



THE COVENANT QUARTERLY

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PROPHESYING DAUGHTERS

Fredrik Franson

Historical Note and Comment

In a day when considerable attention is being given to the evangelical roots of feminism it is most appropriate that Sigurd F. Westberg, missionary, professor, and archivist, should have translated the following article, written more than eight decades ago by missionary Fredrik Franson. It is further evidence of the fact that the evangelicalism of the nineteenth century was much further ahead in its thinking than many who parade under the banner of evangelicalism today.

Franson was a pioneer in many ways—charismatic evangelist, zealous missionary, visionary founder of the Scandinavian Alliance Mission [now the Evangelical Alliance Mission], faith healer, and advocate of feminism. The article was originally published in German and translated into Norwegian, then later translated into Swedish by Franson himself and published in *St. Paul* in April, 1896, by the Bible Women's Home Publishers. Now, eighty years later, it is translated into English. We have been unable to ascertain the date of its original publication in German. We still await a definitive biography of Franson, although there have been earlier attempts [cf. O.C. Grauer, ed., *Fredrik Franson: Founder of the Scandinavian Alliance Mission of North America* (Chicago: Sandinavian Alliance Mission, n.d.) and David B. Woodward, *Aflame for God: Biography of Fredrik Franson, Founder of the Evangelical Alliance Mission* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1966)]. E. Torjeson of TEAM is currently preparing such a full-scale biography of this remarkable man, a kind of nineteenth-century St. Francis.

Franson, born in 1852 in Sweden, came to the United States in 1870, settling in Saunders County, Nebraska. He was converted in 1872. In 1875 he met Dwight L. Moody and came under his influence. Franson was soon attracted by the dispensationalism of John Nelson Darby. He believed in the imminent return of Christ and thus the need for spreading the Gospel as quickly as possible. He began his international travels in 1881 by journeying to Sweden. In subsequent years, as a flaming evangelist and a missionary with burning zeal, he traveled extensively in Scandinavia, Europe, North Africa, and America.

During the course of his travels he engendered a great deal of interest in world missions, recruiting missionary candidates, raising funds for their support, training them in brief missionary Bible courses, and sending them out, often without adequate preparation. For example, he conducted four such "schools" in Brooklyn, Chicago, Minneapolis, and Omaha in three and a half months in 1889-1890.

Amidst these zealous efforts he wrote "Prophesying Daughters," in which he examined the role of women in Scripture, or the positions of responsibility of women in Scripture. He found nearly one hundred such references. Through reading the Scriptures as well as some of the church fathers, such as Theodoret, Chrysostom, Theophilus, and Luther, he advocated strongly women's place in the evangelistic and missionary work of the church. On occasion Franson forgot his exegesis and launched into a homily with illustrations to make his point. He argued that women are to be "a help" not only in temporal things, but in spiritual matters, too. In fact, he argued persuasively that women could indeed be more effective than men. And yet, his male chauvinism is evident in many ways. To cite but two examples from many, he indicated that women might "most inexpensively carry on the work" and therefore ought be used. Again, he expressed some surprise that Deborah, the Old Testament judge, should have had such intellectual capacities. So it is a curious monograph, on the one hand letting his conservative mentality and chauvinism express surprise about the ability of women and yet, on the other hand, letting his evangelism advocate strongly the importance of women in the work of evangelism and missions.

He examined 1 Timothy 2:12,13 and 1 Corinthians 14:3,4, verses most frequently used against women's participating in the work of the church. He stressed the fact that these two passages, which appear to be against a spiritual ministry for women, are often made the basis for a doctrine the rest of Scripture is against. Franson suggested that that is how heresy begins. He concluded that women are to preach, evangelize, and minister as do men if God has called them to such ministries. His final paragraph is interesting in the light of present day feminism. He encouraged women to preach and to evangelize but not to spend their time defending their rights to do so. Was it male chauvinism that led him to suggest this? Or did his missionary zeal compel him to plead for getting on with the task?

While the exegesis of the various texts may leave something to be desired, the general thrust is what is important. Recent studies have indicated clearly the role of women in nineteenth-

century evangelicalism. See, for example, Donald W. Dayton, *Discovering Our Evangelical Heritage* [New York: Harper & Row, 1976], Chapter 8, "The Evangelical Roots of Feminism," and a series of articles entitled "A Woman of Her Times" by Della E. Olson, in *The Evangelical Beacon*, May 27, June 10, July 8, August 5, August 19, September 2, 1975. Franson's article is part of this growing evidence of the role of women in the church's ministry in the nineteenth century.

