

EMERGING TRENDS IN WOMEN MINISTRIES

Preached at a National Conf., November 1979

In the era before Christ, women were little more than slaves. In fact, some slaves were treated better than the wives of that day.

Divorce was an everyday occurrence. If a woman didn't cook the "oatmeal" exactly right, or if she put "too much starch" in her husband's shirt, or if he found someone he liked better, she could be divorced by her husband simply by him saying, "I divorce you" three times.

The woman was the under-dog. She was the mistreated, dispensable member of the family. She had no rights, no respect, and no recourse.

There's no word-picture I could paint that would adequately describe the deplorable conditions under which a woman labored, or the degrading position she occupied in these the darkest of all days.

THEN JESUS CAME!

In His own special, loving way, He elevated woman to a lofty position. Not above a man's head to rule over him; neither beneath his feet to be trampled on and enslaved by him; but she was elevated to her original, intended position to stand by his side and be a loving, understanding, giving, caring helpmeet –

The love of his youth,

The mother of his children, and

The companion of his old age.

When Eve was created, God Himself said, "She is given to you, Adam, for a helpmeet." This was to be her top priority! This was to be her first and foremost ministry – helping her husband and meeting his needs.

All other ministries are secondary. They have their place, to be sure – and they are important without doubt – but being what God created you to be, filling the position God wants you to fill is more important than any of us can possibly imagine.

In today's society women are being heard around the world for good and evil.

Dr. Harold Vock, a Rear Admiral in the Navy Reserve, a psychiatrist for thirty-six years, and an expert on the family, said: "If ERA is not reversed it will destroy us. It is the final legitimating of human destruction. The human crisis is going on now."

Aggressive, hard-hearted, hard-hitting- self-willed, demon-inspired, and worldly-minded women are coming out of the closet. Satan is using them to undermine the home and the family structure. He knows if he can devalue these two entities he can wreck havoc with the church. If he can stifle the family, he can retard church growth.

People, we are living in a critical day of ravage inflation, industrialization and over-populated cities.

Forty-two percent of American women work outside the home.

Drugs are a billion dollar business.

The American home is being defined as one of the most violent places on earth.

A "Good Morning, America" program recently reported that there were five hundred pimps in Minneapolis, Minnesota who take thousands of teenage runaways, force them into prostitution and, if they resist, they are beaten into submission. If they still refuse to submit, they are killed.

In our public schools, the level of excellence is dropping rapidly. There is little or no parental authority; and it has been reported that students misuse and rape their teachers.

Pornography is as easy to be found as a grocery store.

The divorce rate is reported to be forty percent in the first marriage and fifty-six percent in the second.

Twenty percent of all babies born are illegitimate; and ten percent of these babies are not surrounded by a family structure.

Women are materialistic minded. It has been said, "They buy material things to supplant an inner emptiness."

Homosexuality is on a rampage. Anita Bryant was shopping with her children for school clothes and, because of her public stand against the "gay" lifestyle, she was physically harassed by a group of militant homosexuals. Ms. Bryant had to be completely surrounded by the authorities to exit the store.

Gene O'Leary, in the White House, teaches lesbianism and homosexuality – advocates teaching children "how."

Lesbians are adopting babies. They are also being inseminated in order to bear children.

In spite of all this, THERE IS A POSITIVE SIDE!

God has always had and still has today –

Committed,

Covenant-keeping,

Courageous,

Concerned and

Controlled Women!

Women who will seek His divine and perfect will; and upon finding it, they will follow through with humility and love

The Emerging Trends for Women in Ministry didn't just happen today. They have been around since the beginning of creation.

Let's look in the Word and find some women who succeeded and some who failed their God-given ministry.

EVE: She was created from Adam's rib, beautiful in form and figure, with Paradise as her birth place. Her ministry was to be a helpmeet for Adam; instead she led him into sin.

