On November 11, 1992, the world was shocked by the news from Britain that had nothing to do with wars, the economy or the troubled affairs of the royal family. The headline news: The Anglican Church had voted to allow women to be ordained as priests of the Church of England. This action, as reported by Time magazine, amounted to "a second reformation" that was "sweeping Christianity."

Leading the pro-women's forces was the Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey—an acknowledged charismatic—as well as the 500,000 charismatic members of the English church. Only a week after the Anglican bombshell, the American Roman Catholic bishops voted to shelve a pastoral letter that, under pressure from the Vatican, completely rejected the idea that women could ever be ordained to the Catholic priesthood. Time also stated that feminism is emerging as "the most vexing thorn for Christianity."

Almost a century ago, the door was re-opened for anointed women to minister in the power of the Holy Spirit. The role of women in ministry is currently a subject of hot debate in many sectors of the church. While most Protestants have opened the way for women's ordination, the lines are still clearly drawn in the Roman Catholic and Orthodox world, as well as among many fundamentalists who still hold vigorously to traditional views that exclude women from leadership in public pastoral ministry.

Adding confusion to the scene has been the rise of militant feminism that, from a non-biblical base, calls for women's equality in all areas of life, including the ministry. The motive and spirit behind this militant stance, rejected by the majority of charismatics, has caused many to question anew the role of women in church ministry and leadership.

KEEPING SILENCE
For almost 1,800 years, this debate did not exist. Both Eastern and Western churches held to the idea of an all-male priesthood in which women were to "keep silence in the churches" (1 Cor. 14:34) and not "usurp the authority over the man" (1 Tim. 2:12). This tradition was so pervasive that women's voices were not only absent from the public liturgies of the churches, but they also were excluded from church choirs (young boys sang the soprano and alto parts).

To be sure, in past centuries women who felt called to the religious life could enter convents, become nuns, and spend their lives in prayer and devotion. Yet they received the sacraments from male priests who alone could model the New Testament ministries of Jesus and the apostles. Although women could not be priests, many became great...
saints or even, like St. Theresa of Avila, a “doctor of the church.”
Meanwhile, the development of an increasing devotion to the virgin Mary gave women a sense of importance—not only in the church, but in the plan of salvation and in daily intercessory prayer.

The Protestant reformers ultimately rejected the Catholic doctrine regarding Mary; yet, generally speaking, they continued the traditional view of women in ministry. Neither Luther nor Calvin permitted the ordination of women. Indeed, even radicals such as the Anabaptists agreed with the Catholics and Reformers on this point. Traditional Baptists to this day will not ordain women to the ministry.

It was only in the 1700s, when evangelical revivals under John Wesley and George Whitefield began to sweep across England and America, that the traditional views of women in ministry were first challenged. Wesley’s attitudes were almost certainly influenced by his mother Susannah, who spent hours each week teaching basic Christian doctrine to her children, and who preached to over 200 persons weekly in prayer meetings that she conducted in her husband’s parish. Later, when Wesley’s Methodist societies began to flourish, he appointed women as class leaders, explaining that since “God uses women in the conversion of sinners, who am I that I should withstand God?”

With the spread of evangelical revival to America, the role of women in ministry increased. Under revivalist Charles Finney, women were allowed to pray and to speak in public worship. As president of Oberlin College, Finney admitted women as students—making Oberlin the first co-educational college in America. In fact, it was a former student of Finney, Antoinette Brown, who was the first woman to be ordained in America. This took place in 1853 in the Congregational Church in South Butler, New York.

The actions of Wesley and Finney led later historians to conclude that in most great spiritual awakenings, women are accepted as ministers in the early stages—but often are later bypassed in favor of male leadership when the revival begins to institutionalize.

THE DEBATE

The biblical debate over what the Bible says about a woman’s place in ministry has filled volumes. Opposition to women in public ministry is usually based on the apostle Paul’s statements in 1 Corinthians 14, “Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak” (vv. 34-36, NKJV), and 1 Timothy 2, “I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man” (vv. 11-12). Without reference to other scriptures, these passages seem to forbid a woman to prophesy, teach, preach or even say the Lord’s prayer or sing hymns aloud in a church worship service.

Defenders of women’s ministries, on the other hand, begin with a charismatic hermeneutic based on Peter’s Pentecost sermon in which he quotes from Joel 2: “And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh; your sons and daughters shall prophesy...Also on My menservants and maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days” (vv. 28-29). An appeal is also made in Galatians 3, where Paul states that in Christ “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (v. 28). All other scriptures are then interpreted in the light of these overarching promises of an all-inclusive ministry in the last days involving both men and women.

A number of Bible passages do, in fact, describe women in important ministries in the early church. Phoebe was a deacon of the church Cenchrea who Paul said “has been a helper of many and of myself also” (Rom. 16:2). The word here in Greek is “deacon” (“minister”)—not “deaconess” as it is often translated.

