

**AN EVALUATION OF WOMEN PROPHETIC
MINISTRY: A STUDY OF RUTH AND ESTHER**

BY

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FACULTY APPROVAL

AN Evaluation of Women in Prophetic Ministry: A Study of Ruth and Esther, North
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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to almighty God.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this project is written by me and that it is a record of my own research work. it has not be presented in any previous work.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I am indeed grateful to my project Supervisor, Dr. Charles Udegbumam who pain taking assists in no little measure in the completion of this work.

I am also appreciative to the instructors in the school of Prophetic Ministry, and the Head of MFM School of Prophets worldwide, Pastor Kunle Adesanya, Institute Biblical Studies and spiritual Warfare for their tieless impartation of prophetic knowledge.

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ABSTRACT

This research work is an evaluation of women in prophetic ministry with special attention to Ruth and Esther. The first attraction was that, were there women prophets in the Bible? Yes, there were, in both the Old and New Testaments. The Hebrew word for prophet, navi', [feminine, navi'a] comes from an old word for speaker and came to mean a speaker or spokesperson for God. We can see how the term is used by comparing Exodus 7:1: "Then the Lord said to Moses, 'See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron will be your prophet," with Exodus 4:16: "He will speak to the people for you, and it will be as if he were your mouth and as if you were God to him."

The prophet and prophetess declared God's message. This did not necessarily include any prediction of the future; although the future could be brought in to help the people understand God's will for the present. Miriam, Moses' sister, is the first prophetess mentioned in the Bible. Part of her ministry was leading the women in singing and dancing (Exodus 15:20). The women sang responsively with the men, and the Holy Spirit inspired the words of her song.

Deborah (Judges 4:4) was a prophetess who led the people of Israel. She was married, but her husband must have supported her ministry. "She held court under the Palm of Deborah in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites came to her to have their disputes decided" (Judges 4:5). They came because they recognized she did not decide on the basis of her own wisdom, but she would give them a word from God. Later she gave Barak words from the Lord that enabled him to lead Israel to victory.

In another critical time, when Josiah was repairing the temple that Manasseh had closed, a copy of the Book of the Law was discovered. Josiah wanted to inquire of the Lord about what was written in the Book, so he sent Hilkiah to Huldah the prophetess (2 Kings 22:14; 2 Chronicles 34:22). He recognized that in the midst of all the neglect of God's Word, she remained faithful and was a true spokesperson for the Lord. Ruth and Esther played a significant role in the liberation of their people.

To encourage women to rediscover their prophetic role, we need to emphasize further 1 Corinthians 12:11, "All these [spiritual gifts] are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines." Clearly, the Holy Spirit is sovereign in distributing the gifts. We need to look to Him and be open to

Him, for He knows what gifts will meet the need and He knows who He wants to use to minister the gifts. The gifts remain under His power and remain His gifts. He is the source, no matter who is being used, (ICorin.14:1).

CHAPTER ONE

1.0. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The basic definition of a prophet is one who speaks for God. Prophecy consists largely in speaking God's word, calling people to repentance, warning of future judgments, and praising the Lord. Whenever the Holy Spirit moves on a chosen vessel to speak Divine communications, the spirit of prophecy is at work.

The Bible makes no distinction between the prophetic ministry of men and women. A prophet, whether male or female, is God's servant, called and anointed by Him. Prophets are chosen by God, who opens their spiritual ears, gives them a message, and directs them as to when and to whom to speak His Word. This Divine calling and direction constitutes the basis for their spiritual authority. God often gives His prophets and prophetesses words of rebuke and correction to those in authority. Often, prophets are rejected and persecuted by those in power, because the messages God gives through them frequently call these powers to account. Their responsibility is to speak the word of the Lord and leave to God whether or not their messages are received, believed and obeyed.

The exercise of the prophetic ministry is under the authority of the prophet as directed by God; but in public settings, common courtesy and due regard for the up-building of others are to be maintained. New Testament prophets are, along with apostles, builders of the church's foundation. They catch God's vision for His people, speak it boldly, and exhort others to follow Christ. As they pray and fast together, seeking God's will for the church, the Holy Spirit gives direction to them for the church's mission (Acts 13:1-3).

I Cor. 14:3-5 states, "Everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort" and "builds up the church." Verses 29-31 state that prophets receive God's revelation so that all may learn and all may be comforted. Thus, the teaching function is inherent in prophecy. That prophecy was not forbidden to women is clear from I Cor. 11:5, where women's public prophesying is presupposed and their deportment regulated. Paul was not trying to quench the Holy Spirit from speaking through women, but he wanted to ensure that women who spoke for God acted modestly in a way that could not bring legal accusations against the church. Doubtless, his concern to protect the women leaders who were being persecuted in unspeakable ways motivated his cautions.

One thing that stands out in the Bible is the tremendous variety of ministries that are open to women. The prophetic ministry was always open to women. Miriam, Deborah and Hulda are given the title of prophetess in the Old Testament. In the New Testament we have Anna the prophetess who recognised Jesus as the Messiah, when he was a baby in the temple. The four daughters of Philip are also described as having the gift of prophecy, Stanley (1995).

On the day of Pentecost, Peter quoted the prophet Joel:

I will pour out my Spirit on all people; Your sons and your daughters will prophesy Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my spirit in those days (Acts 2:17,18).

Peter saw the massive outpouring of the Holy Spirit as broadening the scope of ministry. Up till this time only the special few had received the fullness of the Spirit. The widespread outpouring of the Holy Spirit meant that every believer could exercise a ministry. For Peter this applied to both men and women. He expected women to exercise a prophetic ministry.

The apostolic ministry was also open to women. An apostle is a believer who is sent out in a missionary situation. A woman who fulfilled this ministry is Priscilla the wife of Aquila (Acts 18:1-5, 18-26). Paul met Priscilla and Aquila in Corinth , and when he went out to establish a new Church in Ephesus he took them with him. He mentions Priscilla three times in his letters as a fellow worker.

Another woman involved in apostolic ministry is mentioned in Romans 16:7, where Paul writes, Greet Andronicus and Junia. They are out standing among the apostles.

It is almost certain that Junia is a feminine name, so Andronicus and Junia were probably husband and wife. Paul considered them both to be apostles.

In the New Testament both the apostolic and prophetic ministries were open to women, so it follows that women can be elders. The New Testament mentions female elders in 1 Tim 5:2. The word translated as older women is "presbuteras", which is a feminine form of the Greek word for elder. It could be also translated as elder's wife, female elder, or elderess. The passage should then read: Do not rebuke an elder harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, female elders as mothers, and younger women as sisters. This suggests that Paul is speaking of a female elder, Thomas (1991).

1.1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In recent times, there has been high pulpit discrimination of women ministers; most regrettable are women prophets in most churches around the globe. The research is to examine and underscore this long aged tradition or doctrine of churches in this regards. The church has deliberately relegated the importance of prophetic ministry to the background while enthroning sectionalism, doctrine of discrimination, and tradition of men at the expense of Christ salvation for all humans in respective of their sex and race.

.Hence, this study intends to resolve the following challenges in Christendom:

- Attitudes of believers to women prophets;
- The unquantifiable work of prophets in the spiritual development; and
- How women prophets could be encouraged alongside with their counterpart (Male Prophets).

1.2. PURPOSE OF STUDY

Prophets are known to be the mouth piece and oracle of God. Christ commissioned His Disciples with Fire and the Holy Ghost in Acts of the Apostle 2:1-47 and 3:1-26, and it was subsequently passed to all believers. As they pray and fast together, seeking God's will for the church, the Holy Spirit gives direction to them for the church's mission (Acts 13:1-3). I will pour out my Spirit on all people; Your sons and your daughters will prophesy Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my spirit in those days (Acts 2:17,18). Hence, the purpose of this study is

to proffer proper strategy that will energized the move great evangelically commissioning for the believers triggered by women prophets for the edification of the church and the enlargement of heaven.

1.3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study to be able to evaluate the role of women in prophetic ministry, steps, methods and concept to adopt in Christendom with a view to adhering to Christ's call for the ministry, command and propagating the gospel of salvation. The study is aimed at achieving the following objectives:

- To determine the importance of prophets to church growth;
- To put aside the discrimination of women prophets in Christendom today;
- To determine impact of women in the genealogy of Christ and His redemptive work on Calvary;
- To ascertain whether women called or should be addressed prophetess.
- To recommend the best “panacea” in solving the controversy sounding the sex of who is called or anointed to be a prophets in the body of Christ.

1.4. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study is on the evaluation of Women in Prophetic Ministry, a case study on Ruth and Esther, as a yet generally acceptable norm in Christendom.

1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

The significance of this study is to examine and evaluate the role of women prophetic ministry in Christendom with a view to encouraged the usefulness of the impartation of grace that was shared equally among all.

The study will open up further area where women prophets has contributed in no little measures, concern and considerate principles for church growth.

16. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study is as a result of the following limitation:

a) TIME

Time is one of the problems encountered in the course of carrying out this study. This study was initiated concluded within a few months, a period short enough to hamper the adequate procurement of relevant data;

b) FINANCE

The research is faced with financial constraint which has militated against a more elaborate work the subject matter as would be necessary;

17. RESEARCH PROCEDURES

This segment of the study examine the method, design and characteristics of the study population, sampling procedure, determination of the sample size, data collection and procedure for processing and analysing the collected data. On this

research, we relied heavily on contentment analysis and qualitative secondary sources of data as further examined in chapter four.

a. RESEARCH QUESTION

In order to effectively answer the research question and present an empirical study I have formulated a few empirical questions:

- What is the role of prophecy in the church?
- What is the Bible stands of prophetess?
- Is prophetic ministry a catalyst for the repositioning of the church development?
- Are female prophets allowed to prophesy in churches?
- What role does prophetic ministry plays in ensuring the actualisation of growth?
- What are the impacts of prophecy in Christendom?

b. RESEARCH PROPOSITIONS

To adequately carry out the research work, the following propositions are made:

- Women prophets has not impacted negatively on church growth at large;
- Women prophetic ministry have not been effective;
- Is to allow perfect evangelism a fundamental principles for real church
- The growth of any church as body of Christ if premised on God on individual as prophets.

1.8. DEFINITION OF TERMS

This research made use of common words for ease of understanding in line King James Version of Bible interpretation. And the causes of reading this work, the use of high sounding words are bracketed with its meaning or highlighted.

1.9. ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

This study is subdivided into five chapters. Chapter one entails the introduction, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, statement of the problem and the entire organization of the study. Chapter two elucidates relevant existing literature on subject matter. Chapter three is based on biblical and theological perspective on women prophetic ministry a case study of Ruth and Esther, role of prophetess in Old and Testament, importance of prophetic ministry vis-a-vic attitude of believers towards women prophets and responsibilities of prophets in church growth.

Chapter four is on research finding analysis. Finally, chapter five summarizes the entire study accompanied with findings and recommendation.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0. INTRODUCTION

Should women teach men? Should they exercise authority over men? What about ordaining women? Even those who agree that Scripture must determine our answers do not agree on what it teaches. And too often differing sides have not been willing to listen to one another. Here are the views of four deeply committed evangelicals that focus the discussion on the issues.

2.1. ORTHODOX AND PRESBYTERIAN VIEW ON WOMEN IN PROPHETIC MINISTRY

These schools of thoughts are those who strongly maintain the Mosaic law of Moses, they are very orthodox in the following of Old Testament context mix with men traditions that women should not be heard in the church.

According to Robert Culver (1999); Argues for what might be called the traditional view that women should not exercise authority over or teach men in the church. James Walter (1995), in his analysis of “Phoebe and Junia(s) Posited a case for plural ministry that questions ordination as a means of conferring authority on women over men.

James W. Scott (1996), "As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own

husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church. (1 Cor. 14:33b-36 NIV).

However, this schools of thought belief that many people, especially in the developing "Christian feminist" movement, the question asked above is not only astonishing but infuriating. Nonetheless, 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36 does seem to teach that women should not speak in church.

The Greek New Testament was written without any punctuation or division into verses. As a result, it is not always easy to determine where one sentence ends and another one begins. This problem faces us in verse 33. Does the second half of the verse, "as in all the churches of the saints," conclude a sentence or begin a new one?

When Robert Stephanus worked out the verse numbers for the New Testament in 1551 while on a journey from Paris to Lyons, he combined this clause with the preceding one as verse 33. Accordingly, the translators of the KJV put the two parts of the verse together into one sentence. But modern Greek editors, most modern translations (RSV, NASB margin, NIV, NRSV), and most modern commentators recognize that verse 33b actually begins a new sentence.

The word "as" in "as in all the churches of the saints" indicates that something is the same as the general practice of Christians. It makes good sense for that something to be the practice that Paul prescribes for the Corinthian church in verse 34. He declares, in effect, "I want the women in Corinth to do what the women do in all the other churches."

On the other hand, verses 33a and 33b do not make any sense together. What can it possibly mean that "God is not a God of commotion, but of peacefulness, as in all the churches of the saints"? The character of God is not comparable with the general practice of the churches.

2.2. THE PENTECOSTAL'S DISPOSITION ON WOMEN PROPHETIC MINISTRY

The argument as posited by the Orthodox and Presbyterian was unacceptable and sharp contrast to that of the Pentecostals view. Walter Schmithal (1967), suggested a modified view, which would allow for women to teach but not to hold positions of authority.

