphasis, although one-sided, has gained an undue prominence, and has been developed into ecclesiastical legislation. Such emphasis needs re-consideration in the light of advancing moral insights, better expository methodology, and a truer view of the consequences of such an ideology.

In approaching Paul's genuine letters, one must be prepared for some surprises. Treatment of our question by Paul is limited to I Corinthians. It surely is not an important doctrine, nor meant to

be such, otherwise it would be referred to in his letters to other churches. Instead there was a peculiar situation of some sort in the Church at Corinth at this time. There is no trace of it in II Corinthians. It was not legislation for all of his Churches.

What was this situation? Of course it cannot be reconstructed for we do not have the information, yet much can be gathered from I Corinthians itself, when supplemented by our knowledge of its environment. Corinth was a cosmopolitan city, a seaport town where the East and West met. It was noted for its shifting population and they for their party strife. The Christian Church was but recently organized by Paul. Its membership was recruited from the varied elements of society. Their shortcomings were due to the pagan ways which clung to them when they entered the Church. Their contentiousness made for division, as it always does. Christian love that "is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude" had not yet wrought its beneficent influence within them. Paul, in Ephesus, on hearing these disturbing things about them, wrote this letter to them somewhat in the role of a disciplinarian. He was fearful lest public moral conscience would be outraged. It is well to remember that beginning with 7:1 Paul is answering questions raised by the Church itself and sent to him by letter. It is no longer mere rumor.

On Paul's first visit, soon after his work in Thessalonica, he had strongly stressed an eschatological message; "for the form of this world is passing away." 7:31 (Their question about marital matters is a reasonable one: if this world is passing away, why marry? Why establish a home? Paul answers at length, the entire seventh chapter, arguing the case in many differing contingencies, sometimes with a great deal of uncertainty. (I Cor. 7:7, 12, 25, 35.) But in the main, it can be said that here Paul does not rely on a double standard for husband and wife; they have equal rights and are free to exercise them since "the appointed time has grown very short." (7:29) "But in my judgment," Paul said, "she is happier if she remains as she is. And I think I have the Spirit of God." (7:40)

A textual problem arises in 7:36f, where the King James translators made Paul consent to a possible marriage of a man to his daughter. The American Standard Version places the word daughter in italics, showing a departure from the actual Greek wording. The new Revised Standard version makes it read "toward his be-

trothed" which is better. However, the actual Greek word is *parthenos*, a word of uncertain meaning.

More to the point at issue, is Paul's discussion of woman's place in the public worship of the Church. This discussion is injected into a long passage, chapters 11 through 14, on Christian public assemblies in which he urges that "everything be done decently and in order." (14:40) Many problems have arisen in the worship of the Corinthians because of their lack of Christian maturity. Among these problems were disorder at the Lord's Table (11:20-34), the use of spiritual gifts in spectacular ways rather than in the way which love dictates (12:1-14:33, 37-40), and the conduct of women in their Church gatherings (11:1-16 and 14:34-35).

About this conduct of women Paul has some very caustic things to say: that "a woman's head is her husband" (11:3); "woman is the reflection of man's glory" (11:7); while "Christ is the head of every man" (11:); and man "is the image of God and reflects his glory" (11:7). "That is why she ought to wear upon her head something to symbolize her subjection, out of respect to the angels" (11:10), who were regarded as present in services of worship. "Any man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, but a woman who prays or prophesies with her head unveiled dishonors her head—it is the same as if her head was shaven." (11:4-5.) Evidently, to Paul, man, who was given divine authority and dominion when created, has supremacy over woman as she was created from him and for him. The veil is a sign or symbol of her subordinate position, and angels are present to uphold the divine order. "For man was not made from woman, but woman from man, and man was not created for woman, but woman was for man" (11:8-9). In all of this Paul makes reference to the Garden of Eden story, which he resurrects to account for the origin of sin in the race, for which Mother Eve gets the greater blame. Such an explanation of evil's origin does not recur in the Old Testament again after the opening chapters of Genesis, and probably would never have been influential had not Paul revived it. Instead evil's origin is popularly explained by the intrigue of demons, or in the wisdom literature by the psychological theory of the evil heart.

