

The Presbyterian Outlook



Continuing The Presbyterian Tribune

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United Nations Week, October 16-24

DURHAM, N. C.

For the United Nations and World Peace

Almighty and ever-living God, our eternal Father, in whose will is our peace and strength: Teach thy warring children, we beseech thee, the way of understanding and peace.

Forgive us the national sin that so often besets us: the pride of wealth and power that leads us to take international action by ourselves alone, the selfishness that blinds us to the needs of other people, the suspicion and fear of the stranger within and outside our gates. In thy deep mercy, eternal God, grant that our beloved country may join with other nations in acts of compassion for a suffering humanity, in working together to reconcile differences between peoples, in seeking to establish a foundation of trust on which to build a more peaceful world.

Bless the United Nations, we pray thee, and all those international servants who work through it to save this and succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Do thou cause its work to prosper in many lands and among many peoples, that all thy children may be helped to find a finer and more abundant way of life.

Lead the entire world, our Father, to have a new birth of freedom and justice, of mercy and truth—to the glory of thy holy name.
AMEN.

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OLD IN SERVICE

CONTINUING THE PRESBYTERIAN TRIBUNE

NEW IN SPIRIT

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1 North Sixth St., Richmond 19, Virginia



SCHEDULE—Raymond I. Lindquist (right), pastor of the First church, Hollywood, Calif., checks the time schedule of two trains chartered for the first gospel train picnic held in that area. He was named honorary engineer of one of the two streamlined 16-car trains. With him are eight-year-old Johnny Blume and Conductor David Latham. More than 2,000 church members participated in the outing, going to Redlands for an all-day picnic. Dr. Lindquist named the outing, "Operation Chew Chew."—RNS Photo.

- Proposed in Mississippi: The bum's rush for "wrong" thinking.

Asked to Leave the County

Two men engaged in a missionary-type work in Mississippi have been asked by a mass meeting of 400 or more Holmes County citizens to pack up and leave.

The men are Dr. David R. Minter and A. E. Cox who serve on an isolated cooperative farm near Tchula.

Although they both emphatically denied charges that they advocate racial integration in Mississippi, all but a few were said to have joined in the vote at the high school auditorium demanding that they leave "for the best interests of the country."

The issue arose as a result of statements by four Negroes who were arrested a week earlier on a charge of "unlawful use of vulgar and obscene language" in the presence of a white high school girl. One of the boys, 19-year-old Curtis Freeman, pleaded guilty in a Tchula justice of peace court and was sentenced to six months on the county farm. The three others were dismissed.

Politicians to the Fore

The county's representative-elect in the state legislature, J. P. Love, acted as

JIUC Reconsideration

Consideration of the possible support of the International Christian University has been scheduled for the fall meeting of the Japan Mission, according to recent reports. At that time Secretaries C. Darby Fulton and S. Hugh Bradley of the Nashville Board are to be in attendance.

Reconsideration of the matter of supporting the JICU was ordered by the 1955 Presbyterian, U.S., General Assembly.

When the issue has been before the General Assembly in earlier years both Dr. Fulton and Dr. Bradley have spoken in vigorous opposition to participation in the enterprise.

spokesman for the citizens group. He told reporters that a tape recording, which was later played at the mass meeting, was made of the Negro boy's "confession." This was said to include something about "mixed swimming" on the co-op farm where Dr. Minter and Cox live.

Love also reported that the Negroes indicated that "a private school is operated out there where white children visited colored children for certain programs." He said the recording was made by County Attorney Pat Barrett.

When asked about it, Barrett said:

"This started as a routine investigation. Then we decided to get some witnesses so there'd be no question about coercion. Then some of those present, because of what the boys talked about, decided it would be a good idea to record it and call a meeting and let the people hear it and go into the matter further."

What happened to the tape was a matter of speculation. Barrett said it was not used in the trial "since the boy pleaded guilty. But that was the purpose of taking it."

