

THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH'S POSITION ON WOMEN LEADERSHIP IN THE CHURCH

I. INTRODUCTION

A. THE SITUATION TODAY

Apparently the debate of the role of women in the Church has reached massive proportions. Women empowerment strategies and feminists philosophy have penetrated almost every area of our society and have recently made inroads into the Church. It does not come to us as a surprise that many Evangelical Churches, Colleges and Seminaries have given up Biblical truths they have held since their beginning. A lot of books have been written affirming the new 'truth' regarding the role of women in the Church. Scripture passages teaching the well known roles of men and women have been re-interpreted.

Some say since the Church is a mystery, as Paul the Apostle observed in *Eph 5: 30*, such passages that present a traditional view, should be ignored altogether. Far and above that they say Paul was undoubtedly a staunch misogynist and all the passages he penned down reflected his anti-female bias. Others say these passages were added by later editors and do not reflect the intent of the original authors. The Church as the bastion of the truth of God is falling fast to the marching orders of the feminist army.

The effort to overthrow the purpose of God for men and women is not ultimately a human effort. It is the effort of the archenemy of God, Satan, who uses sinful human agents to attain his goals. That's why the controversy over the role of women in the Church is so tragic: The Church is being deceived by the lies of Satan and is actually becoming a part of his attack.

God has specific purposes/roles for men and women in the family, the Church and in society that are clear in Scripture, and we need to reaffirm them.

In responding to the current questions on whether or not Christian women should be ordained and lead Churches, one could take a lot of time and space in trying to demonstrate how far-reaching feminism and women liberation movements are. But, instead, we shall simply look at the Word of God which is the final authority on theological matters. If we understand what the Bible says, we will be able to deal with any error we may face in the theological battlefield. Although there is no passage more direct and comprehensive in addressing the role of women in the Church than *I Timothy 2: 9 – 15*, we are not going to exegete it except to pick up some verses that will support the Evangelical Church's position on the matter in question.

B. THE CURRENT SITUATION IN THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH TODAY

1. We, the present Leadership of this Church can't be so naive as to think that the members of the denomination understand and know full well the position of the Church with regard to women leadership either in our local Churches or at National and International levels.

For quite some time, many members of this Church, especially women, have been submissively subscribing and accepting the Church's position that leadership in the Church is vested in the hands of Christian men and that presiding elders and ordained Pastors can only be Christian men. They have also not been questioning the Church's practice that before one could be recognised as a fully fledged leader of a Local Church must first undergo an intensive theological training for three years in a recognised Bible institute that is also approved by the Evangelical Church Ordaining Leadership.

2. However, today, there are some concerned within the Evangelical Church which have expressed that the Church Leadership should put in writing her stance in as far as women leadership in the Church is concerned, hence the paper.

We also want to put on record that the I. B. E. Take this request as a positive and genuine request since, as we have already alluded to above that there is a very forceful infiltration of a feminist philosophy which seeks to mobilise women to take up any form of leadership, be it in the social, political, economic or even in the religious realms. And for that reason, we are exceedingly delighted to put it in black and white what the Evangelical Church viewpoint is on this matter.

C. THE APPROACH OF THE PAPER

We shall (1) first state the Evangelical Church position on this matter, which she has always held from her inception up 'til now; (2) We shall then look at the challenges that threaten the viscera of the Church's theological conviction on women leadership (3) and then look at Paul's response when such challenges confronted him during his time **by** using a case study taken from the Ephesian Church. Lastly, a **conclusion**.

II. THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH'S POSITION ON MEN LEADERSHIP

A. IN THE SOCIAL FAMILY (Marriage)

1. The Evangelical Church believes that the first man (Adam) created by God, was male. God's high calling for him was to be a visionary leader whose main responsibility was to provide Godly leadership in his biological family (Eve and children). Hence God formed him first and gave the initial instructions to him, "*You shall eat of all fruit...*"
2. After the male-man was created, God constructed a female-man out of a male-man's flesh. And He stated in no uncertain terms that her high calling into existence was to be Adam's help-meet (*Gen. 1: 18*). In other words a female (Eve) was created for male (Adam). The fact that he was created first confirmed that he was divinely ordained to be a leader of his biological family.