Paul was evidently confused at a most sensitized point; how to harmonize Jesus' ideal of equality of sexes with the practical situa-

tion then existing in Corinth. He resorted to a traditional set of inherited ideas from the Hebrew book of Genesis. From this dilemma he was not able to extricate himself completely. It was more difficult to do so in the situation in Corinth as he knew it. Archeologists are restoring it for us. Here, in Corinth, Aphrodite worship flourished. This worship "was served by young women of loose reputation, whom Pindar grandiloquently calls 'the daughters of Persuasion, who lift up their hearts to Aurania Aphrodite' and it is a curious comment on Plato's interpretation of the term that the only impure element which we can find in the Greek state-religion of Aphrodite, before the fourth century, we find in this worship of the 'heavenly' goddess at Corinth."³ This sensuous worship carried on by women in a neighboring assembly, and no doubt once the worship of those who had embraced Christianity, constituted a constant peril to the little Church. Paul was concerned that the Church be free from these orgies. How could he forestall them? The method he chose may not have been applicable elsewhere, much less today, but they were serious problems to him and his first recourse was to his Hebrew past. In so doing he departed from the ideal of equality for the sexes, as we have found it in Jesus.

The detached statement of 14:34-35 seems at variance with 11:3-4. In the former, women are to keep silent in the Church. In the latter they may "pray or prophesy" in the Church, provided their heads are properly covered. The further statement that "women should keep silence in the Churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as even the law says. If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in Church," not only breaks into its context, but does not belong where it is now placed. One wonders whether it comes from Paul at all, or from some later anti-feminist in imitation of Paul's statements above, carried much farther than Paul would have allowed. Arguments might be made from other statements in the same book of I Corinthians to contradict the above statements. Certainly I Corinthians 13, the Hymn of Love, does not represent the point of view of 14:34-35. And Paul's statement in Galatians 3:28 that "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus," is

3. Lewis Richard Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, Vol. II, p. 661.

a clear pronouncement of equality of sexes, which approximates Jesus' ideal, and deserves the right to be called Christian.

III. THE DEVELOPMENT OF ORGANIZED CHURCH LIFE

In the later New Testament books when the Church was fortifying itself against forces within and without, an organized system was being developed to place the Church on a defensive footing. This movement was climaxed when the Church had these three characteristics, a canonized New Testament scripture, a creedalized formula, and a system of Church officials. What place did they provide for women in this system? What was their status in the Church of the late New Testament period?

Assuming as many scholars now do that the Epistle to the Ephesians is not Paul's but Pauline, and that it took the Letter to the Colossians as its exemplar, it gives an elaboration of Colossians 3:18-19: "You married women must subordinate yourselves to your husbands, for that is your duty as Christians" into Ephesians 5:22-24: "You married women must subordinate yourselves to your husbands as you do to your Lord, for a husband is the head of his wife just as Christ is the head of the Church, which is his body and is saved by him. Just as the Church is in subjection to Christ, so married women must be in everything to their husbands." In Ephesians, the importance of the Church is magnified beyond Paul's "body of Christ," to the Bride of Christ where the Bride and Christ are correlatives as are husband and wife in Genesis 1:16-17.

I Timothy too shows this trend of expansion beyond Paul. "Women should adorn themselves modestly and sensibly in seemly apparel, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly attire but by good deeds, as befits women who profess religion." (I Timothy 2:9-10.) Into the matter of woman's dress Paul did not go although he has often been charged with it. Our view of I Timothy does not assign it to Paul. Someone else has so assigned it in the salutation. More like I Cor. 14:34-35 is this: "Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent" (I Timothy 2:11-12). And this reference to the Genesis story more definitely stated: "For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet woman will be saved through bearing children, if she continues in faith and

love and holiness, with modesty." (I Timothy 2:13-15.) This could only be done by an imitator.

I Peter, while attributed to Peter, is surprisingly Pauline in many respects, and regarding women its statement is quite like that of I Timothy. "Likewise you wives, be submissive to your husbands, so that some, though they do not obey the word, may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, when they see your reverent and chaste behavior. Let not yours be the outward adorning of hair, decoration of gold, and wearing of robes, but let it be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable jewel of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. So once the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves and were submissive to their husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are now her children if you do right and let nothing terrify you." (I Peter 3:1-5.) This proves to be a homily on texts taken from I Timothy.