Representative White of Lexington, explaining the activity of some of the officials, said:

"After all, it is the duty of law officers to know about what is going on to prevent trouble. So, when we have a situation like this they should let the people know about it."

When he was told that Dr. Minter and Cox denied that they had ever advocated mixing the races in Mississippi, White declared:

"We who have lived here for the past 20 years know what they are doing. We know the minds of these Negroes are being poisoned down there."

Would a group of citizens go to the

- From a continuing discussion of policy here is a contribution made 40 years ago

On the Status of Women in the Church

NOTE—The discussion on the status of women in the church begun here last week is being continued.

In 1916, as frequently before and since, the question was being discussed in the U.S. church. An interesting presentation at that time was in the form of a one-man minority report offered by James I. Vance, the noted minister of First church, Nashville, Tenn. Although the report of Dr. Vance was not adopted, it has its effect by modifying earlier restrictions. Moreover, it did not hurt Dr. Vance's reputation. Two years later he was elected Moderator of the Assembly.—Editors.

THE overtures from West Hanover Presbytery which brought about the appointment of your committee asked the Assembly "to affirm its belief as to the teaching of the Scripture with regard to women speaking or praying in public or in mixed religious assemblies."

Previous General Assemblies have passed on this question. In 1880, in response to an opture from the Synod of Texas asking: "Do our Standards forbid the introduction of women into our pulpits; and if not, is it an offense, according to the definition in the Rules of Discipline, Chapter III, Article I, for a minister or church Session to permit a woman to preach in one of our churches?" the following answer was returned:

"Inasmuch as the public preaching of the gospel is a branch of the ministerial office, to the authorization of which ordination or licensure is essential, and inasmuch as inspired Scripture, as interpreted by our Standards, nowhere, in the case of women, sanctions such a solemnity, but, on the contrary, does clearly prohibit it, this Assembly does therefore declare the assumption of this sacred office by women to be opposed to the advancement of true piety and to the promotion of the peace of the church, and this to such an extent as to make the introduction of women into our pulpits for the purpose of publicly expounding God's Word, an irregularity not to be tolerated. It is the settled doctrine of our church that women are excluded from licensure and ordination by the plain teaching of the Scriptures, and therefore cannot be admitted to our pulpits as authorized preachers of the Word; and also that they are prohibited from speaking by way of exhortation, or leading in prayer, or discussing any question publicly in the meetings of the church or congregation as a mixed assembly. This is according to the mind of the Spirit as expressed by Paul in I Corinthians 14:34-35, and I Timothy 2:11-12. But we do not hold that Christian women are forbidden to hold meetings among themselves for mutual edification and comfort by pious conversation and prayer, or to devise ways

DR. VANCE, who offered this one-man minority report to the General Assembly in 1916, was its Moderator in 1918, was pastor in Nashville's First church 1894-1900 and from 1910 until his death in 1939.

By JAMES I. VANCE

and means to aid the general branches of church work, such as Home and Foreign Missions, etc., or to teach a class in the Sabbath school. Work of this kind we approve and commend, but public speaking in the promiscuous assembly of the congregation or church is contrary to the Holy Oracles, and therefore should be prohibited and condemned by the Presbyteries and church Sessions."

In 1897, replying to an overture from West Lexington Presbytery, the Assembly referred the presbytery "to the clear deliverance of former Assemblies, which settle the principles involved in its overtures, and should guide all our church Sessions in their procedure."

The Old School Assembly of 1832 said:

"Meetings of pious women by themselves for conversation and prayer, whenever they can be conveniently held, we entirely approve; but let not the inspired prohibitions of the great apostle to the Gentiles, as found in his Epistles to the Corinthians and to Timothy, be violated. To teach and exhort or lead in prayer in public and promiscuous assemblies is clearly forbidden to women in the Holy Oracles."

In 1910 the Assembly reaffirmed previous deliverances.