Furthermore, Philip the evangelist had four daughters who prophesied (Acts 21:9). Indeed the list of “apostles” in Romans 16:7 includes Junia, whose feminine name indicates that she was in all probability a female apostle.

THE HOLINESS MOVEMENT

One of the first women to point out the scriptural argument for women’s ministry in the church was Phoebe Palmer, an important 19th-century Methodist leader in the Holiness movement. In her book, The Way of Holiness, which appeared in 52 editions by 1867, Palmer pointed to the foregoing scriptures and concluded that women had as strong a warrant for ministry in Scripture as did men.

Standing with Palmer was Hannah Whitall Smith, author of The Christian’s Secret of a Happy Life (1875), who played a prominent role in the British Keswick “Higher Life” movement. Because of Palmer and Smith’s fervor, both the Holiness and Keswick movements took pioneering positions favoring women’s ministries.

Other Holiness movements and churches, agreeing with this new theology, began to license and ordain women in the ministry. One of the first was the Wesleyan Methodist Church, which ordained its first woman in 1863. When former Methodist William Booth organized the Salvation Army, he immediately recognized women as ministers equal to men. In the Salvation Army, both husbands and wives were “commissioned” (ordained) as ministry teams. When the Church of the Nazarene and other Holiness churches were organized after 1895, almost all of them made provision for women to be ordained and serve as evangelists and pastors.

Another pioneer was A.J. Gordon, the Baptist pastor who worked closely with D.L. Moody and other “Higher Life” leaders near the end of the century. In his book, The Ministry of Women (1888), Gordon closed with Psalm 68:11: “The Lord gives the command; the women who proclaim the good tidings are a great host” (NASB).
THE PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT

When the Pentecostal movement developed after 1901, it continued and radically enhanced the place of women in ministry. Although primarily preoccupied with the gifts of the Spirit, Pentecostalism also strongly emphasized the imminent rapture of the church. Because time was short, everyone was needed to save as many as possible before the second coming. Female ministers flocked to the standards of new missionary-minded denominations such as the Church of God, the Pentecostal Holiness Church and the Assemblies of God. In these churches, women were given unprecedented opportunities to evangelize, teach, pastor and serve as missionaries.

The long list of female ministers in the Pentecostal movement includes Agnes Ozman, whose glossolalia experience in Topeka, Kansas, on January 1, 1901, led Charles Parham to formulate the Pentecostal doctrine of tongues as the “initial evidence” of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

When the Azusa Street revival broke out in Los Angeles in 1906, pastor William Seymour was aided by several female ministers including Lucy Ferrall, Jennie Moore (his future wife), Clara Lumm and Florence Crawford. When Crawford left Los Angeles in 1909, she founded one of the earliest Pentecostal denominations in America—Apostolic Faith—with headquarters in Portland, Oregon.

Other women who spread the Pentecostal fire after Azusa Street included Rachel Sizemore in Missouri, Marie Burgess in New York City, Ethel Goss in Texas, and Ellen Heiden in Toronto, Canada. Added to this list was Holiness leader Maria Woodworth-Etter, who became a Pentecostal soon after Azusa Street and held some of the largest evangelistic crusades in America until her death in 1924. One Pentecostal evangelist, Katie Campbell of Virginia, justified her ministry by noting, “A woman brought sin into the world; they ought to help take it out again.”

Not long after the death of

PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT
Christian Writers Institute would like to ask you a few simple questions:

- Have you always wanted to be a writer but didn't know how to get started?
- Would you like to see your name in print?
- Do the words “free-lance writer” appeal to you?

If you answer “yes” to any one of these questions, then it’s time to contact Christian Writers Institute. Our correspondence courses have been teaching people how to write for over 40 years. Send coupon for “Your Talent Test” free and with no obligation.

Christian Writers Institute
P.O. Box 952248
Lake Mary, FL 32795-2248

---

Woodworth-Etter, the most famous and important female minister of the century came on the scene: Aimee Semple McPherson. Born in Canada to Salvation Army parents, Aimee soon became a Pentecostal and, following a stint as a missionary in Hong Kong, founded the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel in 1923. After building the massive Angelsus Temple in Los Angeles, “Sister” Aimee became a celebrity of the first magnitude, at times dominating the headlines of the nation’s newspapers. After her death in 1944, the Foursquare Church continued as one of the leading Pentecostal denominations in America and around the world.

The next major female preacher in America was Kathryn Kuhlman, who began her ministry in Missouri in 1923. After preaching across the nation with moderate success, she settled in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1947, where she experienced a remarkable national healing and evangelistic ministry until her death in 1976. After the rise of the charismatic movement in the mainline churches after 1960, Kuhlman enjoyed a massive following among both Catholic and Protestant neo-Pentecostals. Kuhlman often said she was given her healing ministry because somewhere some man had refused to obey the call of the Lord.