These later writers betray a strong influence of Paul but they have enlarged upon Paul, adapting new elements from environmental conditions which seemed serviceable to them, but far afield from Jesus' ideal. We strongly protest when Paul is denounced as being thought responsible for all of this enlargement. Paul was too clear a logician to depart so far and wide from the ideal. Only when these books are placed in their proper perspective with the method which "introduction to the literature of the New Testament" provides is Paul cleared from responsibility for all of this expansion. True, it is regrettable that Paul gave the entering wedge when he tried to give advice in a particular situation in Corinth, and departed from his own statement of his high ideal of equality "that there can be neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:28.)

As to the official capacities reserved for women in these late writings, only two possibilities have been suggested: the offices of deaconess and of widow. There are no certain descriptions of the offices given in these late writings. Phoebe of Cenchreae is called a deaconess in the Revised Standard Version (Romans 16:1), although the term is usually translated "servant of the Church." It is impossible to know what her mission actually was, whether an official one or one undertaken by a prominent woman of ability which gave her some importance apart from that of an appointed

emissary. Surely her service must have been of a personal rather than an official nature. Widows were more frequently cared for by the Church as objects of charity than that the Church employed them for service to the sick or for instruction of the young. From I Timothy 5:3-16 it would seem that they were in the care of the Church. Suffice it to say that in those early days the Church was on its way to a more rigid organization of its corporate life and in no sense can it be said that their earliest efforts are patterns for the Church of all times.

In conclusion, women should not have been compelled to live under the handicap of man-made regulations and customs. They, too, have a standing before God on an equal footing with men, they for their type of service as they are capable and men for theirs. Their relations are mutually conditioned and the status of each would be incomplete without the other. This, in the wisdom of God, is his plan for his children. Neither must be "puffed up" or "behave themselves unseemly."

THE CHURCH WOMEN'S OPPORTUNITIES

MOSSIE ALLMAN WYKER*

What is the potential strength of ten million United Church Women?

Inert and indifferent, they can be content with their own homes, and communities, and their denominational, organized work, not realizing that their UNITED help can provide an alternative to communism, ignorance, sin, poverty, and need. Aroused, concerned and UNITED they can be an effective influence for righteousness in the nation and in the world at this critical hour in world history.

Church women are aware of the fact that they are living in an era of confusion and chaos. They believe, as must all Christians, that the answers to our national problems do not rest alone on the decisions and wisdom of the people, but upon their reliance in that POWER back of the universe—God, the Father of all Mankind. Most of all, they realize that we must not capitulate to fear. If those fundamental religious concepts on which our nation was founded are right, they are still our greatest hope, and we will continue to have courage if we hold to them. Fear paralyzes resistance to overcome fear. We dare not be afraid!

In the changing world scene, *church* women are becoming restless. They are not content with "second class" membership in the church. They have varieties of talents to be used. There always will be those women who are happiest when they are serving church dinners, raising money for local support and the missionary enterprise, and being "pastors' helpers." *They deserve great appreciation.*

However, there are others, wanting also to serve the church, who believe their best contribution can be made at policy-making levels. A business woman, for instance, may be of greater service on the Board of Trustees, helping with the business matters of the church, than on the dinner committee. There are also women who love and believe in the church above all other institutions and who long to serve it professionally as women serve in other areas such as education, law, medicine, and business.

* President, United Church Women.

Chapter I of her forthcoming *Church Women in the Scheme of Things* (St. Louis, Bethany Press, 1953).

This writer has great faith in what *church women* can become and achieve over and above the traditional service which has been "allowed" them in the past. We must earn it, but I prophesy that if we continue to mature spiritually, educationally, and emotionally, the day is not far distant when we will be granted "full membership" in the church.