Alvera Mickelsen (2001), Defended the full equality of men and women participation in the activities of the church, as the redemptive work of Christ was for both sex. Emphatically, noted that, the prophetic ministry does not segregate between Jews and Gentile or male and female, but rather the prophetic call is humans as are led by the Spirit of God. Pointing out weaknesses and hidden assumptions of most biblical scholars, should be reminded of what the Bible says **in 1 Corinthians 1:26: "God says that He will use those things that are weak to confound the wise."**

From Old and New Testament (Eve, Sarah, Rebekah, Ruth, Esther, Naomi, Elizabeth mother of John, Mary mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, etc.), women played significant role in God's creation and the full redemptive work of Christ on Calvary. He wants woman to walk in the fullness of the original, pre-Fall relationship that He had with her as well as Adam. As only a tiny part of this great move of God, we pray we will be faithful to the call He has given.

Katharine Bushnell (2008), "The church which silences women will be found to silence the Holy Ghost "and" a sect or sex, or race which attempts a monopoly of the Spirit's voice and power, will find that the Holy Spirit will flee far from it." Don't you believe it is time for the emancipation of women? However, if Christ doesn't win the lives of today's women, the devil will.

Vinson Synan's new book *The Century of the Holy Spirit* in the section on Spirit-filled Women written by Susan Hyatt (1946), applauded the significant role of women prophetess in the Bible.

Barbara Collins (1935), former dean of student affairs and faculty member at Pickett's Fountain Gate Bible College, joined forces with Patricia Joyce in 1938 and Gay Anderson in 1933 to provide a detailed summary on the personality of prophetess Esther spirit-filled women. His argument was in line with Biblical Queen Esther's boldness in confronting King Xerxes of the Persian Capital on the proposed plot of Haman to eliminate Mordecai and the entire Jewish race. (Esth. 1:1-23 and 3:1-14). And her speedy prophetic intervention to liberate her slave people.

In 2008, Pat Joyce a leading Canadian prophetess moved and partnered with Katharine Bushnell in prophetic ministries. This innovative gave more credence to female preachers and prophetess across Europe and strengthened much of its theological position in Katharine Bushnell's classic book *God's Word to Women*. Mandating called prophetess to take hold of their ministry as given to them by God to all nations."

Margret Idahosa (1989), in her sermon audio tape titled: ;'The Grace of Women in the Gospel'' noting that, women were the first people that propagated the gospel of the resurrection Christ and subsequently appeared to women first before His Disciples. Her argument was inferred from the gospel of John 20:1-18.

Susan Stubbs Hyatt (1946), A church historian, Bible scholar, professional educator in the Center for Advanced Theological Studies at Fuller Theological Seminary where she earned Doctor of Ministry and a recipient of many academic awards, such as National Religion and Philosophy Award, National Dean's Honor's List,

Academic All American, and *Delta Epsilon Chi* (Honor Society of the American Association of Bible Colleges, etc). She posited strongly that the “gospel of salvation is incomplete without female preachers”.

She was commissioned by Thomas Nelson Publishers to write the chapter “Spirit-Filled Women” in their benchmark publication, *The Century of the Holy Spirit*, edited by Dr. Vinson Synan, preeminent Pentecostal/Charismatic historian and Dean *Emeritus* of Regent University School of Divinity.

As an advocate for Biblical equality, she is the founding coordinator of the Int’l Christian Women’s Hall of Fame & History Project, a multifaceted undertaking that equips women to be change agents in society and the Christian community by honoring women of the past and present, and by providing interactive education, strategic resources, significant relationships, leadership training, and ministry opportunities.

Bernardette .B. Eddie .H. (2000) is a seasoned minister of the Gospel, having served as a pastor, teacher, missionary, and professor of theology in the U.S. and Canada and having ministered in India, Indonesia, England, Ireland, Sweden, Poland, and Bulgaria. His ministry is characterized by a unique blend of the anointing of the Holy Spirit with academic excellence and over 40 years of ministerial experience.

Brootten has made a life-long commitment to the study of Scripture, church history, and Spiritual renewal. In addition to his on-going personal study and research, Eddie holds a Doctor of Ministry from Regent University where he majored in church history and spiritual renewal. He also holds the Master of Divinity and a Master of Arts in Pentecostal-Charismatic Studies from Oral Roberts University.

Eddie has lectured on revival, church history and various Biblical themes in churches, conferences and some of the major educational institutions in the world today. These include Oxford University in England, Oral Roberts University, Zion Bible College, Celebration Bible College, and Christ For the Nations Institute. He has authored several books, including the highly acclaimed 2000 Years of Charismatic Christianity, which is used as a textbook in colleges and seminaries around the world.

The Lord's mandate to Eddie for this season of his life is to "feed My sheep." He is obeying this commission by teaching and preaching wherever God opens the door, by continuing to write and publish, and by making use of modern media, particularly the Internet, for delivering the message God has given him. Eddie's goal is to see each believer either male or female grounded in the word of God and able to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in a mature and responsible manner. With hearts awakened by the Holy Spirit and minds renewed by the word of God, he believes that authentic revival can transform the church and impact the world in the 21st century. He and his wife, Susan, are prophetic ministers reside in Grapevine, Texas, from which they carry on a ministry of teaching, preaching, writing, and publishing.

Valarie Owen is an ordained minister who has taught the uncompromising Word of God throughout the United States and Canada and in other nations, as well. She has authored several books and her teachings have been recorded and utilized in literally hundreds of Bible schools around the world. Her theme has been: Know your rights and stand your ground.

Valarie is a graduate of North Texas State University and taught in the Texas public school system before God sent her forth to teach His Word. For the past 24 years, she has been a faculty member at Calvary Cathedral International Bible College in

Fort Worth, TX, where she teaches several courses in both the Old and New Testaments. She makes her home in Irving, TX, where she continues to write and teach God's Word.

She was noted in *The Century of the Holy Spirit*, the premier book reporting on the 20th Century Pentecostal/Charismatic Revival, edited by Vinson Synan and published by Thomas Nelson.

The technological revolution that became popular around 1980 opened a whole new way of reaching and teaching. Word of Faith Bible College established in 1979 in Dallas, Texas, was the pioneer in video Bible schools. By videotaping the lessons at its home base, the school was able to reproduce and provide them in a packaged curriculum for local churches that otherwise could not provide high-quality Bible teaching on a regular basis for their hungry constituents. The first and only woman to participate as a regular Bible teacher in this school was Valarie Owen. Through this medium, she taught thousands of students in hundreds of schools around the globe, and when the Bible school switched to live satellite communication in 1983, Valarie was the first and only woman to teach Bible school regularly via satellite across America and Canada, Valarie (1970).

John Chrysostom (1940), *Evidence for Female Prophets as Church Leaders* as it relates to Romans 16:7, states: Greet Andronicus and Junia...who are outstanding among the Apostles: To be an apostle is something great! But to be outstanding among the Apostles - just think what a wonderful song of praise that is! They were outstanding on the basis of their works and virtuous actions. Indeed, how great the wisdom of this *woman* must have been that she was even deemed worthy of the title of apostle.

According to Douglas Moo (1934), the problem with identifying this person "arises from the fact that the Greek form used here, *Iounian*, depending on how it is accented, could refer to either: a man with the name 'Junianus', found here in its contracted form, 'Junias' or to a woman with the name of Junia." The use of such accents mark did not occur until the 9th or 10th century.

However, there is limited external data specifically discussing the gender of the person Paul refers to as *Iounian*. Why is this misconception? Probably because the issue as it were was not of grave concern for those who lived in Paul's time. The first century and early Christian community would have certainly known the gender of the person in question. Therefore, a careful review of the evidence offered by manuscripts, writings from church leaders and scholarly research should shed more light on resolving these issues.

Bible scholars/translators appear divided on the how they interpret *Iounian*. For example, the American Standard Version (ASV), New American Standard Version Bible (NASB), New International Version (NIV), New Amplified Bible (NAB) prefer "Junias" while the King James Version (KJV), New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), New King James Version (NKJV), prefer "Junia." Some Bibles also footnote the name "Julia." This divergence in translations only serves to highlight the problem faced by modern readers of the text. The task is to synthesize the data and reach a conclusion on the basis of objective evidence.

2.3. CONCLUSION

From the above backdrop, we need to **resolve the interpretive issues of Romans 16:7 as it relates to female prophets**. The reason to solve two major interpretive problems in Christendom as it relates to prophetess in the bible both Old and New Testaments:

- a. The first is concerned with the gender of the prophets, does God's calling on an individual subjected to gender? Of course, No! hence, the this research work is patterned towards the above schools of thought that upholds the opinion that female prophets has equal measure of God's calling, grace, power, vision, challenges and prophetic spiritual appellation as male prophets.
- b. Evaluation of these issues can have important ramifications for how the church should carry out her continual mandate. And reviewing Romans 16 will contribute to a better realization that both women and men were participants in all areas of ministry in the church. That is, as Ministers, Deacons, Leaders and even Apostles in past and current dispensation of Christianity.
- c. Thirdly, part of the interpretive problem is that some church leaders presume women ministers or prophets a misnomer in Christendom. Support for a female prophets named Julia is evidenced by, a papyrus manuscript, dating from around 200 AD. This papyrus represents the earliest known and most reliable testimony in support of prophetess. The 3rd century Coptic, 4th century Vulgate, and fifth century Latin versions provide additional early support for this female name. These early manuscripts clearly support a

female named "Julia." Junia, the other variant reading, is supported by the earliest known manuscripts available. Sinaiticus dates from the fourth century and is earliest surviving complete copy of the Greek New Testament dated from the 4th to 5th century and represent a broad spectrum of "text types." These early witnesses, by themselves, do not clearly reveal how an unaccented *Iounian* should be translated. The cumulative evidence provided by other ancient manuscripts, the existence of "Junia" as a common name in ancient times, and the lack of any evidence for "Junias" cannot be ignored. It is not unreasonable to state, as Moo does, that these early witnesses attest to "prophetess."

The quality and age of the above manuscripts provide strong support for a female minister whether it be rendered "Julia" or "Junia." The research from many different scholars clearly support that a female named Junia occurred frequently in ancient writings.

Andronicus and Junia were apostles. The only unresolved question is what did Paul mean by "apostles." James Walters offers four distinct ways "apostle" was used in the New Testament: 1) the Twelve original followers of Jesus, 2) persons who had seen the risen Lord and been commissioned by Him (1 Cor 9.1; 15:1-11); 3) a missionary successful in church planting, labor and suffering (which underlie Paul's arguments in 2 Cor); and 4) an emissary or missionary sent out by a particular church to perform specific tasks (2 Cor 8.23 and Phil 2.25).⁴² The first and fourth choice can be ruled out because they were not among the "twelve" nor was their apostleship specifically associated with a particular church or specific task.

Selecting between the remaining choices 2 and 3 is more problematic. They certainly could have been among either or both of the remaining groups. We simply do not know. They may have ministered together as a married couple. An interesting parallel would then exist with Prisca and Aquila mentioned by Paul in Romans 16.3-5a. We do know, however, that Paul did not assign any gender-specific roles in his greeting to Andronicus and Junia, nor should the church today. They were both equally deemed outstanding apostles of Christ.

2.4. BOOKS/MATERIALS:

In the course of this research work, the following literature books and material were used to support this research. These are:

- Stanley Grenz (1995); *controversy of women Apostle over men. Article.*
- Walter Schmithal (1967): *a journal on the office of the Apostle of the Early Church.*
- James Walter (1987): *Phoebe and Junia(s). an eassys on women in early christianity.*
- Alvera Mickelsen (2001): “*Equality of Christ’s Grace and Calling On the Church*”
- Katharine Bushnell (2008): in her book “*Let it come, Lord!*
(*if Christ doesn't win the lives of today's women, the devil will*).
- Susan Stubbs Hyatt (1946): *10 Things Jesus Taught about Women, Who’s the Boss?, In the Spirit We’re Equal, The Nature of Biblical Unity, Thinking*

Biblically, and The Spirit, The Bible, and Women.

- Margret Idahosa (1989): *Audion Tape Sermon “Woman, Seek the Living among the Dead”*.
- John Chrysostom (1940): *Article on Female Prophets as Church Leaders as it relates to Greet Andronicus and Junia in Romans 16:7.*
- Douglas Moo (1934): *The Epistle to the Romans, The New International Commentary, (Phoebe and Junia(s).*
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CHAPTER THREE

BIBLICAL/THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

3.0. INTRODUCTION

The Greek word for prophet or prophetess, [fem. prophetis], means a proclaimer of divine revelation. Anna, the elderly woman of the northern tribe of Asher, was a prophetess who served the Lord in the temple and met Mary and Joseph and the baby Jesus. She thanked God and told others about Jesus.

Other godly women spoke for God as they were inspired by the Holy Spirit and thus had a prophetic ministry even though the word prophetess was not used of them. Elisabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, was filled with the Spirit and spoke by the Spirit of Mary and the Baby in her womb (Luke 1:41—45). When Paul was on his way to Jerusalem, he stopped at Caesarea where the four daughters of the evangelist Philip prophesied. This must have brought him much encouragement, for the gift of prophecy brings "strengthening [that builds up spiritually and develops or confirms faith], encouragement [that awakens, challenging to move ahead in faithfulness and love] and comfort [that cheers, revives, and stirs hope and expectation]" (1 Corinthians 14:3).