In view of the contemporary debate over the ordination of women in many denominations, this interesting monograph by Franson is helpful. The key for Franson, as for many, is Paul's word in Galatians 3:28, "There is neither male nor female: for you are alive in Christ Jesus." And, therefore, there ought be "prophesying daughters" as well as sons! So be it.

Glenn P. Anderson

**PROPHESYING DAUGHTERS
PREFACE TO THE SWEDISH EDITION**

This little paper was written and published by me several years ago in the German language.

From German it was translated a few years ago into *Norwegian*.

Various representations have been made to me about issuing it in the Swedish language, but not until now have I given my consent to it.

That was chiefly because I did not wish to be drawn into controversial questions.

Since, in the meantime, I have been vividly convinced (and that through the experience of many years) that precisely the sisters can best of all win an entrance and most inexpensively carry on the work, especially in the dark places, leaving the gathering of new converts to the congregations and the *teaching ministry* in general to the brethren, I hesitate no longer to let it go out in Swedish dress. It is published by the Bible Women's Home Publishers in St. Paul, Minnesota.

May God's blessing rest on it, as well as on the many prophesying daughters who have already carried out and still carry out such a glorious work among our Swedish people. May their number increase!

St. Paul, Minnesota, April, 1896
F. Franson

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even upon the menservants and maidservants in those days, I will pour out my Spirit" (Joel 2:28,29).

"For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day; but this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your

and your old men shall dream dreams; yea, and on my menservants and my maidservants in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy" (Acts 2:15-18).

What the Bible says about the woman's place in evangelistic work and prophesying is a very important question, especially in our day, when, not only here at home but also in the heathen lands, so many doors are open for mission work. Many of China's 400 million inhabitants thirst for the Gospel, which can now be preached everywhere and, in most cases, under the protection of the authorities. In Japan reception of the Gospel is so great that it has been said that he who would see heathenism in Japan must hurry out there. Thousands of witnesses are needed, however, in order that Japan may not only learn to know Christianity but the living Christ. In India there are 250 millions and in Africa about as many who have the right to receive from us the glad tidings of Jesus Christ which we know. Oh, how many villages and cities there are, not only in Germany, especially when we think of the Catholic population, where the pure Gospel is not heard and where it is necessary that the Gospel be preached by those who have personally experienced the power that is in Jesus Christ. The field is thus very large, and when we consider that nearly two thirds of all converted persons in the world are women (based on previous experience), the question of woman's work in evangelization is of highest importance. In China 30,000 people go into eternity every day without having heard the Gospel. Now if there is no prohibition in the Bible of public service by women, either in political franchise or in working in the service of the Lord through evangelism, then we stand face to face with the fact that the devil has succeeded in excluding nearly two thirds of the total number of believers—damage to God's work so great that it can scarcely be described.

We will now briefly go through the places in the Scriptures that allude to the position of women. The first place in the Bible that speaks of woman tells us that she shall be "a help" to the man. If she is a help in the temporal, why not also in the spiritual! Since she is now often a help, for example, as a teacher in public schools, why not also a teacher of the heathen and the unconverted in general! Since she is permitted to practice as a physician, why not also as a physician of souls! Since her gifts are used in the service of sin, as for drama, or as a novelist, and so forth, why should not her great influence for good and gain be sought for the Lord who created her! Since her gifts and influence are more and more acknowledged in various areas, why not also in the spiritual! Since she was a help in bringing sin and evil into the world, why should she not be permitted to help, and that in all ways she can, to remove sin out of the world

again! Since she, for example, had such great influence on her husband for evil, namely, to get him to take of the forbidden fruit, why not also use her influence over men, as well as over her own sex, to please the Savior?

In Judges 4:4-6 we read: "Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at that time [Sw: ". . . was a judge in Israel"] . . . and the people of Israel came up to her for judgment." There we find already in the Old Testament how a woman occupied a very prominent position. Deborah was "a prophetess." In what, then, did the profession of a prophetess consist? Naturally, the same as a prophet's profession. But the old prophets not only predicted coming events, they also remonstrated with the people both publicly and individually about their public and secret sins and admonished them about repentance and holiness. Who would dare to say that the work of the prophets was anything else? In the second place, Deborah held the profession of a judge. It is generally said that women have more heart than head, while men have more head than heart, but here we see a remarkable situation in that God has so ordered that the children of Israel should come to a woman to be judged. It strikes us as very strange that precisely a woman should have been chosen to a profession in which sharp thinking was required and that the many prominent thinkers of Israel's male population consequently had to go to her to be judged. And yet we read (at verse 5) quite clearly that this was the case. We see here that a "female judge" [Sw. has a feminine form] carried out the profession of judge in exactly the same way as a "male judge," from which follows naturally that a "prophetess's" profession was exactly the same as a prophet's.