Hence when God advised for mutual co-existence in a matrimonial institution he directed it to the leader, Adam; He said, "*A man would leave his mother and father...*" (*Gen. 2: 25*).

Also He confirmed it after Adam and Eve had succumbed to Satan's temptation. Although it was a woman who first yielded to it, when God issued a family judgement, Adam tried to pass the buck by pointing a finger to his wife. But God still stood by the high purpose for which He created him. He was an everyday leader. So God said even though it was Eve who sinned first and led him to sin, He held Adam responsible for it since He had charged him with his family leadership responsibility; since the family had experienced a fall, God, quite rightly held the leader responsible for it. "*Thing fall and rise on a leader*"

3. Male family leadership is almost universally accepted and the Evangelical Church also subscribes to this view point, i.e., a leader in the family is the man.

B. THE SPIRITUAL FAMILY LEADERSHIP

1. IN THE CHURCH

As it has already been alluded to above (*No. 1*) that the biological family leadership was vested in the hand of a male-man, the Evangelical Church believes that God is absolutely consistent with Himself and with the philosophy of leadership. It is quite unlikely that He would make man a leader of his biological family and then turn

around to make him a subordinate of a female-man in the spiritual family (the Church). Leadership is leadership wherever it is found and its philosophy is the same and constant in practice, i.e., it exercises authority. Hence Paul, talking about the spiritual family leadership to Timothy said, “*I allow no woman to teach or have authority over men...*” (1 Tim. 2: 12). Just like in the biological family, no matter how exceedingly capable, or highly educated or enviably talented a woman can be in terms of leadership skills, her husband would still remain in the position of authority; and she would always play a supportive role to his leadership. A husband and wife cannot both lead their family interchangeably lest they get confused as to who does better than the other in terms of authority. God never meant a family to be an arena for a leadership (authority) competition.

2. A BIBLICAL VIEWPOINT

The Evangelical Church believes that Church leadership is unequivocally reserved for Christian male-man. This conviction is derived from the following Scriptural sources.

a) PAULINE’S PASTORAL TEACHINGS

When Paul was addressing the Corinthian believers, he taught them about the order of authority established within the Godhead and within creation: He said, “*The head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God*” (1 Cor. 11: 3), with evident reference to Gen. 2: 21 – 25. On the basis of such hierarchy, within the Godhead and creation – moving back and forth in his exposition between a metaphorical and literal meaning for the word ‘head’ (*kephale*) – he argues that a woman’s decorum in Christian **worship** should be honouring to both God and her husband (vv. 4 – 9); and that the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head (v. 10 b). Yet while he argues for order and decorum in the congregation on the basis of hierarchical orders within the Godhead and creation, Paul insists on the basis of eschatological redemption, that “*In the lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman*” (Gen. 1: 26 – 27) and that both find their source in God (vv. 11 -12).

In the midst of his first argument from hierarchical order (1 Cor. 11), Paul inserts, “*Because of the angels*” (v. 19 a). What he meant has been hotly debated. Presumably, he was asking that things be done decently and in order because of the presence of angels in the meetings of the Corinthian Christians. Then Paul argues from the very nature of things (vv. 13 – 15).

Finally, he argues from the custom of the Churches in general (v. 16), probably having in mind not only the Churches of the gentiles mission but also the Church in Jerusalem.

Whatever may be said about the covering of a woman's head, Paul assumes that she has the right to pray and prophesy in the Corinthian congregation when she has the 'sign of authority on her head' (*v. 10*). Whereas, Jewish women were screened off from worship and allowed little or no part in the services, Christian women were free to take a responsible part in the practical outworking of the principle that in Christ there is neither male nor female (*Gal. 3: 28*). Because of space limitation we cannot review all that states or implies in the New Testament regarding the status of women. Suffice it to say that spiritual equality and mutuality are also to be found in the phrase "*Neither....male nor female*" of *Galatians 3: 28*. It must be clear that the context in which this verse is stated is spiritual; it has nothing to do with Church leadership as some may want to believe. If we refer to what Paul has already stated about the order of authority in the Church, there should be no confusion now as to whether by *Gal. 3: 28* he is putting men and women on the same level of leadership in the Church, see also Paul's references to female fellow workers in *Romans 16: 1 – 3, 6, 12* and *Philippians 4: 2 – 3* and in the 'house rules' of *Colossians 3: 18 – 4: 1*, and *Ephesians 5: 21 – 6: 7*.