Some have misinterpreted 1 Corinthians 14:34, "Women should remain silent in the churches" to mean that women should not minister in the vocal gifts. However, Paul had already said in verse 31, "you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged." In the context Paul was also speaking about interruptions and disorder. Paul "suggests that another type of interruption should be avoided. Women (who were usually uneducated in that day) were asking questions in an improper manner and thus contributing to the confusion. They were told to

hold their questions and ask their husbands at home. This should be applied to both men and women in matters that custom considers unbecoming. But Paul is in no sense trying to hinder women from prophesying, speaking in tongues, singing, or otherwise contributing to the worship. He expected women to pray and prophesy if the Spirit gave them a ministry (I Corin. 11:5). The Bible makes no difference in spiritual manifestations between men and women."³ The context makes it clear that Paul means public manifestation of the gifts in the congregation.

3.1. OLD TESTAMENT STANDS ON WOMEN PROPHETS

It is a curious fact that in the days of Israel, even though a prophet himself might be generally rejected by the people, they usually listened whenever he proclaimed (either orally or in writing), "Thus saith the Lord." They did not always accept nor act on the prophet's message, but they listened with a degree of respect, because they believed God was communicating with them through the prophet's words. The office and ministry of a genuine prophet implied authority and commanded attention.

But in order to be a true prophet, an individual needed more than a mere confidence that God had called him. The genuineness of such a prophetic ministry was revealed not only in his proclamation of God's message but in every activity of his daily life as an instrument of God. The same is true of a preacher of God's Word today, for there is a sense in which the contemporary gospel minister can have a prophetic ministry—the type of calling that characterized the Bible prophets, especially those who were reformers.

The following are some of the characteristics of a true prophet that made his ministry more efficient, captured attention, and radiated authority, and that, when appropriately incorporated into our ministries, can do a similar work for us.

Agent of the Holy Spirit

It was commonly believed in Bible times that no one—not even the agent himself—had the right or authority to oppose the message of one upon whom the Holy Spirit "descended" or "fell." Jonah, for example, "escaped" from the Lord but eventually fulfilled his commission. When Elijah, following his own impulses, fled from Jezebel, he seemed to have fled also from the Lord, but God's angel overtook him. Similarly, when Jeremiah resolved to throw off the prophetic mantle, he could not, for the word of the Lord was like "a burning fire shut up in... [his] bones" (Jer. 20:9). Likewise Paul cried out, "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" (1 Cor. 9:16). Thus we see that when the Spirit of God takes possession of a prophet, his message overflows in an irrepressible stream, regardless of the personal wishes of the prophet himself or the person to whom his message is directed.

Spirit-filled reformer

The prophet-reformer tried to curb both the political and religious abuses of the people and their leaders. Under the guidance of an illumined conscience he deliberately ignored established traditions and customs when that became necessary in order to obey the Author of his message and calling. He was uncompromising; he was not a conformist. He persisted in reform as long as his Master's will was clear to him. The sense of God's guidance imparted a confidence. In him was found no

hesitation; he did not vacillate. And these characteristics were generally recognized by the people as proof of his divine calling.

To some he might appear to be a self-centered individualist, but behind appearances were circumstances that required him to stand alone for right when necessary. He was an individualist for God, aflame with an inner fire ignited by the Holy Spirit. He felt compelled to preach God's message, whether in the street, in the marketplace, in public meetings, or to individuals to whom he was sent. Only by so doing could he find peace and be filled with a sense of having fulfilled his mission. Only then could he stop proclaiming and return quietly to his home.

God-called

The work of the Bible prophet was not inherited, as was the Aaronic priesthood. There was no prophetic caste comparable to the priestly one that existed in the days of Israel. In a similar way, there is today no such thing as a pastoral, ministerial, or preacher "caste." It may be an honor for a minister's son to follow in his father's footsteps, but the son is not obliged to do so. When Whitefield was ridiculed because he was not in the "apostolic succession," he retorted, "My powerful ordination comes from the pierced hands of the Lord." It was said of Jesus Christ that He was made a minister, and Paul states that he was placed in the ministry by the will of God (see Heb. 8:2; Rom. 15:8; Acts 26:16; Eph. 3:7; Col. 1:23, 25). This distinction seems to have been ignored by some Christian ministers. They have "made themselves ministers" by long years of study and by investing their all in this endeavor. But they overlook the fact that they cannot be made ministers by anyone except God Himself. Can we declare humbly, yet confidently and without presumption, that we truly have been called and made ministers? We must face this question, for our times demand ministers and preachers made such, as were the prophets of old, by God and not by

man. Tom Skinner, in his book *Worlds of Revolution*, said that one of the most unfortunate things about religion in this century is that we have so many religious leaders who have never really been called of God (see p. 255).

Unconditionally in God's hands

The true prophet was God's spokesman. Neither personal nor public interests deterred him in his mission. If the one to whom his message was directed was not in harmony with the will of God (be he the high priest or a teacher of the common people), he could not in the least influence God's servant. The prophet's whole being was subject to God and His cause. He bore a revelation that, even though understood, was at times despised by educated, intelligent men who lacked an enlightened conscience. As a reformer, it was the prophet's work to alter the normal course of matters and divert them to channels in which God would have them flow.

The prophet was a devoted follower of God and His holy law. To him, God's cause was paramount and made him the servant, not only of God, but of God's covenant people. This sense of divine responsibility frequently involved persecution, threats of death, and actual loss of life. He was a constant watchman for God, an uncompromising steward of that which he had received in trust. Grounded in the law of God, in justice, in equity, and in truth, he refused to dilute his message with ambiguities, formalism, praise, compromise, prizes, or gifts.

His awareness of being unconditionally in God's hands made him brave and bold, even daring. Indeed, his calling demanded this kind of stability and direction, because God Himself was that way, and he represented God by his attitudes and deeds. He did not cater to king or prince.

He never exploited the people, nor did he employ demagoguery, for he did not seek or need votes to retain his office. He received from God all that he needed. At times

he stood alone, like Elijah, although a minority usually received his message and renewed their loyalty to God. Being a prophet was seldom popular, for a prophet was called upon to speak plainly. He was not a sought-after man even in the circles of the church.

Crises seemed to draw him as iron to a magnet. God's message caused him to be restless with a holy dissatisfaction. At times when his mission crossed the paths of errant leaders he provoked conflicts. At other times he rushed tempestuously into situations with an energetic exhortation on his lips or some good news to instill hope. But always he was loyal to God, justice, truth, and the cause of the innocent.

Frugal, austere, and modest

Though a prophet was not usually from the ranks of the priesthood, in some cases men combined in themselves the offices of both priest and prophet. Jeremiah and Ezekiel are examples. Such a combination seems contradictory, for the priests tended to be traditionalists, whereas the prophets tended to be activists. The priests were formalists, tied to ceremonial monotony; the prophets were innovators who called the people away from the status quo. The former were identified by a uniform, the latter by attire that seemed to rebuke wealth and ease.

3.2. PROPHETESS RUTH AND ESTHER

Torah (the Law) "...means "teaching" or "instruction" for mankind. The Torah includes both the Oral Law and the Written Law. In addition, the Law is an extension of sacred oral tradition, thus broadening the meaning of Torah to designate the entire body of Jewish laws, customs, and ceremonies.

Nevi'im (the Prophets) "consists of narratives relating to Israel's" history as a nation on its land and a "collections of oracles" (Harris, 6) .

Supporters of God's covenant do battle against the paganism of neighboring groups and among the Israelites themselves. The Prophets seem to have become a closed collection of books and status equal to that of the Law.

Kethuvim (the Writings) "contains the most diverse material..." (Harris, 6), is a miscellaneous repository for all the books accepted later. It contains books of history, prophecy, wisdom, and poetry randomly tossed together in a mixed bag. Jewish books written in Greek such as the Apocrypha were not included as part of the canon of the Hebrew Bible. Apocalypses "means an uncovering" and "revelations" symbolic visions to encourage the righteous to remain faithful despite persecution. The visions often use graphic symbols such as animals with bizarre features to represent national and political groups.

This study explains their role as women in the Book of Ruth and the Book of Esther, from the Hebrew bible. Ruth and Esther are stories of heroines; the contrast in the purposes of Ruth and Esther sharply distinguishes the books. The Book of Ruth basic plot is as follows:

- The prologue tells us how Naomi, her husband and two sons went to Moab, where her sons married. Eventually, Naomi's husband and sons died, and she decided to return to Bethlehem in Judea (Ruth 1:1-7). In the first act, Naomi tells her Moabite daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, to stay in Moab. Orpah eventually agreed, but Ruth refused to leave Naomi and accompanied her to Bethlehem (Ruth 1:8-22).
- The next act sees Ruth gathering barley in the fields of Naomi's relative, Boaz, who showed special concern for Ruth (Ruth 2:1-23).

- The third act takes place at the threshing floor where, at Naomi's instigation, Ruth hides until Boaz falls asleep and then quietly lies down by his feet. When Boaz awakes, Ruth expresses her desire to marry him according to the custom of the kinsman-redeemer. Boaz tells her that another man has a prior claim (Ruth 3:1-18).
- Finally, at the city gate, the other relative renounces his claim, and Boaz marries Ruth (Ruth 4:1-12).

The Book of Ruth concludes with a genealogy that may be read either as integral to this study or as an external addition. The genealogy makes Ruth an ancestress of David and, therefore, of a Davidic messiah (Ruth 4:13-18).

Ruth was willing to forgo her future in Moab, her people, her gods and even her ancestral burial plot to stay with Naomi. The theme of Ruth is the Lord's provident protection of the faithful (Ruth 2:12). Because of the faithfulness of a destitute young widow, the Lord brought Ruth and Naomi out of deep tragedy and sorrow to joy, prosperity, and honor. This singular act had her in the Old Testament as one of the prophetess.

Prophetess Esther

Ahasuerus, the King of Persia, is married to Queen Vashti (Esther 1:3-8). He holds an opulent banquet for seven days to display his wealth, while Queen Vashti hosts a similar feast for the noble women (Esther 1:9). At the climax of the feasting the King commands the Queen to appear at the main banquet "wearing her royal diadem, in order to show off her beauty." (Esther 10:11)." The Queen refuses, the King is angry, and he banishes her. The King then publicly declares a search for a replacement.

Hadassah (Esther) is selected to be the King Ahasuerus new wife. She does not reveal her background as a Jew. Her cousin, Mordecai overhears a plot against the king. Mordecai reports to Esther, who tells Ahasuerus, and gives Mordecai credit.

The King's prime minister Haman convinces King Ahasuerus to authorize him to deal with the Jews as he pleases. Using the king's own signet ring, Haman issues an edict ordering the Jews, including women and children, to be killed and their properties plundered.

Mordecai informs Esther of Haman's role in the plot, Esther agrees to help at the risk of her own life. Esther's scheme, in which she will save her people, but expose the evil Haman at the same time, is hosting a banquet and telling the King during the feast. (Esther Chapters 5-8).

King Ahasuerus has Haman hung on the high gallows that Haman had had built for Mordecai, and Mordecai becomes prime minister in Haman's place. King Ahasuerus authorizes Esther to write a new decree regarding the Jews, which he will authorize. The edict entitles the Jews to take up arms and fight to kill their enemies. The Jews institute a period of feasting and celebration. They then kill 500 of their enemies in Susa, hanging the ten sons of Haman. In the surrounding provinces another Jewish force killed another 75,000 of their enemies. The feast of Purim is a joyous celebration of their victory and their release from the edict of persecution. (Chapter 9-10)

Esther appears as a woman of deep piety, faith, courage, patriotism, and caution, combined with resolution; a dutiful daughter to her adopted father, docile and obedient to his counsels, and anxious to share the king's favors with him for the good of the Jewish people. In short, Esther was very different and this caused her to be elevated into the position of Queen.

The Book of Ruth and the Book of Esther elevates the picture of women in Scripture. There are few people in Scripture that are presented without their faults and failings.

Ruth is a pastoral idyll woven into the history of Israel. The treatment of land and of boundaries between lands does not entail conquest. Elsewhere in biblical narrative, land is associated with nation and empire; here it is associated with fertility and benevolence. Ostensibly taking place during the time of the Judges, the book of Ruth is an antidote to Judges stories of slaughter. Ruth is a story about the possibilities of peace.

Esther, is unusual in the canon in that God makes absolutely no appearance. God does not come along to save anyone - instead, the Jewish people are saved entirely by human actions. The primary attempts to explain the absence of God in the story have included the argument that God is there, but hidden. Thus, when God is there, then God is there. But, when there is no sign of God, then God is really there but only making it look like we are affecting our lives.

Women in ancient Israel had their position in society defined in the Hebrew Scriptures and in the interpretation of those scriptures. Their status and freedoms were severely limited in that:

- Women were restricted to roles of little or no authority.
- Women were confined to the homes of their fathers or husbands.
- Women were to be inferior to men, under the direct authority of men, their fathers before marriage, or their husband after.