This is a day of opportunity for women. We can review history and sigh over all that women have not been allowed to do. We can lament and grow cynical over the fact that one-half of the human race could decree that the other half should stay in its "place," and also could decree what that place should be! We can bemoan the fact that for so long a time, as women yearned to study, to understand, to know, they were told that if they would get and keep husbands, they must appear to know little. Scripture was quoted to them, "If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home."¹

Public education has swung wide the door of opportunity for all women, and it is the way of education that the more one learns, the more eager is that person to know more. So, wanting a home, husband, and children, yet driven always by this person who is herself, with a longing to "become," woman has been baffled and insecure. In spite of all the handicaps, however, she has pushed steadily onward.

Many honest women are asking, "Has it really been the fault of men, or could we have accomplished more if we as women had sincerely wanted this freedom and had been willing to *earn* our rights and privileges?"

Great is the opportunity of church women today for they have resources of spiritual power and inner securities which make it possible for them to assume the initiative in their communities. They, not knowing that barriers are irremovable, proceed to accomplish seemingly impossible tasks.

But women are restless in the church. They have been told by a woman theologian that the church is the last stronghold of male domination. They look around and see women who have entered all professions—education, law, medicine, government, business—and who are attaining distinction. Yet in the church, established for

1. I Cor. 15:35.

the perpetuation of the teachings of their Lord, women remain "second class" members.

They may perform some of the functional tasks of the church. They are allowed to give as much financial support as they care to. They may serve church dinners and raise money for the local church and for missions. They may make church calls and help in church projects. Their service at policy-making levels, however, has been achieved more slowly, and the privilege of being a minister of the gospel for those few who so desire has been almost impossible. Who is really to blame? Is it the men alone? Very often *women* have been heard to assert that a woman should not serve on a national board with men—that was not her "place"! And as for ordination—well!

Church women should restudy their New Testaments and get the right perspective about *themselves*. Those women deserve sympathy who dress in mannish style and become very assertive as they "look wistfully to the other side," longing to be men. If we are born women, then women we must be! The first step in achieving a normal, balanced life is to accept ourselves as women and rejoice in that privilege. For Christians, this is especially true; in no other area is so much offered for the development of a full, rounded life as to those who are followers of that One called "The Christ."

How can anyone read the life and teachings of Jesus and ever feel "imprisoned"? Others may restrict us (even in His name) but He did not imprison. He freed. If we believe that He is our guide, then we go steadily ahead.

A group of church leaders coming together to consider the "status and service of women in American churches" was asked in preparation for the meeting, "Will you restudy the New Testament, particularly the four Gospels, and try to answer the question, 'What is the will of God for women and their service in the church?'"

A church historian wrote, "You cannot answer this question by just asking what *Jesus* says. He treated individuals, all individuals, kindly and exactly alike. *But there was no church*. You have to study Acts and Paul, to see how the New Testament church interpreted Jesus' teachings and practice."

That is true if one accepts the early church as final authority, but if one insists upon going to the source of Paul's authority, which is enduring and universal for all Christians, then it is Jesus who deter-

mines our standards. He did not organize a church. He left followers, both men and women, and they did the organizing. That seemed the best way to continue His work. Final authority, however, still rests in His teachings and not in the church, at least many so believe. Therefore, we must study our New Testament to find this freedom for which all mankind longs.

We discover that His birth² according to Luke was foretold to a woman and how we thrill to her glorious Magnificat,³ sung as she realized that she had been chosen to be the mother of the Messiah. Her song echoes in the hearts of all true mothers when they look forward to motherhood. It was to a woman that Jesus foretold his Messiahship,⁴ according to John. In talking at the well to the woman of Samaria he broke several barriers: the barrier of sex, because His disciples were surprised to find Him speaking to a woman; the barrier of race, for He was talking with a Samaritan; the barrier of religion, because she was considered to be a Gentile. It was to this woman when she said, "I understand a Messiah is to come," that Jesus replied, "I that speak unto thee am He." It was to the women after His resurrection that he said, "Go tell." These women were the first to "bear the good tidings."⁵ And there are those who yet say that Jesus did not use women in His ministry!

Women recall with appreciation the story of the woman accused of committing adultery.⁶ It was the men who brought her to Jesus demanding that she be punished. We wonder why they did not also bring the man who must have had some responsibility in the matter. At any rate, Jesus calmly considered their demands, then turned and wrote in the sand, "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone." One by one the men dropped their stones, rebuked.