Inasmuch, then, as the General Assembly has frequently passed on the matter referred to your committee, we may conclude that there is a doubt in the minds of some either as to the Scriptural authority for such deliverances or as to the present practice of the church, insofar as this practice runs counter to these deliverances. It may, therefore, be assumed that what the Assembly desires the committee to do is not simply to reaffirm past deliverances, but to present the Scripture bearing on woman's position in the church, and perhaps to make some recommendations based thereon.

Three Classes

The passages bearing on woman's work in the church may be divided into three classes: First, those which refer to her activities; second, those which refer to or involve her speaking in public assemblies; third, those which enjoin quietness, subjection, and silence on her part in the church.

Under the first head are such passages as the following:

"I beseech thee also, true yoke-fellow, help these women, for they labored with me in the gospel." Phil. 4:3.

"Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and alms deeds which she did." Acts 9:36.

"Phoebe . . . a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea . . . a helper of many and of mine own self." Romans 16: 1-2.

"Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow-workers in Christ Jesus." Romans 16:3.

"The church that is in their house." Romans 16:5.

"Mary, who bestowed much labor on you." Romans 16:6.

"But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him unto them, and expounded the way of God more accurately." Act 18:26.

And other whose names appear in similar connections.

From this it would seem that in the New Testament church women "labored in the gospel," "in good works and alms deeds," "as servants of the church," "as helpers of the apostles," as "fellow-workers in Christ Jesus," as "having churches in their houses," "in expounding the way of God," and as "bestowing much labor" on Christ's followers. We may conclude that similar activities should be permitted them in the church today. Just what forms of ministry are covered by these various phrases is not made entirely clear, but we may assume

May Women Speak?

Whatever may be true about women speaking now, it is absolutely certain it was not wrong down to the apostles' day. If, in the New Testament, woman is not allowed to do what the providence of God and the call of his people seem to indicate, then we have found one point in sharp distinction from all others, where the New Testament is narrower, more restricted and more in bondage than the Old Testament. The general theory has been that, with the coming in of the New Testament, old burdens were taken off, and liberality and enlargement granted to the church. On this principle, its friends

defend infant baptism. On this principle of enlargement, the gospel is shown to be sent to the Gentiles. Whatever, therefore, may have been the actual frame of mind in which the New Testament converts from the Jewish church entered upon their work, Scripture gives no reason to believe that they would for a moment think woman was not at liberty to speak whenever God bade her, and the people were willing to hear her.

—GEORGE P. HAYES in *May Women Speak?*, published about 65 years ago and quoted by Robert E. Speer in *Some Living Issues*.

that woman's place in the early church was not negative, but positive, and her work varied and important. It would seem also that there is abundant warrant in these passages for recommending that women be set aside for definite ministry as deaconesses.

Speaking in Public

The second group of Scripture references have to do with women speaking in public assemblies. Such passages are the following:

"It shall be in the last days, saith God, I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy." Acts 2:17.

This prophesying implies an audience. Nothing is said about it being an audience composed only of women. To such audiences these prophetesses spoke. Granted that their message was inspired, would the Holy Spirit have inspired them to violate Scripture in order to deliver their message?

Does not the mere fact that these daughters prophesied involve their right to speak in public assemblies?

Again, "Entering into the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we abode with him. Now this man had four virgin daughters, who prophesied." Acts 21:8-9.

There is no intimation that Paul took these four women to task for their unscriptural practice of speaking in public.

Again, "But every woman praying or prophesying with her head unveiled dishonoreth her head." I Corinthians 11:5.

The praying and prophesying were evidently in public, in the assembly, and the matter of which the apostle complains is not that they prayed and prophesied in public, but that they were in some cases unveiled. It was simply a matter of decorous attire. His instructions assume the propriety of women praying and prophesying provided their heads are veiled. The passage must be interpreted, like others bearing on this subject, in the light of Oriental customs.

Again, "They were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. . . . They, therefore, that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word." Acts 8:1, 4.