The role of women is sometimes misrepresented and misunderstood. The Hebrew Bible tells stories about women as war leaders (Judith), lovers (Jezebel),

prophetesses (Deborah), and prostitutes (Gomer), as well as ordinary daughters. Two women, Ruth and Esther using their sexuality in varying degrees, managed to survive difficulties. The Book of Ruth presents an account, during a period of disunity and frequent foreign oppression, the remnant of true faith and piety in the period of the Judges. The Book of Esther, with no mention of God in her book, became queen of one of a powerful world empire amid the ongoing conflict and conspiracies. They made such an impression as to have books named after them in the Bible. Harris, Stephen L.(2007

The Book of Ruth is one prophecy that you may not have heard of. It is the prophecy in the Book of Ruth and it tells us what will lead to the return of Yeshua (Jesus) and the establishment of His Kingdom on earth. Because the Book of Ruth reveals God's Blueprint for Redemption from the beginning of Israel. You can see that it all has come to pass even though the Book of Ruth was written around 1,000 B.C.

The prophetic prophecy of the book of Ruth came to pass in the following:

- God sacrificing His one and only Son to redeem Israel and provide everlasting life and an everlasting inheritance for Jewish and Gentile followers of the Messiah.
- The Messiah would be the Son of God but also the Son of Man.
- God using Israel's disobedience to bring in the Gentile faithful.
- The Gentile faithful would help Israel return to God and their land.

What makes this prophecy important? If you are a Christian, you need to know that God has a special role for you in His plan and that when the worldwide Church, the international Body of Messiah begins to fulfill that role, the fullness of the Gentiles

will come in and Israel will seek redemption. The Messiah will return and establish His Kingdom on the earth.

Author and forensic scientist Matthew Wilson takes us on a journey of new explorations within an old story as he performs what is effectively a forensic analysis of the Book of Ruth, one of the most beloved dramas of the Bible.

Not only does the Book of Ruth contain a prophetic picture of God's ultimate sacrifice of the Messiah to redeem mankind, it also contains these amazing prophetic details:

- God's plan for the mutual dependence of Jewish and Gentile believers;
- The history of the Jewish people including the holocaust;
- The dual nature of Messiah as the Son of God and the Son of Man;
- The return of the Lord, the resurrection and what will trigger it;
- The literal fulfillment of the Genesis 12:3 blessing and curse;
- The complete picture of Romans Chapter 11;
- The Gospel of the sacrificed Messiah as seen in John 3:16

Most important for the Church today, the books of Ruth and Esther unveils God's ordained role for Christians in the redemption and restoration of Israel and the world. It is a plan that has been hidden in plain sight for three thousand years but is now unfolding across the globe.

3.3. EVALUATION OF WOMEN IN PROPHETIC MINISTRY

During the first century, many women were active in Christian ministry. Acts 21:9 mentions the four virgin daughters of Philip the evangelist as prophetesses who lived in his home at Caesarea, where Paul and his associates visited during his third missionary journey. Priscilla, or Prisca, and her husband Aquilla, were known as fellow-laborers in Christ with the apostle Paul. Their expertise as teachers enabled them to explain the way of God more accurately to Apollos of Alexandria, another important leader of the early church (Acts 18:25-26).

Another associate of Paul's, Lydia, a seller of purple dye, opened her home for ministry (Acts 16:40), as did many other Christian women in the Roman empire, including the "elect lady" to whom John addressed his second epistle. Close examination of II John would suggest that she was functioning in a pastoral capacity, as would also have been the case for Lydia (Acts 16:40), Nympha (Col. 4:15), and Chloe (I Cor. 1:11). Phoebe was a leader of the Church at Cenchrea. In Romans 16:1, 2, Paul commanded the members of the church at Rome to receive her as such, and to help her in whatever manner she requested. Paul also mentions that Andronicus and Junia were outstanding among the apostles (Romans 16:7), and there is little doubt that Junia was a feminine name. Both John Chrysostom and Jerome made reference to her as a woman apostle, and no commentator referred to her as a man until the late thirteenth century.

In the early fourth century, Catherine of Alexandria defended the faith at Alexandria before philosophers and courtiers, before she was tortured to death by Maxentius, the son of the Roman Emperor Maximian. At about the same time, Dorothy of Caesarea in Cappadocia was martyred (A.D. 313). As she was being led to her execution, Theophilus, a lawyer, taunted her, asking her for a basket of flowers and fruit. Soon afterward, a child came to her with a basket laden with roses and apples.

She sent this to Theophilus, who as a result of this incident became a Christian and later gave his own life as a Martyr.

Macrina the Younger (328-380) was founder of a religious community for women in the eastern church. With her brothers, Basil the Great and Gregory of Nyssa, she was a pioneer in the monastic life. She healed, prophesied, and actively spread the faith. John Chrysostom wrote of her that "she was a great organizer, and independent thinker, and as well-educated as Basil himself." After the death of her mother, she reared and educated her younger brother Peter, who became Bishop of Sebaste.

Marcella (325-410) was an important teacher in the early church who was highly esteemed by Jerome. She was in the front lines in interacting with heretics and bringing them to a better understanding of Christian truth. Her palace on the Aventine Hill became a center of Christian influence. At one point, when a dispute arose in Rome concerning the meaning of the Scriptures, Jerome asked Marcella to settle it. Her Church of the Household was not only a house of study and prayer, but a center for deeds of Christian charity and sacrifice. It was here that another woman, Fabiola, received inspiration to establish the first hospitals in Rome. Marcella later established on the outskirts of Rome the first religious retreat for women. It was also at Marcella's Church of the Household that Paula (347-404) and her daughter Eustochium first made their decision to assist Jerome in his Latin translation of the Bible. They went to Bethlehem in order to aid him in this work, revising and correcting his translations and making new Latin translations from the Hebrew and Greek texts. In turn, Jerome dedicated some of his books to them. Paula founded three convents and a monastery in Bethlehem, where Biblical manuscripts were copied. This became a model for what soon became the universal practice at monasteries for many centuries.

Genevieve (422-500) lived in Paris when Attila and his Huns invaded France in 451. She assured the inhabitants of Paris that God would protect them if they would pray. While the men prepared for battle, she persuaded the women to pray for hours in the church. Then, after Attila destroyed Orleans, he decided not to touch Paris. At a later time, she was said to have averted a famine in Paris and the surrounding cities by distributing miraculous gifts of bread.

Bridget, also known as Bride (455-523), inspired the convent system that made an indelible impact upon life in Ireland. After settling in Kildare, she built for herself and her female friends a house for refuge and devotion. As other houses were founded through her missionary efforts, she became known as the "mother abess" of all of Ireland.

Theodora I (500-548), wife of the emperor Justinian, was an important and influential Christian. A woman of outstanding intellect and learning, she was a moral reformer. Justinian, as Christian Emperor, was, for all practical purposes, head of the Church of his generation, and his wife, as Empress, shared his power to select church leaders. The inscription "Theodora Episcopa" or "Theodora, Bishop (fem.)" in a mosaic at the Basilica of Sts. Prudentia and Praexedis in Rome, may have been a reference to the Empress.

Hilda (614-680) was appointed by Aidan as abess of the convent at Hartlepool in County Durham in 649. Ten years later, she founded a double monastery for men and women at Whitby in Yorkshire, which became world famous as a school of theology and literature. Five of her disciples became bishops and a sixth, Caedmon, became the earliest known English poet.

Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) was a German abbess, mystic, and writer known throughout all of Europe. Skilled in subjects as diverse as theology, medicine and politics, she did not hesitate to rebuke the sins of the greatest men of her time in both Church and state. She exerted a wide influence among many people, including the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa and various kings, prelates, and saints. Many miracles were attributed to her during her lifetime.

Clare (1193-1253) was co-founder, with Francis of Assisi, of the Poor Clares, a mendicant order which spread rapidly through Italy and into France, Germany, and Spain. In 1249, when she was lame, her convent was attacked by a group of Saracens. She told the sisters to carry her to the door of the monastery, then addressed the Saracens and prayed aloud that God would "deliver the defenseless children whom I have nourished with Thy love." She heard a voice answer "I will always have them in my keeping," and turning to the sisters, she said, "Fear not." At this moment the Saracens scrambled down the walls of the cloister, recoiling from her valiant words. Clare's care for the poor was a tremendous inspiration to Elizabeth of Hungary (1207-1231), a princess who, in the last years of her short life, led a life of rigorous self-sacrifice and service to the poor and sick.

Some other significant women of the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries included Hechthild of Magdeburg, Gertrude the Great, Angela of Foligno, Bridget of Sweden, Catherine of Sienna, Catherine of Sweden, Margery Kempe, Julian of Norwich, Joan of Arc, Catherine of Genoa, Isabella of Castile, and Maragaret Beaufort.

During the Reformation, a member of the Bavarian nobility, Argula von Grumbach (1492-1563), challenged the Rector and all of the faculty of the University of Ingolstadt to a debate in which she would defend the principles of the Protestant Reformation. She offered to base this debate upon a translation of the Bible

published prior to the outbreak of the Reformation. She was permitted to present her position in 1523 in Nuremberg before the diet of the Empire. Martin Luther wrote of her, "that most noble woman, Argula von Stauffer, is there making a valiant fight with Great Spirit, boldness of speech and knowledge of Christ." Her extensive education and fine critical abilities enabled her to become a force to be reckoned with. She conducted church meetings in her home and officiated at funerals.

Two other important leaders of the Protestant Reformation were Margaret of Navarre (1492-1549) and her daughter, Jeanne d'Albret (1528-1572), the grandmother and mother of King Henry IV of France, who issued the Edict of Nantes, granting religious toleration to the French Protestants for almost a century. Jeanne d'Albret held services of the new Reformed faith in her palace apartment. A friend of John Calvin, she also used her palace as an institute for Reformation study.

During the Puritan era, Anne Hutchinson (1591-1643), became influential in that as many as eighty overflowed to the doorsteps of her house, at a time when Boston had a population of roughly 1,000 people. These meetings grew rapidly, and soon men, also, began to attend. Among her loyal followers was Henry Vane, who served for a short time as governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Within two years of her arrival from England, she had the strongest consistency of any leader in the entire colony. Her large following, coupled with her strong exegetical and homiletically skills, deep Christian commitment and insightful understanding of spiritual truths, may have incurred the jealousy of several New England ministers, who became uncomfortable enough with her successes that she was accused of heresy and banished from the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1638.

Margaret Fell (1614-1702), the mother of Quakerism, was an English peeress and wife of Judge Thomas Fell, member of the Long Parliament and Vice-Chancellor of

Lancaster. Her home became a place of refuge and renewal for the persecuted Quakers for almost fifty years. She was arrested for holding Quaker meetings in her home, Swarthmore Hall, and imprisoned for four years. After her release from prison, she visited Quakers in jails and travelled on horseback with her daughters and servants to remote farms and villages as an itinerant preacher. Many people sought wisdom and advice from her, including Thomas Salthouse, and, of course, George Fox, who married her a number of years after the death of her husband. Because she had his blessing in her preaching ministry, she wrote many tracts and letters on the subject of women in ministry.

Madame Guyon (1648-1717) was a French mystic who was imprisoned on several occasions for long periods of time because of her beliefs, but she was never known to complain about this. An author of forty books, including a twenty-volume commentary of the Bible, she had a wide following, particularly in France and Switzerland. Among those profoundly influenced by her ministry was Archbishop Francois Fenelon.

The founder of the first Methodist congregation in America was Barbara Heck (1734-1804). In England, Lady Selina Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon (1707-1791), founder of the Calvinistic Methodist denomination during the Evangelical Awakening, functioned as a bishop by virtue of her right as a peeress to appoint Anglican clergymen as household chaplains and assign their duties, and to purchase presentation rights to chapels, enabling her to decide who would conduct services and preach. Among the many chaplains whom she appointed and continued to finance for many decades was George Whitefield. In 1779, after sixty chapels were already functioning under her auspices, this practice was disallowed by a consistory court of London. Therefore, in order to continue to function, she was able, under the Toleration Act, to register her chapels as dissenting places of worship, known as

"The Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion." Lady Selina frequently invited members of the aristocracy to her home to hear the preaching of the Wesleys, Whitefield, Isaac Watts, Philip Doddridge, Benjamin Ingham, John Fletcher, John Berridge, William Romaine, Henry Venn, and others. She founded Trevecca House on property adjoining the home of Howel Harris. A seminary for the training of ministers for all denominations, its first president was John Fletcher. Joseph Benson eventually became headmaster on John Wesley's recommendation. George Whitefield preached the inaugural sermon when it opened in 1768.

In America, two important preachers during the first years of the Second Awakening (1800-1808) were Deborah Peirce of Paris, N.Y. and Martha Howell of Utica. Phoebe Palmer (1807-1874), "The Mother of the Holiness Movement" began her ministry in 1835 with her Tuesday Meetings for the Promotion of Holiness, which continued for 39 years in New York City, where she lived with her husband, who was a physician. Hundreds of Methodist preachers, including at least five bishops, were profoundly affected by her ministry. The success of Phoebe Palmer's informal meetings encouraged other women to conduct the same type of ministry, and dozens of them sprang up throughout North America. These meetings brought together Christians of many denominations under the leadership of women, particularly among Methodists, Congregationalists, Episcopalians, Baptists, and Quakers.