Someone recently commented, "It seems there were so many *women* who had sinned and who came to Jesus wanting forgiveness." I was reminded of a jingle handed to me one day in a meeting (I do not know the author): "Woman weeps o'er sins she's done, and makes them seem like double; man straightway forgives himself, and saves the Lord the trouble."

2. Luke 1:27-28.

3. Luke 1:44-56.

4. John 4:7-27.

5. Matt. 28:7.

6. John 7:53-8:11.

It was Jesus who taught that we are not male nor female but children of God.⁷ Then we are not servants nor slaves but part of a family—the household of God.

We remember two statements given by a respected leader of the church, "Slaves be obedient to your masters,"⁸ and "Women be subject to your husbands."⁹ We know today that the first statement is obsolete, and we are beginning to believe the other is also. We are asking modern theologians to rethink these statements for us, using the Revised Standard Version of the Bible! We must remember that this leader spoke out of the social customs of his day and also that Christianity allowed women greater privileges than did the pagan world around them. This same leader ordered women not to cut their hair and told them to always wear veils¹⁰ in public. Certainly few women who today enjoy the comfort of short hair would want to go back to those hallowed days of long tresses; and if we attempted to wear those oriental veils in modern American traffic, we would all be killed. But Paul's real concern should be our concern today. He believed that a good woman should keep that certain reserve, that inner refinement so essential to true womanhood in any generation. With the firm conviction that Jesus accepted women as persons and in His ministry used them to the limit of their training and ability, we then can decide how each of us will follow the dictates of our hearts and find our own best way to serve Him. The opportunities are limitless if we work in His spirit as channels through which His work may go forward.

We must come to the realization that though probably we shall be always a part of some family, we are primarily persons in our own right. We are responsible to God for our own lives—not, ultimately, for our husbands or our children, our organizations or our relatives—but for our own stewardship and service. Therefore, we rejoice in our freedom given us through Christ. We accept joyfully our status in being "a woman in the scheme of things" for in the laboratory of today's experience it is being demonstrated that woman's intelligence and ability are comparable to man's. Absolute honesty requires us to say that whatever a woman wants to become

7. I Cor. 11:1-16.

8. Eph. 6:5.

9. Eph. 5:24.

10. I Cor. 11:5-7.

she can, if she follows the directives she receives in her daily periods of meditation and honestly works in the spirit of her Lord. Certainly a woman should not feel she should serve on policy-making boards or receive ordination if she does not care to do so, but it is hardly fair for her to decide what someone else should do.

It is a revelation when one discovers for herself a technique for achieving without being militant. A well known church woman shares her experience in these words:

I so well remember my first revelation and discovery. I lived on a street where I was the only girl my age in the midst of several boys—two brothers, and their friends—who formed the "gang." I could cut out paper dolls and play house all I wanted to by myself but it was a lonely business. Interest in such activities seemed to dim as I watched the boys in their lively games of Indian and cowboy and "catch as can." A girl cousin who visited us occasionally joined me in longing to be a part of it but "Girls, gosh!" came scornfully from the members of the gang. Our first attempt at being a part of the cherished group came in begging quilts from my mother and in making tents far better than any which had been erected. These were recognized as such, grudgingly accepted, and used. But we were still not a part of the gang. We sat in a wigwam, wearily leaned our heads against the center pole and meditated. If only one could get that cherished rating of "chief!" Our stormy demands to be accepted and to have our rights acknowledged got us nowhere. I suddenly realized that I would have to be able to ride the pony and stay on no matter how swift the ride; I must be able to run faster and for a greater distance than any of the boys; and I would have to be able to think faster and with greater decision than any of the gang. *That made you chief!* Even at the age of ten I knew that being a girl I never could make it if I could not do better than their best. So it was up to me. Never shall I forget that day when the slow, drawling voice of the older boy came as from a great distance, "You know, maybe she can do it. Let's make her chief!"

This woman is one of the many who have learned that technique.

Another testimony comes from a woman who is ordained although she never intended to be. She had dedicated her life to full time Christian service and planned to be a national youth leader. However, as so often rightly happens, along came a young man who persuaded her to change her mind and become a minister's wife.