On the other hand, subordination and submission of women to men is prominent in *I Corinthians 14: 34 – 35*, ("*Women should remain silent in the Churches*"), *Colossians 3: 18* and *Ephesians 5: 22 – 24* ("*Wives, submit to your husbands*"), *I Timothy 2: 11 – 12* ("*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*"), *Titus 2: 5* ("*Subject to their husbands so that no one will malign the Word of God*") and *I Peter 3: 1 – 6* ("*Submissive to your husbands.... like Sarah who obeyed Abraham and called him her master*"). To justify such subordination and submission, not only is the created hierarchical order of *Genesis 2* cited, as in *I Corinthians 11: 3* ("*The head of the woman is man*") and *I Timothy 2: 13* ("*For Adam was formed first, then Eve*"), Eve's association with the curse and blame for the fall is appealed to: "Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner."

Lastly, it is worth noting that when Paul talks about the relationship in the home between the husband and wife he invokes the situation of the relationship of the Christian to Jesus Christ as significant for and understanding of male and female roles. This may well have its point of reference in the situation in the home since Adam and Eve were husband and wife, and the relation of Christ to the Church is the prototype for the conjugal union (*Eph. 5: 22 – 23*). These features are clearly trans-cultural, and it would not do to say that this passage does not provide principles of action that affect the relationship between men and woman in the present context of the Church.

May we emphasise once again the point made by Paul that women are free to participate in the worship service including prophesying "preaching", "praying" because preaching and praying have nothing to do with the leadership role in the Church (*I Corinthians 11: 5*); and when Paul says, "The women should keep quiet in the Churches, for they are not authorised to speak, but should take a

secondary and subordinate place, just as the law also says - *Genesis 3: 16 (I Corinthians 14: 33 – 35)*. We believe it was a circumstantial phenomenon. It would appear to us that the passage relates to disruptions apparently occasioned by whisperings and questionings during the divine service that interfered with the proper worshipful atmosphere at Corinth. The fact that women, not men, are mentioned here is because they were the principal source of disruption of this type, perhaps because they were less carefully instructed than men and would be more likely to raise questions.

b) JESUS CHRIST'S PRACTICE (*Mark 3: 13 – 19*)

Although Jesus had a good number of women disciples and followers who faithfully followed him, even to the place of death, when he chose the 12 Apostles whose responsibility was to lead and man the Church after he had gone, he never appointed even a single woman into such a position (*Matthew 10: 1 – 4*) it was all men. In fact from the very onset when He prayed overnight to (*Luke 6: 12 16*) solicit His Father's approval for the future Church leaders, the next day His Father led Him to choose 12 men. Quite a good number of these women who had supported and ministered (*Mark 15: 40*) to His needs and the needs of His male disciples, were not chosen into the leadership, it was always men.

Some Bible critics say, Jesus, by choosing only men into Church leadership was being accommodative to a sinful Jewish culture which discriminated and looked down upon women; but this can't be any further from truth. Jesus never committed sin or an error. But by choosing men only into Church leadership, He was being consistent and compliant with God's will for Church leadership. In the Old Testament leadership of God's children was always given to Godly men, like Moses, Joshua, etc.

c) IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

In spite of Jewish tradition, the Old Testament does not teach that women are inferior. The Old Testament teaches that women are spiritually equal to men.

(i) THEY HAD THE SAME RESPONSIBILITIES AS MEN

- **To Obey the Law**

In *Exodus 20* the Ten Commandments are given to both men and women. From the beginning, God laid down the principle that both men and women were responsible for obeying the laws.

- **To Teach the Law**

Deuteronomy 6: 6 – 7 says that both men and women are responsible to teach their children to obey God's law and to love Him. *Proverbs 6:*

20 says, “My son, keep thy father’s commandments, and forsake not the law of thy mother.” The assumption is that both sexes are responsible to teach the law of God to their children, which means they must both know the Law of God.

- **To Participate in the Festivals**

In *Exodus 12* both men and women were involved in the Passover, one of the Greatest Celebrations of the Jewish calendar.

- **They Had the Same Protection as Men**

Penalties given for crimes against women are the same as those for crimes against men (*Exodus 21: 28 – 32*). God values equally the life of a man and the life of a woman.