In 1858, Walter Palmer, Phoebe's husband, purchased the periodical *GUIDE TO HOLINESS*, which under her able editorship, grew in circulation from 13,000 to 30,000 subscribers. She travelled widely with her husband, conducting evangelistic meetings during the summer months. In the fall of 1857, she and her husband travelled to Hamilton, Ontario, where they attracted crowds of several thousand people when an afternoon prayer meeting became a ten-day revival meeting during which four hundred people were converted to Christ. They experienced similar

successes in New York City and in England, where they preached for four years to packed houses at Leeds, Sheffield, Manchester, Birmingham, and dozens of other places. It is estimated that within her lifetime, Phoebe Palmer brought over 25,000 people to faith in Christ.

Catherine Booth (1829-1890), with her husband, William Booth, founded the Christian Revival Association in 1865 and the Salvation Army in 1878. The Booths regarded the active participation of women to be vital to Christianity. Before 1865, when they were still Methodists, Catherine began preaching. Soon after her pulpit debut, her husband became ill, and his slow recovery paved the way for her own preaching ministry. For a time, he was so ill that she had to take over his entire preaching circuit. She eventually became one of the most famous female preachers of England, and her last sermon was delivered to an audience of 50,000 people.

Hannah Whitall Smith (1875), author of *The Christian's Secret of A Happy Life* catalyzed the development of the Holiness movement in Britain and throughout Europe. Her activities in England led to the Keswick Convention in 1874.

Carrie Judd Montgomery was a healing evangelist of considerable prominence beginning in 1879, and became a founding member, along with A. B. Simpson, of the Christian and Missionary Alliance in 1887. She later became a part of the Pentecostal revival and was ordained a minister by the Assemblies of God in 1917, continuing in ministry until 1946.

Maria B. Woodworth-Etter was also involved in the Holiness movement before she rose to prominence as an early Pentecostal leader. In 1884, she was licensed to preach by the Churches of God general conference, founded by John Winebrenner in 1825. Within a few months of this time her meetings were already beginning to

receive national press coverage, and in the late 1880s she started twelve churches, added 1,000 members, erected six church buildings, and started several Sunday Schools. Her work at this time resulted in the licensing of twelve preachers. The revivals that she held at this time were accompanied with unusual manifestations of God's power, many healings, and mass conversions. During the early Pentecostal movement, Woodworth- Etter was in continual demand, becoming a featured speaker at the Worldwide Pentecostal Camp Meeting at Arroyo Seco, California, in April 1913. She founded the Woodworth-Etter Tabernacle in western Indianapolis in 1918, which she pastored until her death in 1924.

Beginning in 1906 and 1907, Florence L. Crawford, Mabel Smith, Ivey Campbell, and Rachel A. Sizelove were some of the first women to spread the blessings of the early Pentecostal revival through their separate itinerant ministries. Florence Crawford planted and pastored several churches in the Pacific Northwest, founding and becoming general overseer of the Apostolic Faith Church based in Portland, Oregon, which later became part of the Open Bible Standard Denomination.

Other pioneers of the Pentecostal movement in the U.S. included Mrs. Scott Ladd, who opened a Pentecostal mission in Des Moines in 1907, the Duncan sisters, who had opened the Rochester Bible Training School at Elim Faith Home, "Mother" Barnes of St. Louis, Missouri, who, with her son-in-law, B. F. Lawrence, held tent meetings in southern Illinois in the spring of 1908, and Marie Burgess, who preached in Chicago, Toledo, Detroit, and New York City, where she founded Glad Tidings Hall, which soon became an important center for the spread of the Pentecostal revival. Another early Pentecostal pioneer in New York was Miss Maud Williams (Haycroft).

In Canada, some early pioneers of the Pentecostal movement included Ellen Hebden in Toronto, Ella M. Goff in Winnipeg, Alice B. Garrigus in Newfoundland, the Davis sisters in the Maritime provinces, Mrs. C. E. Baker in Montreal, and Zelma Argue throughout all of the Canadian provinces. Aimee Semple McPherson of Ingersoll, Ontario, began a preaching ministry in 1915 which began in Toronto and took her along the U.S. Eastern Seaboard, and across the United States in 1918. She eventually founded Angelus Temple in 1923, where she continued as senior pastor until her death in 1944.

Kathryn Kuhlman's ministry began in the summer of 1923. After her ordination by the Evangelical Church Alliance in Joliet, Illinois, she established the Denver Revival Tabernacle in 1935, which she pastored for three years. In the mid-1940s, she went to Franklin, Pennsylvania, where she began to thrive as a preacher and radio evangelist. Many people were healed at her meetings beginning in 1947, and she gained a reputation as one of the world's outstanding healing evangelists, carrying on as a leading figure during the charismatic movement until her death in 1976.

A few of the women working as Pentecostal pastors during the charismatic movement of the 1960s and 1970s included Charlotte Baker, Myrtle D. Beall, Helen Beard, Aimee Cortese, Sue Curran, B. Maureen Gaglardi, Anne Giminez, Ione Glaeser, Hattie Hammond, Alpha A. Henson, Marilyn Hickey, Violet Kitely, Janet Kreis, Freda Lindsay, Fuchsia T. Pickett, Iverna Tompkins, and Rachel Titus. A sampling of a few of the other women who were vital during the time of the charismatic movement as speakers, authors, or evangelists, would include Eleanor and Roberta Armstrong, Rita Bennett, Edith Blumhofer, Hazel Bonawitz, Roxanne Brant, Mary Ann Brown, Shirley Carpenter, Jean Darnall, Josephine Massynberde Ford, Katie Fortune, Shirlee Green, Nina Harris, Sue Malachuk, Daisy Osborn,

Dorothy Ranaghan, Agnes Sanford, Gwen Shaw, Bernice Smith, Ruth Carter Stapleton, Jean Stone, Joni Eareckson Tada, and Corrie Ten Boom.

3.4. NEW TESTAMENT PROPHETIC ORDER

New Testament prophetesses include Anna (Luke 2:36-38), the first to proclaim Jesus as the Redeemer publicly; Elizabeth (Luke 2:41-45), who recognized Christ while still in His mother's womb; Mary (Luke 2:46-55), who through faith conceived God in the flesh by the power of the Holy Spirit; and a false prophetess called Jezebel, whom God called to repent from immorality.

The Book of Acts tells us that the evangelist Philip had four virgin daughters who were prophetesses. The early fourth-century historian Eusebius writes that the family moved to Asia. In the epistle of Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus, to Victor, bishop of Rome, we learn that "in Asia, also, mighty luminaries have fallen asleep. Philip, one of the twelve apostles who slept in Hierapolis, with his two aged virgin daughters. Another of his daughters, who lived in the Holy Spirit, rests at Ephesus." (*Eusebius, Book II, ch XXXI*) Eusebius goes on to say, "But we must now show how Papias, coming to them (at Hierapolis), received a wonderful account from the daughters of Philip. For he writes that in his time there was one raised from the dead." (*Ibid, ch. XXXIX*)

Eusebius mentions this as part of Papias' credentials, who "professes to have received the declarations of the apostles from those that were in company with them. . ." Thus, the accounts Papias received from the daughters of Philip, along with other trustworthy Christians who were likewise acquainted with the apostles, were accepted as authoritative.

This account is significant because Papias was a second-generation believer very highly regarded by the early church. A disciple of John at Ephesus and link to the bishop and martyr Polycarp, Papias is our earliest source for much post-apostolic tradition. Eusebius was the foremost church historian of his age who documented both the New Testament and sub-apostolic periods. The fact that Eusebius cites Papias' contact with the daughters of Philip as proof in part of Papias' own credentials as a reliable authority for early Christians shows the very high regard in which these prophetesses were held.

That these women prophets were highly regarded by the early church is evident from the writing of Apolinaris of Hierapolis, who in refuting the claims of the ecstatic prophets Montanus and Maximilla, wrote, "But the false prophet is carried away by a vehement ecstasy, accompanied by want of all shame and fear. Beginning, indeed, with a designed ignorance and terminating in involuntary madness. They will never be able to show that any of the Old or any of the New Testament were thus violently agitated and carried away in spirit. Neither will they be able to boast that Agabus or Judas or Silas or the daughters of Philip or Ammias in Philadelphia or Quadratus or others that do not belong to them ever acted in this way." (*Eusebius Book V ch. XVII*) Here, Aplinaris points to the daughters of Philip as examples of true, Godly prophets.

Concerning the ministry of prophecy during the Church Age, Acts 2:17-18 states, "And it shall come to pass, in the last days, says God, I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy." Here, Peter quotes Joel 2:28 to explain the phenomena of Pentecost. He goes on to show that in the Messianic "last days" that Jesus has inaugurated, the prophecy of Joel is fulfilled. Without respect of persons, God will pour out His Spirit upon all people, and they will speak Divine revelations. The Gospel is offered to all, and the sign of the Holy Spirit, as evidenced in speaking in tongues and prophecy, is offered freely to all who believe.

On the day of Pentecost, one hundred and twenty followers of Christ were filled with the Holy Ghost and spoke in languages they had never learned, publicly proclaiming "the wonderful works of God." According to Acts 1:14, these one hundred and twenty Holy Spirit-inspired preachers included both men and women. Their speech was not just ecstatic praise, although that would be wonderful enough, but inspired preaching which listeners understood in their own languages. Its purpose and effect was the conversion to Christ of hearers from many lands and languages and their becoming unified as members of His Body, the church, the community of believers in Jesus.

Prophecy and Evangelism

New Testament tongues and prophecy, given both to men and women, thus have an evangelistic purpose. They are signs and wonders demonstrating the marvel of God's mercy and abundant grace offered to all and poured out for all through Jesus Christ. This is why it is so important that the freedom to prophesy and preach not

be restricted. We can only demonstrate the Gospel by allowing God to be God and letting all those He fills with His Spirit and so directly testify of His wonderful works! The medium IS the message. A church that allows only a few professionals to preach the Gospel conveys a false message that free participation in the Gospel is only for the elite. But when all believers are free to exercise the gifts God gives them, the Gospel is seen for what it truly is--good news for all people..

Prophetic Gifts without Respect of Persons

Acts goes on to quote Joel that "even upon my menservants and maidservants I will pour out of My Spirit, and they shall prophesy." Note that God calls those He sovereignly fills with His Spirit His servants and says that "all flesh" shall prophesy. New Testament prophecy is not reserved for the spiritually mature, but a gift God offers freely to all believers. Thus, the prayer of Moses is fulfilled, "would God that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them." (Num. 11:29) Through the free exercise of inspired preaching in the church, God demonstrates His extravagant grace!

The gift of the Holy Spirit, as evidenced by speaking in unknown languages and declaring the praises of God, was also poured out upon new Gentile converts to Christ at the household of Cornelius in Capernaum. Here, the grace of God was extended cross-culturally. How difficult it must have been for Peter and his Jewish-Christian friends to accept the fact that God had given His Holy Spirit to Gentiles, who were despised as unclean by religious Jews! God had to prepare Peter by giving him a vision three times. When the leaders of the church at Jerusalem questioned what Peter had done in baptizing these Gentiles, he said, "Since God gave them the

same gift as to us, who believed in the Lord Jesus, who was I to oppose God?" (Acts 11:17) This is an attitude all Christians would do well to emulate.

Rejection of Charismata and The Rise Of Montanism

Quite early in the church's history, Christians who continued to exercise charismatic gifts including prophecy after the apostolic age were considered to be heretics. With increasing persecutions against the church, emphasis shifted from evangelism with signs following to courage and witness under the tortures of martyrdom. Reverence for the apostles and prophets who founded the church produced an attitude of humility which deterred people from seeking to emulate their ministry themselves. The healing ministry continued through the intercession of martyrs more than through living believers; and with the formalization of the New Testament canon, the ministry of prophets was seen as no longer needed. A growing church hierarchy had a dampening effect on lay ministry. As the practice of charismatic gifts died out in most churches, ecstatic prophets were viewed as too similar to pagan prophets, with whom they were categorized.

During the latter part of the second century, a Christian sect developed in Phrygia, led by one Montanus and two prophetesses, Priscilla and Maximilla. Church historian Philip Schaff writes, "During the bloody persecutions under the Antonines, which raged in Asia Minor and caused the death of Polycarp AD155, all three went forth as prophets and reformers of the Christian life, and proclaimed the near approach of the age of the Holy Spirit and of the millennial reign in Pepuza, a small village of Phrygia, upon which the new Jerusalem was to come down. Scenes took

place similar to those under the preaching of the first Quakers, and the glossolalia and prophesying in the Irvingite congregations." (Philip Schaff, *History of The Christian Church*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1882-1910, vol 2, p. 414.)

The Montanists adhered to Catholic church doctrine but called believers to a higher standard of holiness and to the practice of prophetic gifts. They believed in preparing for the coming Judgment, return of Christ and the millennial age by fasting and other ascetic practices, terming themselves "spiritual" as opposed to "carnal" Christians. Montanist prophets sometimes fell into trances and prophesied in the first person. These practices, along with the fact that their leadership did not arise from the Catholic clergy but from lay men and even women, brought criticism.