In the third place, we read something that strikes us yet more strangely, namely, that this woman was *commander-in-chief* in war. Thus she summoned her general, Barak, and said to him (verse 6): "Go and draw toward Mount Tabor and take with thee 10,000 men." In the fourth place, our amazement reaches its high point when we read that Deborah was also married. She was called Lappidoth's wife. Her husband was living, therefore, for otherwise she would have been called Lappidoth's widow. The next place to which we would refer is Micah 6:4: "For I brought you up from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of bondage; and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam." Here is a woman who lived even before the time of the judges, who is named as one of the three leaders of the remarkable army that went out of Egypt. This woman was a prophetess (Exodus 15:20)—not only that, but one of the leaders of the whole nation of Israel, among whom were 600,000 men of Israel (Exodus 12:37), besides "a mixed multitude" (verse 38).

We read further, in 2 Chronicles 34:22, about the prophetess Huldah, to whom the king of Israel sent a deputation of five men, among whom was Hilkiah the high priest and Shaphan the secretary, to ask her about the will of God with reference to the book of the law that had been found. What would be thought in our time if an emperor or a king should send, for example, an archbishop to a woman to seek her counsel? Such things strike us as queer, but not so in the sight of God. Huldah's reply is sharp and decisive like that of a person who had constant communication with God. The indication is that in all of Israel there was not a single man who could give counsel, not even the high priest himself, but a woman had to be teacher of the whole nation. When the high priest carried out the king's command he was much more humble than most priests in our day.

In Numbers 11:29 we find some splendid words of Moses when Joshua wanted to stop some people from prophesying: "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them!" That women were included in this desire we see clearly from the words "all the Lord's people" as well as from the fact that his own sister was a prophetess. This desire of Moses, as we know, was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. The next place is Psalm 68:12 [this verse is translated directly from the Swedish quotation, because the RSV is quite different; the reference in the English Bible is 68:11]: "The Lord kept his word, great became the multitude of women celebrating victory." All the later translators have had to acknowledge that the women, far from being omitted, are directly in view. According to another translation this passage is rendered so: "The Lord let the word go out with great multitudes of women proclaiming the glad news." Just as the women of that time had the commission to proclaim victory over the enemy armies, so they have now the commission to proclaim the glad news of the victory on Golgotha. At the sight of the greatness of the harvest, we cannot help but burst out: "Praise be to God for the promise of the great multitudes of women who will proclaim the glad tidings."

We read further in Joel 2:28: "And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy. . . . Even upon the menservants and maidservants in those days I will pour out my Spirit." Against these clear statements some have tried to raise the objection that this prophecy will be fulfilled only in the millennial kingdom. We concede gladly that the ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy will occur at the beginning of the millennial kingdom, after Israel has returned to Palestine and been set free from the tyranny of the Antichrist and received the twice repeated assurance: "My people shall never again be put to shame"

(verses 26,27). But to deny that this prophecy received a previous fulfillment on the day of Pentecost is the same as to deny the apostle Peter's divine commission and inspiration, for it is he who clearly says about the wonder of Pentecost, "This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel. . . ." It is very interesting to note the difference between Joel and Acts. Through Joel God says, "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh," and repeats it in verse 29. Through Peter, by contrast, also twice repeated, "I will pour out of my Spirit. . . ." What happened on the day of Pentecost was, therefore, only the first drops of the great ocean of the Spirit that will come at the beginning of the millennial kingdom. God be praised for these drops, and God be praised that these are of exactly the same kind and species as the ocean itself! If the daughters and the maidservants are to prophesy at the great mission at the establishment of the kingdom, then they shall do it also now, for every drop in the ocean is like every other drop.

When we turn to the New Testament we find at once "a prophetess, Anna" (Luke 2:36). No man who was active at the time of Jesus' birth, not even the old, Spirit-filled Simeon, has the title of prophet, but about a woman we read: "And there was a prophetess, Anna, . . . she spoke of him to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem." We are not here given any range of numbers of hearers. If she met one, she spoke with that one, and if she met ten or more at one time, she spoke with them. She was a prophetess, and she carried out the work of a prophet, which, according to 1 Corinthians 14:3, was to speak to people for their edification, exhortation, and comfort. If we, then, go to the time when Jesus himself was active here on earth, we will find that he explained most definitely that *each and every one must use those pounds (gifts) that he or she has received, and he threatens with severe punishment all those who hide their pound in a cloth.* When, therefore, a woman has the gift of an evangelist, how can she dare to neglect to use such a gift? "Cursed is he who does the work of the Lord with slackness" (Jeremiah 48:10). How much more are not they cursed who do not seek to do it at all? It should be clear to every one of God's children that he always requires all that we can do for him. If you have only Sundays to give to God, then use them for him; if you have an occupation that demands your time in the summers, use the winters for God; if you can, on the other hand, use all your time directly in the work of the Lord, then do it. If you cannot prophesy, then pray; but if you can do both—so much the better. But would there not then be too many workers and ambassadors? someone asks. There will be time enough to consider that point when all the heathen are converted, or at least have heard the Gospel, but until that happens there will be too few and not too