- **They Took the Same Vows as Men**

The greatest vow an Israelite could take was the Nazarite vow. It was a vow of separation from the world and devotion to God. Women as well as men could take this vow (*Num. 6: 2*). The highest level of spiritual commitment was not restricted to men.

- **They Had the Same Access to God as Men**

God dealt directly with women in the Old Testament. He didn’t go through men every time He wanted to communicate with them. For example, the angel of the Lord (a pre-incarnate manifestation of Christ) appeared to Hagar (*Gen. 16: 8 – 13*) and the mother of Samson (*Judg. 13: 2 – 5*).

- **They Had the Same Privileges as Men**

Women as well as men served God in special ways. *Nehemiah 7: 67* tells of a choir made up of 245 singing men and women. They led the people to praise God through music. According to *Exodus 38: 8* women served at the door of the tabernacle, possibly to instruct women who were coming to worship or to clean the tabernacle grounds. From such passages as *Deuteronomy 12: 10 – 12*, *1 Samuel 1*, and *2 Samuel 6*, we learn that women shared in the great national celebrations of Israel.

(ii) THEIR SEPARATE ROLE

Although women shared spiritual authority equality with men in the old Testament, they did not have the same role. Nonetheless, that does not in any way diminish their spirituality.

a) They Did Not Serve As Leaders

There were no women rulers in the history of either Israel or Judah. It should be borne in mind that this was not just a cultural practice since leaders who led God's children were appointed by Him. If anyone believes that God was complying with the cultural practice of sinful people, we might find ourselves making a debilitating error or find error with the Holy God who has no trace of sin or mistake. He could not be part of human sinful practices or tradition.

Deborah was a Judge not a political leader, who acted primarily in the role of an arbiter, and certainly 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 an 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.

b) They had no ongoing prophetic ministry

No woman in the Old Testament had an ongoing prophetic ministry such as that of Elisha or Elijah. There are five women in the Old Testament who were referred to as prophetesses.

1. MIRRIAM

Miriam was Moses' sister and is called a prophetess in *Exodus 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.

2. DEBORAH

Deborah is describes 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 an ongoing prophetic work.

3. HULDAH

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.

4. NOADIAH

Noadiah was a false prophetess who opposed the work on Nehemiah in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem (*Neh. 6: 14*)

5. THE WIFE OF ISAIAH

Isaiah's wife is called a prophetess in *Isaiah 8: 3* because she gives birth to a child whose name had prophetic meaning. There is no record of her speaking a prophecy. This passage indicates that the word prophetess can be used in a general way.

The Old Testament differentiates the role of women from men. Women are not inferior to men but have a different role.

(iii) IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. THEIR SPIRITUAL EQUALITY

The spiritual equality of men and women is declared in *Galatians 3: 28*, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus". 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, i.e. 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.

They had the same spiritual responsibilities as men.

All the commands, promises and blessings of the New Testament are given equally to men and women. We all have the same spiritual resources and the same spiritual responsibilities.

They had the same access to Jesus as men.

Jesus first revealed that He was the Messiah to a **woman** (*John 4*). Jesus healed women (*Matt. 8: 14 – 15*), showing them as much compassion as He did men; He taught women (*Luke 10: 38 – 42*) at the cross and allowed them to minister to Him (*Luke 8: 3*). At the cross, the women remained after the men had fled (*Matt. 27: 55 – 56*); A woman first saw the resurrected Christ (*Mark 16: 9; John 20: 11 - 18*). But all these have nothing to do with the leadership role in His ministry.

2. THEIR SEPARATE ROLE

They did not serve as leaders. There is no record in the New Testament of a woman Apostle, Pastor, Teacher/Evangelist or Presiding Elder. The New Testament does not record any sermon or teaching by a woman.

They 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 Mirriam 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, Presiding Elder, Evangelist or Apostle. Needless to say the Evangelical Church is open to women ministering in Word/preaching.

C. WHY THE TRADITIONAL EVANGELICAL CHURCH VIEWPOINT WITH REGARD TO WOMEN LEADERSHIP CHALLENGED TODAY

There are factors that have adversely affected God’s purposes for males and females in their mutual co-existence in this world. We may not be able to exhaustively discuss these details; but we are going to state only but few of them for the purpose of our discussion.

