

NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE SCHOOL OF
THEOLOGY

WOMEN PREACHERS AND LEADERS: EXAMINATION OF
NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING WITH FOCUS ON
I TIMOTHY 2:11-15

BY

AGNES MAKAU:

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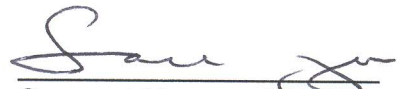
BY
AGNES MAKAU

A Thesis submitted to the Graduate School in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Theology

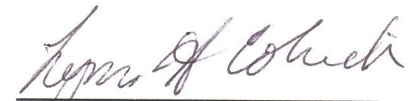
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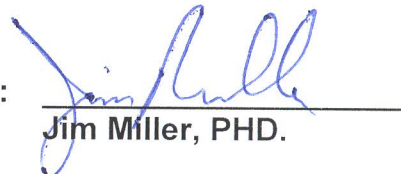
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DECLARATION

WOMEN PREACHERS AND LEADERS: EXAMINATION OF NEW
TESTAMENT TEACHING WITH FOCUS ON 1 TIMOTHY 2:11-15

I declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit.

The views presented herein are not necessarily those of the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology or the Examiners.

(Signed) Agnes Makau
Agnes Makau

June 26, 2000

ABSTRACT

The Thesis discusses women preachers and leaders by examining the New Testament teaching with a focus on 1 Timothy 2:11-15. This is presented in five chapters.

Chapter One is mainly introduction encompassing the statement problem, the hypotheses (major and minor), the significance of the study, the purpose of the study, assumptions, limitations and delimitations of the study, plan and method and literature review.

Chapter Two deals with the examination of 1 Timothy 2:11-15 emphasizing 1 Timothy 2:12. This includes The Author, Recipient and Purpose of 1 Timothy, The Religious Situation at Ephesus, The Exegesis of the Text within the Context and, finally, A Synthesis of the Findings. 1 Timothy 2:12 cannot be used to answer the question as to whether or not women can be preachers and leaders in the Church today. It must be understood within the context of the Ephesian situation. We would be reading into the text if we use it to decide the outcome of women as preachers and leaders in the Church today.

Chapter Three is the examination of selected passages relating to women. These are Romans 16:1-7, 1 Corinthians 11:5, 1 Corinthians 14:34-35; 2 Timothy 2:2. They are the texts which are more clear on what women can do. A look at these passages yields findings that do not deter a woman from being a preacher or leader in today's church. Romans 16:1-7 talks of Phoebe who was a deacon in a church and includes others that were fellow workers with Paul. 1 Corinthians 11:5 allows a woman to pray and prophesy in public. 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 is in the context of the order of worship and is not related to the concept of women as preachers and leaders today. 2 Timothy 2:2 addresses the issue of criteria for those who would be entrusted with the word of God or the responsibility of teaching the word of God. This text includes women which is evident upon application of correct interpretation.

Chapter Four discusses the relation of 1 Timothy 2:11-15 to Romans 16:1-7, 1 Corinthians 11:5, 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, 2 Timothy 2:2. In relating the findings of Selected Women-Related Passages in Chapter Three to the teaching of 1 Timothy 2:11-15, we determine that Paul cannot be saying women may not be preachers and leaders. If we insist that the teaching of 1 Timothy 2:11-15 is a universal prohibition of women as preachers and leaders in the church, then we must also conclude that the Bible contradicts itself.

Chapter Five is the Conclusion. It also outlines the relevance of this thesis to the church in Africa today. A careful look at the passages under study reveals that women can be preachers and leaders in the church and should be accepted as such. As a matter of course, the gift must be polished by education to produce respected leaders such as we see in Phoebe and qualified preachers/teachers as exemplified by Priscilla.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Church practices should have, as much as it is possible, their basis or foundation in the Scriptures. This calls for careful and correct Biblical interpretation of each and every related passage of Scripture.

The debate on women as preachers and teachers of both men and women in the church today gains its momentum from the teaching in what tradition holds as the Pauline epistles. This is discussed later in this paper under Author and Recipient. The church has leaned heavily on Paul and his teachings in these books for a solution to the issue of women as preachers and leaders. The question we need to ask is whether Paul has always been interpreted correctly by the church. If the answer is “yes”, why has the debate continued? If the answer is “no”, why has the church not arrived at the correct interpretation? Or, having correctly interpreted the issue of women as preachers and leaders, has the church been reluctant to stand against tradition?

Women continue to be trained for ministry as well as men. The researcher is interested in finding how these women bridge the gap between their convictions and the church’s stand on women in positions of authority, specifically preaching and teaching. This will be accomplished by exercising correct principles of interpretation in regard to specific passages that affect the whole discussion. This thesis employs the historical critical method, which

extracts those normative (although not exhaustive) and universal elements, which the ancient text conveys. In a way, this method widens the gulf between the Bible and modern readers or hearers. It witnesses to the fact that the Word of God today has to do with the Word of God which was spoken in ancient times by the prophets and apostles. Therefore unless the modern interpreters allow the text to speak out of its original situation, they have no basis for claiming that their message is continuous with the message recorded in Scripture¹. If we recognize the importance of making the word of God contextual, then the historical method is crucial.

Every interpretation process includes application. However the “intuitive” approach, which emphasis on immediate personal application evident in contemporary popular preaching and devotional literature, can only be helpful if it is combined with the historical method. Interpreters therefore must

- interpret Scripture with Scripture.
- interpret Scripture literally, that is according to the original meaning, literary form, and context.
- recognize the role of the Holy Spirit.
- interpret Scripture dynamically, in order to transform lives.

Statement of the Problem

The aim of the researcher is to exegete key passages that teach on women, and their implication for women as preachers and leaders. The researcher will seek to understand the historical, social and cultural

¹ Rene Padilla, “The Interpreted Word, Reflections on Contextual Hermeneutics,” *Themelios* (March 1981): 19-23.

background that may have determined the expression of Paul's teachings as he related to his recipients. In addition, a careful word study of 1 Timothy 2:11-15 will be conducted to reveal any hidden or helpful meaning. This will allow the researcher to know whether Paul has been misunderstood through misinterpretation.

The Hypotheses

Major hypothesis

The church has, over the years, misinterpreted 1 Timothy 2:12. Consequently, it has erroneously based its policies for women as preachers and leaders on this incorrect teaching.

Minor hypotheses

1. Interpreters have not done justice to 1 Timothy 2:12 which affects the place of women as preachers and leaders greatly. It is not a good verse to use in deciding whether or not women can be preachers and leaders in the church today.
2. Today's African cultural and societal inclinations and beliefs, whether as a result of their culturally affected theological training or their experiences, have played a bigger role in the decisions concerning women as preachers and leaders than the teaching of 1 Timothy 2:12.
3. The church should preach and effect equality of men and women in ministry regardless of culture, by using clearer passages than 1 Timothy 2:12.