many. All who have to do with sending out evangelists soon become aware that only a very small number actually go out of those who seem to be prepared for it. One has old debts to pay, another has an old mother to care for, a third is sickly and cannot trust God to make him well, a fourth has not received power to lead souls to Jesus in his own neighborhood, and so on. Consequently, there is no danger at all that too many will go out. That a sister can serve God just as well in her earthly employment may be true, but it may also just as well be false. If she, by earlier preparation or on other grounds, has an earthly calling, she is surely a true servant of Christ if she is faithful in her calling. As it says in Ephesians 6:7, even such "serve the Lord." But if she, on the contrary, has the gifts of an evangelist and nothing hinders her from using all her time for the Lord, then she cannot "serve the Lord equally well in an earthly calling," at least as long as there are over fifty million people who every year go into eternity, most of whom have never heard a word about salvation in Jesus. In their sloth many seek comfort in the doctrine of predestination. I often think of the answer that the great missionary Carey received from an English clergyman when he, more than one hundred years ago, as a simple shoemaker, asked if it were not about time to think about the conversion of the heathen. The clergyman replied: "Oh, my dear friend, when God wants to convert the heathen, he will do it without either you or me." A magnificent humility! But the shoemaker was not satisfied with this; with the help of God he learned three Indian languages at the shoemaker's bench, after which, trusting God, he sailed to India and became one of the first and most progressive missionaries of his time, a means in God's hand of translating the Bible into several Hindu languages. It is amazing how one can get such a false idea as that not all God's children should use all their powers in all ways to save the lost world. There are, so to speak, many people in the water about to drown. A few men are trying to save them, and that is considered well and good. But look, over there a few women have untied a boat also to be of help in the rescue, and immediately a few men cry out, standing there idly looking on and therefore having plenty of time to cry out: "No, no, women must not help, rather let the people drown." What stupidity! And yet this picture is very fitting. Men have, during all these centuries, shown that they do not have the power alone to carry out the work for the salvation of the world; therefore, they ought be thankful to get some help. But let us continue. In John 4:28 we read about the Samaritan woman that on the same day she became acquainted with Jesus, she persuaded a whole town to seek the Savior. We do not read that Jesus investigated, when the inhabitants of the town came out to him, to determine whether this woman had spoken to two or two hundred at one

time, but we read that this great woman missionary brought a great joy to the warm heart of the Savior so that he burst out: "Lift up your eyes, and see . . . the fields!" That many of these Samaritans were converted through the woman we see clearly in verse 39. "And many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony." The same expression is used of Jesus' speech in verse 41: "And many more believed because of his word." The woman evangelist brought souls to the faith through "her word," and the evangelist above all evangelists, Jesus (Luke 4:18), who was equally the proclaimer of the glad tidings and their subject, brought yet more to the faith through "his word." In Samaria there was, therefore, a multitude of converts, some of whom were converted through a male evangelist and others through a female evangelist. Jesus was not ashamed to take a woman as a partner; how much less ought we to be ashamed of it!

We have now looked at the mission of women in the Old Testament, at the birth of Christ, and at the time of his life down here. We will now take an example after his resurrection. In Mark 16:10 we read of Mary Magdalene: "She went and told those who had been with him." This message of his resurrection, which was to be preached to the farthest boundaries of the earth, was first proclaimed by a woman, and not only to the eleven but to "them that had been with him." Mary Magdalene received, as it appears here, a much greater commission than is generally thought. She was to proclaim to *all who had been with him*, or to "his brethren," as Matthew says in 28:10. If she had met the five hundred brethren at one time, she would not only have had the right, but she would have been under obligation to make it known to all of them. Without a doubt she was obedient to this commission both energetically and conscientiously. That she was qualified to carry out a mission we see in Luke 8:2, where we read that Mary Magdalene was one of the women who followed Jesus on his journeys through the villages and towns.

