

BRIEF EXCERPT FROM MY NOTES REGARDING WOMEN IN MINISTRY¹

Here are some comments on the subject of women preachers and pastors by two well-known pastors & Bible teachers: Dr. Gil Rugh and Dr. John MacArthur. I think the reader will find their comments extremely enlightening and helpful.

Dr. Gil Rugh, Pastor of Indian Hills Community Church, Lincoln, Nebraska:²

“...we do not realize our potential in glorifying God as He intended, unless we function as He intended us to function... Deborah and Huldah (in the OT) were prophetesses, but they were not allowed to be teachers of the people, because that was the role of the priests, and no women were allowed to be priests!

*“...To be a “Christian feminist” is to deny and distort Scripture ... (in regard to the command for women to keep silent in church in 1 Cor. 14:34) they say there were arguments back and forth across the church aisle. They say it’s cultural. But Paul says (14:34), ‘just as the law says!’ Now we don’t find a verse that has that law per se, but if we look at 1 Peter 3:5-6 Peter says that the Old Testament taught that godly women were to be quiet and submissive and then it gives Sarah as an example. **Paul concludes then in 14:37** (by saying) **‘if you’re spiritual you’ll do what I say!’***

*“...(regarding 1 Tim. 2:10 it says) ‘she is to receive instruction with all submissiveness.’ The twisting of the meaning of the words here (are) just that-twisting! (These) **were not culturally-based teachings, but theological and creative** (i.e. based on): **a) the order of creation, & b) the fall** (woman led in it)...*

*“Someone may say, ‘yeah, but in Titus 2:3 it says women are to teach what is good, so 1 Timothy 2 doesn’t apply to us today!’ But the first rule of Bible interpretation is, **CONTEXT DETERMINES MEANING**. Please note that that’s not the end of the sentence (in Titus 2:3)! It says, ‘older women are to...teach younger women... to love their husbands and children, etc. (In other words, it does not refer to women teaching and preaching in the church at all!)...*

“OT priests could ONLY be men...”

*“In 1 Corinthians 11 (it teaches that)...man does not originate from woman, but woman from man. The order of Genesis 2 is **KEY**, which is why feminists often reject Genesis chapter two! ... (this passage also makes clear that)...there should be a recognizable difference between a man’s and a woman’s hair style ... (Paul concludes in 11:16) ... **‘this is the way it is. There is nothing to debate. All the churches practice this.’**...In conclusion (Dr. Rugh was expounding on Romans 16), **we don’t build our doctrine from the greetings in Romans 16.**”³*

(cont.)

¹ Compiled by Mike Edwards. Note: This material is a very brief excerpt from my extensive (53pp) paper titled “*The Various Groups in Protestant Christianity Today-An explanation of the religious positions of Liberalism, Neo-Orthodoxy, New-Evangelicalism & Fundamentalism*” which was first presented as a series of messages delivered at the Independent Baptist Pastors Conference held in Kerowagi, Chimbu, Papua New Guinea in Sept. 2003, and subsequently in a variety of locations in Papua New Guinea, St. Vincent, West Indies & the United States. -mwe

² I personally transcribed the statements quoted here from a tape of a sermon preached by Dr. Rugh c. 2001-2003.

³ Rugh, op. cit.

Dr. John MacArthur makes some excellent observations to Old & New Testament prophetesses, etc.:

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT...

“...Although women shared spiritual equality with men in the Old Testament, they did not have the same role...They did not serve as leaders...Deborah was a judge who acted primarily in the role of an arbiter, not as an ongoing leader. That explains why she called on Barak when needing military leadership against the Canaanites (Judg. 4-5) Queen Athaliah was a usurper and not a legitimate ruler (2 Kings 11).

“There is no mention of women priests in the Old Testament. As far as we know, no woman wrote any portion of the Old Testament... They had no ongoing prophetic ministry...such as that of Elisha or Elijah.

“There are five women in the Old Testament who are referred to as prophetesses. Miriam (Ex. 15:20). Perhaps she is called a prophetess because she gives a brief revelation in verse 21. We know of no other occasion when she acted in the prophetic office ...Deborah is described as a prophetess in Judges 4:4 because she was used by God to give a direct revelation to Barak. We know of no other occasion when she engaged in ongoing prophetic work ...Huldah gave revelation from God to Hilkiah the priest and other men about the coming judgment on Jerusalem and Judah (2 Kings 22:14-22; 2 Chron. 34:22-28). There is no other recorded instance of her speaking as a prophetess ...Noadiah was a false prophetess who opposed the work of Nehemiah in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem (Neh. 6:14) ...Isaiah’s wife is called a prophetess in Isaiah 8:3 because she simply gives birth to a child whose name had prophetic meaning. There is no record of her speaking a prophecy. This passage (clearly) indicates that the word prophetess can be used in a general way...

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT...

“... The spiritual equality of men and women is declared in Galatians 3:28... In the context of Galatians 3, the oneness spoken of here is the oneness of salvation. That is clear from verses 13-27. Paul’s point is that all people-Jews and Gentiles, slaves and free men, men and women-have equal access to the salvation that is in Christ. The passage has nothing to do with the role of women in the church, nor does it teach that all differences are eliminated among Christians. A Jewish person did not cease to be Jewish when he became a Christian, and slaves did not automatically become free men. Some distinctions were retained... (Women) did not serve as leaders.

“There is no record in the New Testament of a woman apostle, pastor, teacher, evangelist, or elder. The New Testament does not record any sermon or teaching by a woman.

“...(women) did not have an ongoing prophetic role. Some argue that the daughters of Philip prophesied (Acts 21:9). However, they are not referred to as prophets, nor is there any indication of how often they prophesied. They may have spoken on only one occasion, as Deborah and Miriam apparently did in the Old Testament. The New Testament records other occasions when women spoke the word of God. Mary, the mother of Jesus speaks the Word of God in Luke 1:46-55.

“First Corinthians 11:5 says that women who prophesy are to have their heads covered. Acts 2:17 speaks of women prophesying. The Greek word translated ‘prophesy’ simply means ‘to speak forth’ or ‘to proclaim.’ There are times and places when women speak the word of God, but that is distinctly different from being identified as a pastor, teacher, elder, evangelist, or apostle.”⁴

⁴ “God’s High Calling for Women,” by Dr. John MacArthur, Jr. Moody Press: Chicago, Illinois, 1987, pp. 26-29.