(Read: Genesis 3, 4)

SARAH: She was full of fear, doubt, insecurity and impatience. Her special ministry was to bear Abraham a promised son. Because the promise was not forth coming, she interfered with God's plan and delayed the birth of Isaac until she was ninety and Abraham was one hundred years old.

(Read: Genesis 11-49)

JOCHBED: When Moses was born, a decree had gone out that all the Hebrew children should be killed. When Moses turned three months old, Jochbed devised a plan which saved the life of the greatest lawgiver, statesman, and leader the Hebrews would ever know. Her memory lives on today because she walked humbly before God; and she transmitted her character of love of Jehovah to her son Moses, her daughter Miriam, and

her older son, Aaron – not by how many big tasks she accomplished, but by how wisely and well she served as a mother!

(Read: Exodus 6:20; Numbers 26:59)

MIRIAM: She was the first woman in the Bible whose interest was “national” and whose mission was “patriotic.” She was first used of God when approximately seven years old to guard baby Moses in the bulrushes.

During the long and inhuman Egyptian bondage, Miriam ministered to her people. She was revered by the people and honored by God. “For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants; and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron and Miriam” (Micah 6:4).

She held a unique place among Hebrew women of “prophetess.” (The Hebrew definition of this word is: “A woman who is inspired to teach the will of God.”)

She is the first woman singer on record.

The Bible gives no record that she ever married.

After crossing the sea and leading the victory song, something begins to happen to Miriam. She speaks out against Moses public ally and even pulls Aaron in on her tirade! In doing so, she is no longer is a leader in exultation but one in jealousy and bitterness. The probable cause is her secondary place to Moses.

This is one of the most perfect examples in the Bible of a woman’s mixed nature of good and evil.

God strikes her with leprosy.

Moses prayed for her.

God healed her.

Doubtless the leprosy of her mind departed with the leprosy of her body.

(Read: Exodus 15; Numbers 12, 20, 26; Deuteronomy 24:9; I Chronicles 6:3; Micah 6:4).

DEBORAH: She was a very feminine woman, who never had ambition to push herself forward. She better personified the homemaker in Israel than a warrior. But, when God needed her, she was ready. She summoned one of Israel’s most capable military men – Barak. A careful study reveals that she built up Barak’s own self-confidence and his confidence in God. She convinced him that God would not fail.

Barak said: “If you’ll go with me, I’ll go; but if you do not go with me, I will not go” (Judges 4:8).

Deborah’s faith carried the Israelites forward unafraid. She took no credit for herself. Her glorious victory is best recorded in these concluding, but meaningful, lines of her Bible biography: “And the land had rest forty years” (Judges 5:31).

RUTH: Her ministry was to her mother-in-law.

HANNAH: She had a ministry of prayer; and God rewarded her with Samuel.

ABIGAIL: Her ministry was to King David. She was one of his eight wives; but she had greater influence on him than the others and helped him remember that he was God’s anointed. Of all the women in the Bible, Abigail was the wisest.

WIDOW OF ZAREPHATH: Her ministry was to the prophet Elijah; and she was rewarded when her son was raised from the dead.

THE FOLLOWING HAS BEEN TAKEN FROM A COG ARTICLE – TWEAK.

It has been said, “Never underestimate the power of God through a woman. This era will bring her opportunities, new challenges, new ways of doing things and new ministries; and Church of God women will be active participants! She has been exposed to training to a level her forebears never knew. She is recognized for her competence and equality through the cross of Jesus Christ. The tools she uses are those of prayer and faith and mutual trust in a cause bigger than any one of her fellow-laborers. She relies on guidance from God to help her find the way through the challenges which present themselves.

Family threats will be dealt with on her knees, petitioning the Father to reveal solutions and reveal His will to His daughters.

The trend of Christian women today must be to focus on Christ’s return. “Looking for that blessed hope, and the ... appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13). Comforting “one another” (I Thessalonians 4:18) with information about His return, and being “stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord (I Corinthians 15:58). Their labors are not in vain.