Philip Schaff wrote, "This brings us to another feature of the Montanistic movement, the assertion of the universal priesthood of Christians, even of females, against the special priesthood in the Catholic church. Under this view, (Montanism) may be called a democratic reaction against the clerical aristocracy, which from the time of Ignatius had more and more monopolized all ministerial privileges and functions. The Montanists found the true qualification and appointment for the office of teacher in direct endowment by the Spirit of God, in distinction from outward ordination and episcopal succession. They everywhere proposed the supernatural element and the free motion of the Spirit against the mechanism of a fixed ecclesiastical order." (*Schaff*, op. cit, p. 418). Catholic clerics denounced the Montanists as presumptuous and assumed that their supernatural manifestations were demonic, not divine. Most of them were excommunicated.

The theologian Tertullian, who became a Montanist at the turn of the third century, wrote, ". . . we have among us now a sister who has been granted gifts of revelations, which she experiences in church during the Sunday services through ecstatic vision

in the Spirit. . . And after the people have been dismissed at the end of the service it is her custom to relate to us what she has seen. . ." (*Tertullian, De Anima, ix c.210*)

The Montanist movement attracted a wide following in Rome, Asia, Constantinople and North Africa and continued in the church to the sixth century, when its rigors caused it to die out. Schaff writes, "But the religious earnestness which animated it, its prophecies and visions, its millenarianism, and the fanatical extremes into which it ran, have since reappeared, under various names and forms, and in new combinations, in Novatianism, Donatism, the spiritualism of the Franciscans, Anabaptism, the Camisard enthusiasm, Puritanism, Quakerism, Quietism, Pietism, Second Adventism, Irvingism, and so on, by way of protest and wholesome reaction against various evils in the church." (*Schaff, op. cit, p. 427*) Many would include the twentieth- century Pentecostal movement and its child, the charismatic movement, with their emphasis on freedom in the Holy Spirit under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, in this

3.5. THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN PROHPETIC MINISTRY.

For one to enter into the prophetic ministry, there are basic guidelines to adhere to:

- the call of God,
- anointing from the Holy Spirit, and a
- desire to study about prophetic gifts,
- Ministry of the prophet,
- prophetic intercession, and;
- what every prophet needs to know.

Entering prophetic ministry is simple when you know how. What you need is someone to help you discover what already belongs to you.

Jonas Clark, founder of Spirit of Life Ministries, has been involved in prophetic ministry for over 25 years. He has witnessed the good, the bad, and the ugly. As a seasoned Spirit-filled leader in the Body of Christ he can show you how to get started, enter prophetic ministry with proven steps and scriptural guidelines and hear the voice of the Holy Spirit, and He will enable you to make right decisions even during difficult situations. Scripture declares, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:14).

Jesus wants Christians to know and recognised the voice of the Holy Spirit when He communicates. _You don't have to struggle any more hearing from God. While studying the word of God and other godly spiritual literatures, you will learn more about prophets, prophetic ministry, and directive prophecy. This prophetic material will help you overcome fear and get started.

Prophetic ministry exposes prophets to the following benefits:

- As a prophet, you learn how prophets deal in measures, boundaries, gaps, and hedges.
- Discover prophetic communications.
- Learn how prophets announce, confirm, and activate.
- Learn the protocols of seasoned prophetic believers.
- Understand why devils fear prophetic ministry.
- Learn about prophetic intercession. Probably including one you never heard of before.

- Learn about high level spiritual warfare.
- The differences between prophetic blessing, curses, and judgments.
- You will be able to identify false prophet.
- You come to full understanding why God uses women in prophetic ministry.
- You will become a hallmarks of an advanced prophetic believer.

3.6. IMPACT OF PROPHETESS IN CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

In several passages in Acts, the phenomenon of prophecy is described to Christian disciples generally. Thus, the Pentecostal experience of tongues, which is identified as prophecy, is manifested by the whole Christian community. Likewise, the Ephesian disciples “began to speak with tongues and prophesy” (Acts 19:6) upon their reception of the Holy Spirit.

Ananias, who received a prophetic revelation concerning Paul, also is designated simply as “a certain disciple” (Acts 9:10). Alongside these texts is the equally significant fact that Luke restricts the term or title prophet, as it is used of his contemporaries, to a select number of “leading men” (cf. Acts 15:22) who exercise considerable influence in the Christian community. Among them are a group from the Jerusalem church visiting Antioch, including Agabus (Acts 11:27 f.; cf. 21:10); a group resident in Antioch, including Barnabas and Paul (Acts 13:1);³ and the two prophets who accompanied the Jerusalem Decree to Antioch, Judas Barsabbas and Silas (Acts 15:22, 32). Peter also, who is not called prophet, nevertheless has the marks of a prophet, for example, in the knowledge of men’s hearts (Acts 5:3; 8:21 ff.; cf. Luke 7:39) and in the experience and proclamation of revelations in visions and dreams.

Among such leaders perhaps should be included the four daughters of Philip “who prophesied”.

In summary, Christian prophecy in Acts is represented as an eschatological power of the Holy Spirit from God (Acts 2:17) or from the risen Jesus (Acts 1:8; 2:17, 33; cf. Psa. 68:19 (18); Eph. 4:8). Although prophecy is a possibility for any Christian, it is primarily identified with certain leaders who exercise it as a ministry (see below). The specific “prophetic” functions of these persons is more difficult to establish. That is, which of their activities are specifically a manifestation of their role as prophet? What is the relationship of prophecy to other ministries in Acts? To identify the role of the Christian prophet it is necessary to discover Luke’s understanding of what constitutes and what distinguishes prophecy.

Certain functions of the Christian prophets are clearly reminiscent of the role of the prophet in the Old Testament. In addition to the marks of the prophet mentioned above, these include the prediction of future events (Acts 11:28; 20:23, 25; 27:22), the declaration of divine judgments (Acts 13:11; 28:25-28), and the employment of symbolic actions (Acts 21:11).

The prophets in Acts also expound the Scriptures and “exhort” and “strengthen” the disciples. Whether these activities also represent for Luke a distinctly prophetic function requires a closer look. Luke’s use of *propheteuo* with reference to Christian prophets is relatively frequent. The verb is used to describe the proclamation of the Baptist⁶ as well as the ministry of those in Acts who are designated prophets.⁷ As a description of Peter’s preaching, it may be one of the

prophetic traits that characterize Luke’s presentation of the apostle’s ministry. In Acts 15:32 the phrase *parakalō kai tēnuchō* (“exhort and strengthen”) is specifically connected to the fact that Judas and Silas are prophets.⁹ It is found elsewhere in the New Testament only in Acts 14:22, used of the prophets Paul and Barnabas, and (with the cognate) in the Thessalonian letters.

The noun *paraklēsia*, which occurs in the New Testament only in Luke—Acts, Paul and Hebrews, is associated by Luke with the activity of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, the written *paraklēsia* of the Jerusalem Decree is set in parallel with the verbal “exhortation” of the prophets Judas and Silas, and the term “son of *paraklēsia*”, applied to Barnabas in Acts 4:36, possibly represents “son of prophecy”.¹² The understanding of *paraklēsia* as the specific ministry of a prophet is supported in the Pauline literature by (1 Corinthians 14:2). There the prophets’ ministry of “edification” is accomplished by means of *paraklēsia* and *paramutēsis*¹³ which are, in the words of G. Stählin, “a part of the work of prophesying”. A similar impression is given in Romans 15:4 f., where the Scripture or God gives *paraklēsia* and in 2 Corinthians 5:20 where God “exhorts” through Paul and Timothy.¹⁵ It is true that in Paul *paraklēsia* is not always explicitly identified as a Spirit-mediated, eschatological reality and, even as a charism, it can be listed alongside of and distinct from *paraklēsia* (Rom. 12:8). Nevertheless, it probably has a special connexion with Christian prophecy, even when that connexion is not explicitly expressed.

To return to Acts 15:32, in the light of the above considerations it is very likely that the fact that Judas and Silas are prophets is the basis of their ministry of *paraklēsia*.¹⁶ The clause should then be translated, “since they themselves also were prophets”. It compares their *verbal* exhortation with the written, and also prophetic, *paraklēsia* of the Jerusalem Decree.

In Luke's thought *paraklēsij* is one way in which the Christian prophets exercise their ministry and, in this context, is a form of prophecy. The interpretation of Scripture, usually in the synagogues, is a key feature of the missions of the prophets Paul and Barnabas, Paul and Silas, as well as of Peter and other Christian leaders. This manner of teaching is elaborated in Acts 13:16-41 in the form of a synagogue homily. It may or may not be significant that the "prophets" in question also are "teachers".

(The exposition of Scripture is ascribed to Barnabas [Acts 13:5; 14:1] but not to Silas.) Also this activity in Acts is not described as "prophecy" nor limited to "prophets". In what degree then can it be regarded as "prophetic" activity? The interpretation of Scripture as an activity of a prophet was not unknown in the first century since it was explicitly ascribed to Daniel (9:2, 24). It may be inferred also from other Old Testament texts in which the prophet uses and reapplies older biblical phraseology and ideas.¹⁹ These phenomena support the views of S. Krauss and others who connect the prophets with the origins of the synagogue and regard them as the first to dispense religious teachings in such assemblies.²⁰ The rabbinic tradition, reflects a similar picture. According to the Targum to (judges 5:9), Deborah, under prophetic inspiration, "did not cease to give exposition of the Torah."²¹ The rabbis, moreover, regarded themselves, as the teachers of Israel, to be the successors of the prophets: they sat "in Moses' seat".

With respect to the interpretation of Scripture, then, there was not a sharp division between the prophet and the teacher. This is perhaps to be most clearly observed in the Qumran community's "teacher" (*moreh*) and the wider number functioning as

“instructors” (*maskilim*). In a perceptive essay Professor Bruce has compared the wisdom possessed by “Daniel the prophet”²³ and by the “wise” (*maskilim*) in Daniel 11, 12 with that of the “wise” at Qumran. “The *maskil* here, as in Daniel, is one who, having received from God understanding in his hidden purpose, is thus in a position to impart that understanding to others”. Without identifying themselves as prophets, the teachers at Qumran engage in an interpretation of Scripture that has as its model the activity of Daniel the prophet. This becomes more significant for the present essay when one observes the similarities between the method of biblical interpretation at Qumran and that in (Acts 13:16-41.25). In Acts, however, the interpreter is given the title “prophet” as well as “teacher”. Both terms also are applied to Jesus. It is clear from (Luke 7:39). that they are not mutually exclusive: the one who is addressed as teacher may also be (the eschatological) prophet.

Also, Jesus’ teaching “in their synagogues”²⁶ often must have included *ipso facto* a midrash or exposition of Scripture.²⁷ It is less clear, however, to what degree such teaching is the cause of, or attached to, the conviction that Jesus is a prophet.

Two passages that bear upon this question are Mark 1:21 (cf. Lk 4:31) and Mark 6:2 (cf. Lk. 4:16; Malt 13:54). In the former text Jesus’ exposition, in contrast to that of the Jewish theologians, is characterized by TMxous...a Although some commentators interpret as pointing to the prophetic character of Jesus’ teaching, this is not as clear as one might wish. For the word is seldom if ever used elsewhere to describe a prophet’s teaching²⁹ although it may, in the New Testament, represent his personal rights in the congregation or his miraculous powers.³⁰ The prophetic character of Jesus’ exposition may perhaps be inferred, however, from its connexion with his miraculous powers, which also are described as a “teaching” (Mark I :27).

In Mark 6:1-6 also both Jesus' synagogue teaching and his miraculous powers are the cause of the people's astonishment. Nevertheless, there are two significant differences: his teaching is here described as *sof...a*, and Jesus compares or identifies his role with that of a prophet. The "wisdom" (*sof...a*) that is "given" to Jesus is recognized by his audience to be an extraordinary pneumatic power; the question is whether it has a divine or demonic origin. In an instructive essay on the concept of *sof...a* U. Wilckens writes that Mark uses his received picture of Jesus as a Scripture teacher to present him as the archetype of Christian charismatics.

Whether such a broad inference may be drawn from this text or not, it is true in any case that Jesus is so regarded in the primitive church.³⁴ Furthermore, probably no strong dichotomy should be made between the rabbinic "wisdom" of being learned in the Scriptures — the ordained rabbi³⁵ — and the "wisdom" of the knowledge of God's mysteries that is present in the prophets and teachers of Jewish apocalyptic, especially in Daniel and Qumran. The context of the wisdom, that is, the biblical revelation, is the same. The difference in the case of Jesus, however, is not just that he, an unordained person, manifests the bearing and biblical knowledge of an ordained rabbi (so Daube). There is also a qualitative distinction. Like the synagogue teaching of his later follower Stephen, no one "could withstand the wisdom and the spirit" with which Jesus expounded the Scriptures.

While the limited amount of evidence does not allow certainty in the matter, it is probable that not only the miracle-working context but also the manner of Jesus' exposition of Scripture in the synagogue contributed to the conviction that he was a prophet. And it could do so because such exposition was regarded as the proper activity of a prophet. Very likely Luke, at least, views the same kind of exposition of "prophets and teachers", e.g., in Acts 13 also to be an exercise of a prophetic

gift.³⁸ It is true that this conclusion depends in some measure on Luke's understanding of the relationship of "teacher" and "prophet" (see below).