Not all Pentecostals have equally embraced all women’s ministries, however. From its beginnings in 1879, the Church of God in Christ, for example, has allowed women to evangelize but not to be ordained and serve as pastors of local churches. As a result, female ministers such as Earnestine Reems of Oakland, California, have had to leave the denomination in order to pasteur. Interestingly, the COGIC’s long-standing policy was recently challenged by Bishop O.T. Jones of Philadelphia, who shocked the church in 1991 when he ordained 15 women and began to assign them as pastors in his diocese.

---

THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

Unlike the Holiness and Pentecostal movements before it, the advent of the charismatic movement did not usher in significant breakthroughs for women in ministry. The new charismatics—participants in already established churches—were more intent on bringing renewal to their ranks than on championing “side issues” such as women’s ministries.

Furthermore, the infiltration and rise of the radical feminist movement in mainstream churches caused a conservative backlash among many charismatics. The 1970 publication of The Christian Family by Larry Christenson, a key leader in the Lutheran renewal, promoted a traditionalist view of women in ministry. Other independent charismatics influenced by the shepherding/discipleship movement, as well, took a hard-line stance against women in public ministry.

Nevertheless, a number of women rose to ministry prominence in the 1980s. These have included Agnes Sanford, Aimee Cortese, Anne Gimenez, Marilyn Hickey, Iverna Tompkins, Freda Lindsay, Ruth Carter Stapleton, Roxanne Brant, Rita Bennett and Frances Hunter. Many of these women were—and continue to be—major speakers at large charismatic rallies. Some, such as Gimenez and Hickey, have been featured on nationwide TV programs.

CATHOLIC CHARISMATICS

The Catholic charismatic movement developed after 1967, during a time of conservative reaction to many of the liberalizing trends that were dividing the church—including the demand of radical feminists for the ordination of women to the priesthood. In general, Catholic charismatics stood apart from such militant efforts and supported the traditional view. Influential charismatic communities such as the Word of God in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and the People of Praise in South Bend, Indiana, also took a traditional stand.
on a woman's place in the home and in ministry.

At the same time, virtually all Catholic charismatics recognized the important role played by Elena Guerra, the Italian nun whose letter to Pope Leo XIII led to a major encyclical on the Holy Spirit in 1897. Furthermore, many outstanding Catholic women took leadership roles in the renewal—women such as Jane Gallagher Mansfield, Dorothy Ranaghan, Josephine Massyngberde Ford, Judy Tydings, Edith Difato and Nancy Kellar.

**THIRD WAVE APPROACH**

Since about 1980, a charismatic movement called the “third wave” (evangelicals who manifest spiritual gifts but who disdain the labels “Pentecostal” or “charismatic”) has given birth to hundreds of congregations in America. A leading example of this movement is the Association of Vineyard Churches founded by popular speaker John Wimber. The Vineyard’s position on women in ministry may be typical of most third wave churches.

According to Jerry Ward, pastor of the Oklahoma City Vineyard, the issue has by no means been settled within the Vineyard movement. Although some women have been ordained in the southeast region, the practice “has not been generally accepted.” Ward says. As of 1992, women are not allowed to exercise pastoral oversight in Vineyard churches, though “women’s giftedness in ministry is fully utilized.” Women are most often used in husband and wife teams that minister in small cell groups.

**WHERE ARE WE NOW?**

In 1990, the Assemblies of God adopted a position paper reaffirming the church’s historic stand in support of a significant role for women in ministry. Yet some recent observers such as Edith Blumhofer, an Assemblies of God historian, believe that the prominence of female ministers as experienced in the flush of early Pentecostalism

---

**WHEN NOT TO BUILD**

**An Architect’s Unconventional Wisdom for the Growing Church**

Ray Bowman

with Eddy Hall

“If you’re among the growing number who uneasily wonder if the church is spending too much of its time, money, and energy on buildings...this book is for you.”

An architect/church-facilities consultant gives a commonsense approach to avoid unnecessary church building. A must read before building or expansion programs.

**Baker Book House**

Available at Christian Bookstores

ISBN 0-8010-1031-4

160 pages paper $9.95

---

**Ministries, Churches, Nonprofits**

Barbour & Company, Inc.

has the best in Christian books for your ministry, church or nonprofit organization. Let our books work for you as fund raisers, premiums, donor gifts, etc.

**Call Kathy Blume at**

1-800-262-3281

(Hours 9-5 Mon.-Fri.)

**FREE**
The only N. T. book in the Bible that doesn't end with "AMEN..." because we are living in it...

A. C. T. S.
ADVANCED CHRISTIAN TRAINING SCHOOL
"Preparing TODAY’S Christian for Today's battles."

* Develop your strength of Character
* Perfect your Calling
* Prepare for Service

Offering a well-rounded, affordable curriculum, with a variety of programs conveniently designed for any schedule.

Call TODAY: (908) 769-7300

an outreach of:
Faith Fellowship Ministries World Outreach Center
2177 Oak Tree Road, Edison, NJ 08820

*** Register with this ad and receive 10% off Tuition!!! ***