Firstly: The Fall (*Genesis 3: 16*)

- a) When God created the male-man and female-man, He blessed them saying they must be, “Fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and subdue it; and **rule over** the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and over every living creature that moves upon the earth” (*Gen. 2: 28*). It is worthy noticing that both female and male were accorded by God the ruler-ship over all living things; but certainly not over each other.
- b) God had stated in no uncertain terms, in the first pages of the Bible, that a female (Eve) was created for a specific purpose – to be a male’s (Adam) helpmeet, saying, “It is not good for a male-man to live alone, I need to make a suitable partner for him” (*Gen 2: 18 – Contemporary English Version*). The male-man was created for a special purpose – to be a visionary leader. And the female-man was to be a helper leader.
- c) But when sin came in, there was a swing of pendulum from mutual existence to rules-hip relations. In this case, the male-man as the first being ruled over his wife. But God did not command this; He only predicted what would happen as a result of their sin. He said to a woman who was the first one to succumb to the devil’s temptation, “You will suffer terribly when you give birth. But you will still desire your husband, and he will rule over you” (*Genesis 3: 16*). Let it be clear that God did not command man (Adam) to rule over his wife (Eve). But He did state that the purpose for which man was created was to lead his family (his wife, Eve) (*Eph. 5: 21 – 24*) and later their children.

- d) Since man became sinful he lorded it over his wife and that's where wife abuse began. As a response to this abuse woman started feeling the pressure of evil ruler-ship. So it all started with the fall. Since then, up 'til now women have not been feeling happy about their status.

Secondly: Cultures and Traditions

- a) All cultures and traditions are the same and sinful since they are manmade. The custodians and designers of culture and customs, in most cases are men. So most cultural and traditional practices have a tendency to relegate women into a second class citizen or elevate men to better living conditions and privileges than women. So women would and quite rightly so, tend to react against living under the line of the privileged few (men).
- b) Time and space won't allow us to trace up all atrocities that prevail in different nations of the world. Suffice it to say there is a lot of truth in what women complain about concerning the way men treat them. So, justifiably, no one wants to be oppressed and pushed around, so women are trying to find ways and means to be at par with man in all spheres of life including family and Church leadership.

Thirdly: Feminism

- a) Before we comment on this subject, it would help us to define it so that everyone would know what it is all about and the driving philosophy behind it.
 - (i) **Definition:** Essentially, feminism constitutes a critique of culture and society in the light of sexism; i.e., the oppression and injustices meted out against women on the grounds of their gender. Feminism is primarily concerned with the unmasking of such injustices, and it aims at their elimination, thereby effecting women's
 - (ii) Some feminists would like to believe that feminism is not necessarily a movement of women because at the centre of its definition lies the issue of injustice, this effectively means that women are not only concerned about women oppression, they would be equally concerned with any form of injustice whether it is within their camp or men's camp or children arena. No doubt in most cases, women will find themselves at a disadvantage, given the pervasiveness of male bias in the ordering of society.
 - (iii) Though it is more likely that it is the victims of sexism who will more readily champion a cause which aims at its elimination, this does not rule out the possibility of men participating in feminism. (Armstrong, Karen. The Gospel According to Women. London, 1986)
- b) Its History
 - (i) The struggle for the emancipation of women is as old as the 19th century. During this time the feminist movement was concerned with the right of women to participate in the public sphere of society. They demanded

their right to education and protested against their unwarranted domestication. They were concerned with their having been relegated to second rate status, being legally defined with reference to their husbands. In particular, women agitated for the right to vote, a right which they were grudgingly granted in the 1920s. (John Stuart Mill, England). The wave of feminist movement subsided then; but it was rekindled in the 1960s although it is not known what triggered this re-emergence of feminism (see documents of Vatican II p.267)

Women during the mid-60s were already politically emancipated in the secular society while the Church, especially the Roman Catholic was keeping them in the basement of their office.

- (ii) Women observed this anomaly and they began to do theological research to expose the **cultural** and **theological** roots of the religious-based sexism. Feminist **theology** and feminist **hermeneutics** are the results of this effort.