But it is supported as well by the mention given to Judas and Silas in connexion with the Jerusalem Decree. E. Käsemann has noted the similarity of the words in the Decree, "it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us" (Acts 15:28), to the promulgation of eschatological law elsewhere in the New Testament. He thinks that the latter is the work of Christian prophets, and that often "holy Scripture provided the primitive Christian prophets with the stylistic form in which to clothe their sentences of holy law".³⁹ Indeed, the formula *lšgei kÚrioj* in Acts 1:16-18 reflects something more: the *exposition* of Christian prophets.⁴⁰ In addition, the theme of the citation, the inclusion of the Gentiles, is specifically the "mystery" that according to Paul "has now been revealed to (Christ's) holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit".

This theme is, in turn, directly related to the "new temple", a major motif in the *lšgei kÚrioj* quotations.⁴² Taken together, these facts strongly suggest that the prophets Judas and Silas were not chosen incidentally to accompany the Decree. Probably they were chosen because they had already exercised an influential role in establishing (or proclaiming) the biblical rationale upon which the provisions of the Decree were justified.

The foregoing discussion enables us to return to the question raised earlier and to answer it with some measure of confidence. The interpretation of Scripture was indeed regarded, under certain conditions, as prophetic activity.⁴⁴ And it is likely that Luke does so regard it, even in such persons as Peter and Stephen who are not given the explicit appellation *a prof»thj*.

The persons in Acts named *profétai* exercise a rather widespread ministry and they do so in a varied fashion — singly or in groups, traveling or in settled congregations. The content of their activity also is varied — prediction (Acts 11:28; 20:23, 25, 29 f.; 21:11), specific direction of the community in its decisions (Acts 13:1 f.; 15:27) and teaching by exhortation and biblical exposition.⁴⁵ Yet, as was noted at the outset, persons who are not termed “prophets” exercise some of the same functions. This fact raises two questions that must be answered if the role of the prophet in Acts is to be placed in clearer perspective.

First, in view of the breadth of the prophetic function, why is the term relatively so restricted? Furthermore, what is the relationship of the prophet to other designated ministries in Acts, specifically the apostle, the teacher, and the elder?

Long ago H. B. Swete distinguished between those in the primitive Church who on occasion prophesied and a relatively small number who were known as *of profétai*, “forming a charismatic order to which a recognized position was given in the Church”.⁴⁶ In a recent study J. Lindblom reaches a similar conclusion, apparently independently, and enumerates as such “berufsmässige Propheten” Agabus and his companions (Acts 11:27), the Antioch circle (Acts 13:1 ff.), Judas and Silas (Acts 15:32), and the daughters of Philip (Acts 21:9). KJV.

This kind of distinction, which is supported by several texts in Paul and in Revelation, may be the best explanation of the matter.⁴⁸ E. Schweizer rightly cautions against making a sharp distinction in the earliest period between official or “ordained” and unordained ministries, and the *caveat* applies to Luke’s own time as

well.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, a special recognition and authoritative status appear to be conferred upon the *persons* of those who have manifested certain charisms in a prominent and/or continuing manner.

Except for the twelve apostles (Acts 1:22, 6:2-6) Luke shows little interest in defining the ministries that he names. Even in that case it is “the twelve” whose ministry is (partly) explained by apostleship, not apostleship by the twelve. This is clear from the fact that Luke can also call them “disciples” and name other persons apostles. The latter instance presents a further complexity in that “the apostles Barnabas and Paul” are previously named “prophets and teachers”. Thus, the triad of gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:28 are clustered around and apparently applied to the same persons in Acts.⁵² Also, in Acts 20:17, 28 the editorial “elders” is equivalent to the term “bishops” in the speech of Paul that follows (Phil. 1:1). In part the ambiguous nature of the specified ministries in Acts is traceable to the differing terminology in Luke’s sources, terminology that he is unconcerned to conform to a consistent pattern.

But the lack of concern itself suggests that for Luke no less than for his traditions there is a certain ambiguity and fluidity in the designation of ministries. On the one hand, the Spirit is itself the gift and to be “full of the Spirit” implies the empowerment to manifest a variety of gifts (Acts 2:33; 6:3, 8 ff.). On the other hand, certain persons may be so identified with a specific gift as to be recognized and set apart in the community on that basis. For Paul also certain persons are set apart in terms of a specific charism (1 Cor. 12:28).⁵³ At the same time one person may manifest a multiplicity of charisms (1 Cor. 12:31; 14:1; 2 Tim. 1:11), and (some) charisms and charismatics may be grouped in an undifferentiated manner as pneumatikῶν and pneumatikῶν, (1 Cor. 14:1, 37; 3:1).

In this context it is not always easy to distinguish the role of the prophet from that of other ministries. Seeking to do so, G. Friedrich concludes that “teachers expound Scripture, cherish the tradition about Jesus and explain the fundamentals of the catechism, the prophets speak to the congregation on the basis of revelations...”⁵⁴ While this distinction may be true as far as it goes, it does not give sufficient weight to the teaching role of the early Christian prophet.

Predictive prophecy, of course, presents no problem. But as the above discussion has shown, there is no clear division in Judaism or the primitive church between the teaching of a prophet and of a teacher. Likewise, the false prophets in the church teach (1 Jn. 2:22, 26 f.; 4:1 ff.), and the false teachers in the church correspond to the false prophets of the Old Covenant (2 Pet. 2:1). As H. Greeven rightly recognizes, both the prophet and the teacher expound the Scriptures and the sayings of the Lord, and in this area the transition from teaching to prophecy is “gewiss fließend”.⁵⁵ For Paul prophecy apparently is a formal term embracing various kinds of inspired teaching.⁵⁶ The teaching of the prophet apparently overlaps that of the teacher and can be distinguished from it only by the manner in which it is given or by the recognized status as “prophet” of the one who is teaching.

In Acts also various kinds of teaching are present in the activities of the prophets. Probably the same relationship between the prophet and the teacher is assumed. But one cannot speak with assurance, especially since *didaskaloj* occurs only in Acts 13:1.

There also is an overlapping of the roles of apostle and prophet. Indeed, E. C. Selwyn argued that “apostles” were “prophets on circuit” in contrast to “prophets in

session”.⁵⁷ That is, an apostle is simply a prophet who is sent (ἐποστῆλλω) as a missionary. In support he cites Didache 11:3-5. But concerning the apostles and prophets (τῶν ἐποστῶτων καὶ προφητῶν) do according to the ordinance of the gospel. Every apostle who comes to you receive as the Lord. But if he remains three days he is a false prophet. The usage is remarkable, and it is one possible explanation why Barnabas and Paul on tour are called apostles (Acts 14:4, 14) but are named prophets only while resident in Antioch (Acts 13:1). However, it is more likely that the shift in terminology reflects Luke’s use of a different tradition. In any case the explanation hardly accords with the use of the terms elsewhere in Acts where “apostles” reside in Jerusalem and “prophets” travel.

To pose the question differently, is there any activity ‘ascribed to the Christian prophet that is not also true of those named apostle? Apparently there is none. The example of the apostle Peter, mentioned above, illustrates that every activity of the prophet — including prediction, exhortation and biblical exposition — can also be ascribed by Luke to the apostle. On the other hand, unlike the prophets the apostles do “many wonders and signs” (2:43), witness to the resurrection of Jesus (1:22; 13:31; cf. 26:16), exercise an authority in the congregations, and impart the Holy Spirit (8:15 ff.; cf. 19:6). It may be significant that it is in connexion with one of these activities, miracle-working, that Barnabas and Paul are named apostles.

Likewise, in the Pauline literature the mark of an apostle includes “signs and wonders and mighty works” (2 Cor. 12:12; cf. 1 Cor. 9:1). In summary, the ministries of the apostle and the prophet in Acts may be compared to two concentric circles, in which the circle of the prophet’s activity is somewhat smaller. Christian “elders” (πρεσβύτεροι) appear in Acts as a leadership group in the congregations of Jerusalem (11:30; 21:18), Galatia (14:23), and Ephesus (20:17). Their function is “to shepherd”

(*poima...nein*) the church of God (20:28), a term whose cognate *poimōn* is listed in Ephesians 4:11 among the spiritual gifts. In Acts the elders also are given their task by the Holy Spirit (20:28) even though they may be appointed by a prophet or apostle (14:23).

The description of the prophets Judas and Silas as “leading men” apparently sets them apart from the “apostles and elders” in Acts 15:22 (so Haenchen). However, several facts suggest that the elder, like the prophet, had a teaching function in addition to his responsibilities of general oversight of the community.

The Christian use of the term *presbýteroj* is clearly derived from Judaism where it was used of a group in the Sanhedrin and of the community and/or synagogue leaders. Traditionally the elders in Judaism were a “lay nobility”, heads of ancient patrician families. In the first century, however, persons who also had been trained as scribes were preferred when community or synagogue leaders were chosen. That is, one who was selected to be elder was likely to be a theologian. For the early Christian community this would correspond to a charismatic person, e.g., a teacher, even though he may have been titled *presbýteroj* (in conformity with the Jewish custom) or within the organizational structure.

This view of the matter accords with a number of New Testament texts. (i) As they do in Judaism, the elders in Acts 15 and Acts 20 function as guardians of the tradition, although the similarity is qualified by the role of the Spirit among the Christians. (2) The Christian elder may exercise a specific ministry of teaching (I Tim. 5:17; 2, 3 Jn. 1). However, the same kind of ministry may be exercised without reference to any name or title. Although in Acts the elder is a part of the organized expression of the church, he is very likely selected on the basis of certain spiritual gifts. And his ministry itself is doubtless viewed as a manifestation of a charism.

3.7. CONCLUSION

Therefore, the role of the prophet may overlap that of the elder as it does that of the apostle and the teacher, especially in certain teaching functions. But unlike the prophet the apostle (in Jerusalem at least) and the elder or ‘shepherd’ are incorporated into the organizational structure, Jonas Clark (1982).

At a number of places in Acts the early Christian mission is viewed as a continuation of Jesus’ mission and as a contest between conflicting spirit-powers. The former is expressed most clearly as the immediate action of the exalted Lord himself (Acts 1:1 (“began”); 9:5; 10:13; 16:7; 22:18; 23:11). The contest is explicit in the encounter of Peter with Simon Magus (8:9-24) and the encounter of Paul with the false prophet Barjesus (13: 6ff.) and the medium in Philippi (16:16). The same kind of *conflict* may be inferred from the episode of the Jewish exorcists (19:13-20). The role of the Christian prophet is related to both of these Lukan themes. The prophet is the Lord’s instrument, one among several means by which Jesus leads his church. As one who makes known (gnwstÒj) the meaning of the Scriptures, exhorts and strengthens the congregation, and instructs the community by revelations of the future, the Christian prophet manifests in the power of the Spirit the character of his Lord, who is the Prophet of the end-time (3:22).

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.0. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, analyzing the data collected through questionnaire is going to be based on context analysis as earlier posited in my research procedures, which will be limited to those direly relevant to the course of study used.

4.1. RESULT PRESENTATION

Question 1:

What is Prophecy? : Prophecy is God revealing His thoughts to His people through Prophets concerning a particular issue, or giving directives, instruction, solution on a matter.

Question 2:

Who is a Prophet or Prophetess? : Prophets are male and female ministers who are divinely called or chosen by God into the Prophetic Ministry as an “Oracle of God”. That is, the “mouth piece God” or better known as those who reveals God’s mind to His people on earth.

Question 3:

Who is a Prophetess? : Prophetess are male and female ministers who are divinely chosen by God into the Prophetic Ministry as the “mouth piece God”. However, they very few compared to their counterpart male prophets.

Question 4:

What is Prophetic Ministry? : Prophetic Ministry is about igniting purpose, hope and identity through the gift of prophecy seasoned with result backup with God’s word. True prophetic ministries are unpopular, they are uncompromising they strive to do the work of God, even to their own discomfort and personal sacrifice. True prophetic ministries are unconcerned with men’s opinions about them, they often times speak the words given them, hoping in their hearts they do not come to pass, they are mocked, rejected and misunderstood, yet they do the work nonetheless, for it is their calling, their duty, and their reasonable service to God.

Question 5:

Where is prophecy from? : Prophecy has its origins in God, it is divinely inspired, and when God chooses a vessel, it is not for the vessels glory, or net worth, it is not so the vessel is lauded among his peers, or perceived to be spiritually gifted. He is simply one of the brethren, who now has a greater responsibility toward God, one of whom God requires more sacrifice, and obedience.

Question 6:

Who is a Prophetess? : Prophetess is spiritual watchwoman who has insight to the will and purposes of God. That is, having an idea of what God intentions are or given spiritual capability to proclaim the truth of God.

For example; **Judges 4:4-5** “Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at that time. She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the people of Israel came up to her for judgment”.

Question 7:

Why is there controversy about Prophetess in the Church? : This is all about dogmatism and doctrine of men. They make their argument from the book of 1 Cor 14:34 “The women should keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says”. While equally forgets to read Acts 10:3 “So Peter opened his mouth and said: “Truly I understand that God shows no partiality”.