It is not conceivable that these dispersed disciples were all males.

There must have been women among them, but there is no sex line drawn in the "preaching" that was done. It was the same kind of preaching referred to in Acts 5:42, where we read that Peter and John "every day in the temple and at home ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ."

Again, "I desire therefore that the men pray in every place, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and disputing; in like

manner that women adorn themselves in modest apparel." I Timothy 2:8-9.

The reference is to public prayer, and to the way people should conduct themselves while engaged in it. The point is not that men should pray in public and that women should keep silent; but that men, when they pray, should observe certain things, and that women, when they pray, should observe certain things.

From these passages there is, therefore, Scriptural authority for women "prophesying," "praying," and "preaching." They did these things in the Apostolic Church, and if so, we may assume that they should be permitted as much liberty in the church today.

"Quietness and Subjection"

The third group of Scripture references are those passages which enjoin quietness, subjection, and silence on the part of women in the church. Such passages are the following:

"Let a woman learn in quietness with all subjection. But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over the man, but to be in quietness." I Timothy 2:11-12.

The reference here is evidently to authority and demeanor, and has no particular bearing on woman's ministry in the church. Certainly there is nothing in the passage to forbid her speaking in public.

Again, "Let the women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but let them be in subjection, as also saith the law." I Corinthians 14:34.

This is the *locus classicus* for previous deliverances of the Assembly closing the lips of the women. Does a fair interpretation of it warrant any such action?

Before examining the passage, let us remind ourselves of what such a literal interpretation involves. It would forbid women teaching in the Sunday schools. It would forbid women joining in congregational singing in the church. It would forbid women reading Scripture aloud in the responsive readings in public worship.

That the Bible would forbid such acts on the part of women is inconceivable.

Again, such an interpretation arrays this passage against the passages already quoted, in which women are allowed to speak in the church.

Again, such an interpretation would forbid much of the work which our women missionaries are now doing on the foreign field. Can we believe that in preaching and proclaiming the gospel to groups of heathen they are committing a sin by violating Scripture? It would also forbid a returned woman missionary from appearing before the congregation at home and giving them an account of her

work. Can we believe that in doing so she is violating Scripture and committing a sin?

It would also forbid a woman superintendent in charge of an orphanage appearing before a church court and telling the story of her work. Can we believe that in doing so she is violating Scripture and committing a sin? If these women can be trusted to do the work, can they not be trusted to tell about it?

Besides, is it not an exceedingly hazardous thing to build up such a radical theory of conduct on a single passage of Scripture?

Does not all this raise the question as to whether this passage has not been wrongly interpreted in the action of previous Assemblies?

Turning now to the passage itself, we find that the Greek word for silence occurs three times in succeeding paragraphs of this fourteenth chapter of I Corinthians, and that each time it is conditioned.

In verses 27 and 28, a man speaking in an unknown tongue is to keep silence when he has no interpreter. Of course, this does not mean that he is to keep silence when he has an interpreter.

In verse 30, "If anything is revealed to another that sitteth by, the first is to keep silence." Of course, this does not mean that he is to keep silence when there is no such revelation.

With women, the silence is also conditioned. The question is one of decorum. And the speaking from which they are to refrain is not preaching, but asking questions; for in verse 35 Paul adds that "if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home."

But, because they are not to disturb the public worship by asking questions, does it follow that they must never speak in the church?

Such a conclusion is not borne out by this passage, is in conflict with the plain teaching of other passages, and is at variance with the practice of some of the most devout and intelligent bodies of Christians.

Not Forbidden

Therefore, the following recommendations are submitted:

1. Women are recognized as ministering and laboring with the apostles in the New Testament church. The Assembly would encourage our women to prepare themselves by special training for such service, and would instruct Sessions to set aside devout and capable women in their congregations to the ministry of deaconesses.

2. While the Scriptures do not authorize official teaching and preaching by women, they do not forbid her speaking in the churches.