The central issue that is being debated here is: Is the Bible conducive or inhibitory to the quest for liberation by women?

c) The Feminist Culture of the Bible

(i) The Radical View

- There is now literature pertaining to a feminist perspective in sociology, psychology, law and theology. The leading proponent of the radical view is Mary Daly; she says the Bible is of no use to women in their research for emancipation. She said that because, "The Bible is not only inherently patriarchal, b, both in its doctrines and its statements about women, but it has also been used as a tool to keep women down." Theresa M. Hinga, Women Liberation Pg 40.
- She points out that the Bible speaks of God in male categories and images almost to the total exclusion of female imagery. She contends, "The Bible portrays God as a super male figure (father, king, judge, etc) to whom everything else is subject. For Daly, this depiction of God as male tends to reinforce male dominance in society. She succinctly puts it, "When God is male, the male is God" (Daly 1973: 13).
- She considers it wrong for the Bible to present only men as role models to be emulated, e.g., the figure of Christ, with whom Christian teaching demands that the Christian should identify. She said it is rather preposterous for women to identify with a man. This demand for identification with Christ poses complex problems. The unique savoir of humanity is male, the son of a male deity.
- Mary's words to the angel also present a problem to Daly. She says her humility and submissiveness, the attitude, "Be it done unto me according to thy will" is detrimental to women who wish to break out

of their submissive status. She says Adam, Eve and the fall narratives are the myth (Daly, 1973: 45). She says the insistence that the subordination of women is divinely ordained implies that for women to attempt to resist is tantamount to a sinful rebellion against God's will.

- She concludes that the Bible is useless in women's search for liberation; thus recommends a total rejection of the Bible as irredeemably patriarchal and hence conducive to the oppression of women.

(ii) **The Moderate View “The Baby In The Bath Water”**

- The feeling here is that the radical view of the Scriptures to a certain extent is unwarranted and a total rejection of the Scriptures is uncalled for. Subscribing to Daly's idea would be tantamount to throwing the baby out with the bath water. This view contends that there are elements in the Bible which can be salvaged and used by women in the quest for their emancipation.
- The reformist feminists argue that to totally reject the Bible as historical text is also to throw away a considerable amount of women's history and heritage.
- This view also says to reject the Bible would be to lose touch with many women whose lives the Bible plays a very important role. The reformists see the Bible as a source of hope and inspiration for many. And they feel they need to develop a feminist hermeneutics, and perhaps to reconstruct the Bible.

(iii) **Feminist Hermeneutics**

- There are feminist scholars who take as their point of departure the observation that there are elements in the Bible which can be salvaged to act as a resource for women seeking emancipation.
- They say that feminists can make use of the prophetic tradition in the Bible. Prophets rose up to criticize social injustices and called for repentance. This view takes feminists as critics of society in so far as it is oppressive to women. They can appropriate for themselves the prophetic rule. Furthermore, in prophetic tradition, God is often depicted as being on the side of the oppressed. E.g., the Exodus event. The prophets, also, did not get tired of reminding the Israelites of how God liberated them from Egypt. They take Jesus as a prophet who depicted the liberation of captives and the poor (*Luke 4: 18*).

After looking at the three views one cannot help but observe that Churches need to diligently teach their congregants what God's purposes are for both men and women. It also becomes extremely important that congregants be advised against spiritualizing straight historical narratives in the Bible; or else they find spiritual meanings in every portion of Scripture, e.g., Jesus called, "Thabitha Cum"; feminists say Jesus was calling upon all women of the world to rise up from their slumber and eject their male oppressors.

III CONCLUSION

Space and time won't allow us to exegete *I Tim. 2: 1 – 19*. However, there is a booklet on this passage that has already been compiled. Those who have interest may procure this document for further reading.

Otherwise the Evangelical Church's position on women leadership in the Church has already been clearly explained above. In closing, one would say, the Church has to find a way of practically recognizing women's ministry in the Church. That is, we have women who are spiritually and doctrinally mature and capable of sound ministering not only among other women but also to the entire body of Jesus Christ. We would agree on having Ministering Elders as opposed to Presiding Elders from whom Church leaders emerge.

Again, it must be noted that the Evangelical Church does not forbid women from preaching the Word of God in the Church. We make a clear distinction between preaching the Word and being leader of the Church.

We hope the above explanation is clear to every family member of the Evangelical Church.

AMEN