Question 8:

Was Ruth and Esther Prophetesses? : Yes they were. The Book of Ruth and the Book of Esther elevates the picture of women in Scripture. There are few people in Scripture that are presented without their faults and failings.

Ruth is a pastoral paradise intertwined into the history of Israel. The treatment of land and of boundaries between lands does not entail conquest. Elsewhere in biblical

narrative, land is associated with nation and empire; here it is associated with fertility and benevolence. Ostensibly taking place during the time of the Judges, the book of Ruth is an antidote to Judges Stories of slaughter. Ruth is a story about the possibilities of peace.

The Book of Ruth concludes with a genealogy that may be read either as integral to this study or as an external addition. The genealogy makes Ruth an ancestress of David and, therefore, of a Davidic messiah (Ruth 4:13-18).

Ruth was willing to forgo her future in Moab, her people, her gods and even her ancestral burial plot to stay with Naomi. The theme of Ruth is the Lord's provident protection of the faithful (Ruth 2:12). Because of the faithfulness of a destitute young widow, the Lord brought Ruth and Naomi out of deep tragedy and sorrow to joy, prosperity, and honor. This singular act had her in the Old Testament as one of the prophetesses.

Esther is unusual in the canon in that God makes absolutely no appearance. God does not come along to save anyone - instead, the Jewish people are saved entirely by human actions. The primary attempts to explain the absence of God in the story have included the argument that God is there, but hidden. Thus, when God is there, then God is there. But, when there is no sign of God, then God is really there but only making it look like we are affecting our lives. (Esther 1, 2, 3.-10).

Question 9:

Why are Prophet needed in the Body of Christ? : In Matt. 16: 8 and Joel 2:25, Christ talked restoration of the Church. Hence, prophets are assigned by God in the church to reposition believers for the second coming of Christ, give spiritual direction, admonitions, and constant spiritual re-birth. Acts 12:1-13.

Question 10:

What are the benefits of Prophetic Gift to the Church? : prophetic benefits to the church is numerable to mentioned, just to state few: prophets are watchmen to the church; they interprets God's revelation to the church; they induce revival when the church is spiritual weak; they intercede on behalf the church; prophets are prince at the altar of God for the church' etc.

Question 11:

Whom is Prophecy for? : Prophecy is from God our creator and for the edification of the church. It is form of communication between God and His creature. True Prophecy reveals God's future for mankind irrespective of our doctrinal differences and beliefs.

4.2. CONCLUSION

From the above aforementioned, the controversy surrounding whether women prophetess be accorded the same respect as prophets may have been laid to rest after respondents have sincerely adjudged their honest position on women prophetic ministry. From the above context analysis, both the Old and New Testament gave credence to women ministry even in the redemptive work of Christ as state in the Book of Mark 16:9-20:

When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. And they were saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?” And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. And he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go; tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.”⁸ And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

Now when he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. She went and told those who

had been with him, as they mourned and wept. But when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they would not believe it.

Jesus Appears to Two Disciples

After these things he appeared in another form to two of them, as they were walking into the country. And they went back and told the rest, but they did not believe them.

The Great Commission

Afterward he appeared to the eleven them as they were reclining at table, and he rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen. And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. ¹⁷ And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up serpents with their hands; and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by accompanying signs.

Women were the first minister to broker the Good News of the risen Christ. Hence, women in prophetic ministry will continue to remain a strong denominator in the gospel redemption.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

5.0. INTRODUCTION

Andronicus and Junias were outstanding among the apostles probably by virtue of their apostolic sufferings, the numbers of years they had been in Christ, their labor, and their humble service for Christ. May the eyes of all those in the Church be opened to see this important truth and its significant implication in allowing women to minister equally as they are called by God. To do otherwise is to deny the full redemptive work of Christ.

Some have misinterpreted 1 Corinthians 14:34, "Women should remain silent in the churches" to mean that women should not minister in the vocal gifts. However, Paul had already said in verse 31, "you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged." In the context Paul was also speaking about interruptions and disorder. Paul "suggests that another type of interruption should be avoided. Women (who were usually uneducated in that day) were asking questions in an improper manner and thus contributing to the confusion. They were told to hold their questions and ask their husbands at home. This should be applied to both men and women in matters that custom considers unbecoming. But Paul is in no sense trying to hinder women from prophesying, speaking in tongues, singing, or otherwise contributing to the worship. He expected women to pray and prophesy if the Spirit gave them a ministry (11:5). The Bible makes no difference in spiritual manifestations between men and women."³ The context makes it clear that Paul means public manifestation of the gifts in the congregation.

To encourage women to rediscover their prophetic role, we need to emphasize further 1 Corinthians 12:11, "All these [spiritual gifts] are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines." Clearly, the Holy Spirit is sovereign in distributing the gifts. We need to look to Him and be open to Him, for He knows what gifts will meet the need and He knows who He wants to use to minister the gifts. The gifts remain under His power and remain His gifts. He is the source, no matter who is being used.

First Corinthians 12:27 says, "Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it." That includes the women as well as the men. Paul challenged believers to "eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy" (14:1). This makes it clear that though the Spirit distributes the gifts as He determines, He looks for those who have an eager desire to prophesy to the edification of the church. He will not force a gift on a person who does not have an earnest desire. It also lets us know that we do not have the gifts automatically just because we have been baptized in the Holy Spirit. Further steps of faith are needed, and chapter 13 indicates that God's love that He pours out into our hearts by His Spirit (Romans 5:5) is an important motivating factor in the ministry of spiritual gifts. So let Spirit-filled women take courage and in faith, with love for God and His people, eagerly desire to prophesy to the edification of the Body.

5.1. SUMMARY

What Paul is saying is that women should not be allowed to disciple men. It would be wrong and dangerous for a woman to gather a group of men and make disciples of them. But the converse is also true. Men should not be allowed to disciple and teach women. We can see this in the ministry of Jesus. He did not choose twelve men because he considered men to be superior. He chose men because he knew it would be wrong for him to disciple women. Where men disciple women, and women disciple men, gossip and temptation follow closely behind.

Paul is saying emphatically that men should disciple men and women should disciple women. This is also seen in Titus 2:3-5 where he instructs the older women to teach the younger women. It is their responsibility to help the younger women to develop true Christian character. This is especially true in a Church with a lot of women. In a society with a lot of widowed or divorced women, it would be wrong for men to take responsibility for discipling them. Women elders should do this work.

In marriage, two people become one, so when a man is appointed as an elder, his wife compliments him by also exercising an eldership ministry. This can be seen with Aquila and Priscilla. Because Aquila was called to be an apostle, Priscilla also became involved in apostolic ministry. Likewise Isaiah called his wife the prophetess, recognising that they had become one, and therefore shared the same ministry.

The New Testament pattern is that male elders disciple the men of the church. Each man would be responsible for his wife and children. The elder's wives would disciple the women, especially those that are young. Husbands and wives would work together, so that couples discipled couples. Women and Discernment

Women should be involved in this leadership process. In 1 Timothy 2:13, Paul says that it was Eve who deceived. He is not saying that Adam did not sin, but recognizing a difference between the female and male personality. Women are often more open to the supernatural than men. This meant that Eve was more easily deceived. Adam was not deceived, but disobeyed deliberately. He sinned in a different way, because his personality was different.

Women are more open to the supernatural, so they are often able to hear God more clearly. For this reason women should be involved in the decision making process. Eve was fulfilling a legitimate part of her complementary role in giving her advice to Adam. Her advice was wrong, but she was not wrong in giving it. Leaders of the Church will need the advice of mature women.

Deborah the Old Testament prophetess provides a good example of this (Judges 4). Barak was clearly the leader of the people, but he was unable to hear what God was saying. It was Deborah, a woman, who was able to hear the voice of God. She did not take control of the army, because that would be wrong for a woman. But she advised Barak what he should do.

In the church today, the eldership function is not being fulfilled by either men or women. Most Christians are not being disciple at all, so churches are stagnating. We should be seeking to restore this ministry. Rather than restricting the ministry of women, we should be encouraging them to take up the gifts that God has given them. They must be encouraged to exercise the ministries to which God has called them, and this includes discipline the women of the church.

Women should also be encouraged to exercise their discernment for the benefit of the whole church. It can only be complete when all members are using the gifts that God has given to them.

5.2. FINDINGS

The most commonly misunderstood passage on the issue of women elders is 1 Tim 2:11-14. It has been the subject of a great deal of debate.

A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived: it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.

Because of misunderstandings about this passage it must be considered in detail.

The first point made is that women should learn in quietness. The Greek word translated as quietness (*hesychia*) does not mean absolute silence, but calmness or peacefulness. Paul is saying that women should learn without raising objections and being contentious. To prohibit all speech by women is to go beyond the demands of this passage. Paul merely asks the women to avoid being contentious. He also expects men to pray without "anger or disputing" (1 Tim 2:8).

Paul's key point is that he does not allow a woman to teach and have authority over a man. To understand what Paul is saying, we must remember that he is not using the word teach in the modern sense. In the New Testament all teaching took place within a relationship of authority. So when Paul speaks about "teaching" and "having authority" he is not speaking about two different things. The two go together. There

cannot be teaching without authority. Paul is speaking about what we would understand by "discipling". Teaching is the formation of Christian character within a relationship of authority.

A common interpretation is that 1 Timothy 2:12 forbids preaching by women, and prevents women from giving talks to groups of men and women. This is an incorrect understanding of what Paul is saying. Modern preaching is not teaching in the New Testament sense of the word. The preacher has no authority over his listeners, so they are quite free to ignore all that he says. A preacher generally does not have a relationship of authority with those who listen. Because preaching is not "teaching with authority", Paul's words do not apply. It is quite legitimate for women to preach and give Bible messages to men.

5.3. CONCLUSION

It is ironic that some today assume that God would have His New Testament handmaidens--washed in the blood of His Son, filled with His Holy Spirit, and set free from the Law--do less than His handmaidens under the old covenant! Especially since Jesus told His followers, "greater works than these shall ye do, because I go to my Father." The only winner in this battle is satan, who divides the church, silences the female majority, and deludes the minority to trust in the flesh instead of God's Spirit. Like Deborah, we need to let God be God and be faithful to Him. Like Barak, we need to listen to God speaking to us through His chosen prophets, whether male or female.

The gospel ministry today needs the distinctive spirit, direction, style, form, and content of the reforming prophets of old. The ministry of these reformers and their

distinctive characteristics resembled those of that prophet whom Moses declared would arise like unto himself— Jesus Christ, our divine Lord. It was "the Spirit of Christ which was in them" that made it possible for these men of prophetic ministry to reproduce Him whom they represented—the Prophet of prophets.

If we preachers today permit this Spirit to work in us, we will manifest the Saviour in our ministries. The hour through which God's church is currently passing requires that we give first priority to having the characteristics of a prophetic ministry. The divine enabling for its accomplishment will not be delayed if the conditions are met. Only when its ministers manifest the qualities of prophetic ministry will the church be able to reveal the glory of God, which is to illuminate the whole earth.

God is no respecter of persons. There had always been women prophets in Israel. Miriam, who by her faith and courage saved her baby brother Moses from death when she was just a child, prophesied to the nation and was set before them as a leader by God Himself along with Moses and Aaron (Micah 6:4). Miriam led the women of Israel in antiphonal praise to God at the Red Sea, exulting with the men in God's victory over Pharaoh's armies.

Deborah-- prophetess, judge and military leader-- is the most celebrated woman prophet of the Old Testament because she brought liberty to Israel through her faith, courage and boldness. (Judges 4:4) is generally translated as "Deborah, a prophetess, wife of Lapidoth. " but the Hebrew word here translated "wife" usually means "woman," and Lapidoth is not attested elsewhere as a man's name. Rather, it is the ordinary feminine plural for the word "fire." As her career demonstrates, Deborah was a fiery woman! The Hebrew is emphatic that SHE judged Israel at that time. Respecting her as a wise woman who heard from God and knew His Law, the

people of Israel came to her for judgment. When the word of the Lord came to Deborah, she summoned Barak from Naphtali and directed him to obey God by mustering troops against the oppressor Sisera. When Barak agreed to do so only if Deborah accompanied him, she did not hesitate to go and rally the troops.

After the victory, in the ode of celebration, Deborah sings, "The villages ceased, they ceased in Israel until I, Deborah, arose, until I arose a mother in Israel." Deborah heard the word of the Lord and was obedient to God's call. In response to that call, not human invitation, Deborah rose up to lead her nation, inspiring others to follow her faith. Because of her courage and fear of God, not man, the nation was set free and enjoyed peace for forty years.

The prophetess Huldah taught at the college in Jerusalem and brought revival to the nation when she confirmed the Word of God brought to her and prophesied judgment and grace to King Josiah, the high priest, and the religious elite of her day. These men received and acted upon her declaration as it was, the word of God, not a human. Note that this occurred during the ministry of Jeremiah, who had been prophesying at Jerusalem for five years by the time the Lord used Huldah to speak His message. God wasn't out of men to use! He deliberately chose to use this woman. According to the original edition of the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, "The standing and reputation of Huldah in the city are attested by the fact that she was consulted when the Book of the Law was discovered. The king, high priest, counselors, etc. appealed to her rather than to Jeremiah, and her word was accepted by all of the word of Jehovah." (Reeve, 1915).

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