As she studied the situation, she decided there could be no better place for full time Christian service than in a parsonage home. However, as they went on in their preparation for the ministry, occasionally she supplied for her husband in his student pastorates. She had never known greater joy than being in those pulpits, sharing with others her faith and Christian convictions. She took more Bible courses and pastoral theology. She learned that a sermon must have an introduction, three points, and a conclusion. Her husband was a hard taskmaster. "Get more 'meat' into them," he kept insisting. "The people like you, they like what you say, but you aren't saying anything." So she struggled on.

Then one day he thoroughly stunned her. They were going into the rural ministry, he would be away from the parish a good deal in interdenominational work, there would be few lay leaders. She must be ordained and serve also as a minister. She resisted and struggled. What would people think? What would they say? But he never gave up until he achieved this goal. Because they were going into the rural ministry they decided they should not be ordained at the Seminary. They would return to the farm where he was reared and there in front of the fireplace in the home he loved, the double ordination would take place. So it was that the ministers and elders came and, side by side, this couple received the rites of ordination. Even as she accepted this responsibility, she slipped her hand into his to be sure that security was still there. But realization came to her then of how difficult would be the way. Her husband would be accepted. She would be allowed to serve only as she earned that privilege with custom and prejudice against her. She must never be aggressive nor too eager.

They had been serving for some time, she as minister's wife only, when the local doctor's wife died. She left a letter asking that the minister have charge of her funeral but requesting that his wife give the funeral sermon. Clothed in her black dress and trim white collar, the "woman minister" did the best she could. After that, she was accepted. She buried and married and administered communion, but every step of the way she walked with caution and discretion. The opportunities are there if women have the consecration and the training to use them.

From the President's Annual Report, The College of the Bible, Lexington, Kentucky, June 5, 1905, we read:

The number of our students during the session now closing is the greatest reported for many years . . . in our list you will find the names of five women, one of them a married woman, wife of a male student. These were matriculated on the responsibility of the faculty because of their desire to study the Bible as a means of greater efficiency in the work of the Sunday School and of missions. Two of them are candidates for foreign mission work and one is to go to Japan within a few weeks. We trust that the Board will approve this innovation. Someone remarked, after we had admitted some of these, that they will soon be turning out female preachers; *but I replied, that by the time they studied the Scriptures with us they will learn that women are not to be preachers.*—J. W. McGarvey, President.

This statement would be discouraging if we did not remember what a real innovation it was to have *five women* in a seminary, not a Girls' Academy—in 1905.

In answer to an inquiry, Dr. Riley B. Montgomery, now president of The College of the Bible, has written, under date of June 15, 1953:

The College of the Bible accepts women for the Bachelor of Divinity degree because we believe that women should have the opportunity to share equally with men in Christian work and leadership. Among Disciples of Christ churches, women may accept calls to churches as ministers and perform all the responsibilities that are called for in the pastorate of churches. We believe that if women desire to prepare themselves for the pastoral ministry they should have the opportunity to do so.

For those women who wish to major in the field of Religious Education, it is our feeling that they would be better workers in that field if they would work for the Bachelor of Divinity degree, which would give them a broader theological education than if they took the briefer course leading to the Master of Religious Education. We have courses leading to both degrees but we are increasingly encouraging all students, men and women, who plan to work in the field of Religious Education, to work toward the Bachelor of Divinity degree.

We believe that women should have the same right to ordination for any position in the church that is accorded to me. Our educational program is planned on the basis of this belief. Though the function of ordination among Disciples of Christ is a function of the local church, The College of the Bible shares in this responsibility with the local churches when they are ordaining graduates from our institutions. *We would rec-*

commend women to the local churches for ordination as readily as we would men.

All of this policy and practice on the part of The College of the Bible in its educational program, as well as respect to ordination, is in line with the policies and practices of the Disciples of Christ as a religious body.¹¹

Can the women of the Disciples of Christ read this statement and believe that it is *the men* today who are holding us back? Perhaps this is indicative of the changing scene regarding women and their status and service in the church.

What opportunities do church women really want?

11. Personal letter to the author.

	261.2
Disciples of Christ.	D61
	in
Women in the Church.	261.2
	Pam Box
DATE	ISSUED TO
	1/1/76 J. W. W.