In John 20:21 Jesus says to his disciples: " 'As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.' And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.' " This passage has been understood as though only the eleven were present, which is as little demonstrable as the idea that Mary Magdalene was to bring the news only to the eleven. On the contrary, there is no ground to assume that only men were present. That the expression "disciples" is used does not at all prove that they were only men, for in the epistles the word "brethren" is often used and yet it cannot be doubted that sisters were also included. In order to arrive at some clarity about this see, for example, 1 Thessalonians, where the expression "breth-

ren" is often used (sixteen times). Is it to be assumed that the glorious words to be found in this epistle of exhortation and comfort are written only for men? It would be amazing if Mary Magdalene, who through her witness had occasioned the calling of the meeting, should herself not be present. Without doubt she and several other women were present when Jesus breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit," and according to verse 21 were sent out. Certain it is, in the meantime, that this took place a few days later as we see in Acts 1:14,15, where it is clearly stated that the women and the others persevered with one accord in prayer. (We read here that Peter stood up in the midst of the "disciples" and addressed them "men and brethren," although sisters were also present. We have the same custom in our day. We say often dear friends [masculine form] although a good number of those present may be friends [feminine form].

One hundred twenty men and women are here together with one accord in prayer and supplication. In chapter 2:1 we read the glorious words: "When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place . . . and there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues." Here also the stupid objection* has been made that since it says "each of them," it must consequently have concerned only men. If one can prove from this that only men spoke, then one can also prove from verse 6 and verse 8, where the words "each of them" appear, that only men were hearers. But the miracle of Pentecost remains and will remain. . . . Those 120 brothers and sisters who according to both chapter 1:14 and chapter 2:1 were "all together in one place," were filled with the Spirit, and that in such a way that they could not remain silent.

It will now be interesting to see what Peter and the eleven will say about this public appearance of men and women. The mockers said, "They are filled with new wine"—but do Peter and the eleven say the same when they heard that even the women opened their mouths? Not at all, but here Peter stands up, on his own and the others' behalf, and explains freely and openly the preaching of the women, saying that now the prophecy of Joel that sons and daughters would prophesy has been fulfilled.

We would here call attention to three points. 1) We have two great proofs that sisters prophesied on the day of Pentecost: a) in

* This concerns only the German original, where, according to German grammar, the word "each of them" has different forms for different genders.

that the whole multitude of brothers and sisters, which consisted of 120 men and women who had previously been together in prayer, were *all* filled with the Holy Spirit so that they spoke, and b) in that Peter distinctly explained that Joel's prophecy, that "daughters" and "maidservants" would prophesy, *was fulfilled* on the day of Pentecost. How could it be said that the prophecy was fulfilled if they had not prophesied! Peter's speech was specifically a defense of the preaching and public appearance of the others. 2) How did they prophesy? Three times it is stated for us that persons of fifteen different nations and languages *heard them speak* in their own languages (verses 6,8,11). It was not, therefore, in isolation, but completely public. Whether they divided up into small groups or spoke one after the other is a matter of indifference to us. It is, however, clear that they spoke publicly to many hearers. Three thousand, all told, were converted, which on the average means twenty-five new converts for each of the prophesying brothers and sisters. Whoever has been present at a meeting where each one has spoken for one-fourth to one-half minute can without difficulty understand that it was possible that they all could have spoken one after the other even if they were all together in one meeting. The multitude came together, it says (verse 6). If they did divide up, it was perhaps according to the various languages, in fifteen groups, which would come out to eight speakers (of the 120) in each group. If we assume that the prophesying lasted only two hours, from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m., when Peter began his remarkable defense (verse 15) of this seemingly coarse mischief that the disciples let themselves in for, then each speaker would have one quarter hour, which was, of course, ample time. 3) *What did they speak about?* About the wonderful works of God (verse 11). The greatest of these wonderful works of God was, of course, that he raised from the grave the previously crucified Savior and that this pouring out of the Spirit was a proof that Jesus now sat at the right hand of the Father in heaven—they preached, therefore, *the simple Gospel*. We have, however, received only one of the speeches given on the day of Pentecost, namely, Peter's speech, so we know that the others were no doubt of the same content. Many people ask: If Jesus had wanted to use sisters in the work, why did he not send any out? With the Bible open before us, we can reply: If Jesus did not want to use sisters, why did he send out, both before his resurrection and lastly on the day of Pentecost, so many sisters with the glad tidings? The objection that is often heard that the flames of fire were something extraordinary that belonged to the time of the apostles, so consequently women of our day must, in spite of all that, remain silent, collapses completely when we hear that Peter in his defense says not a word about speaking with other tongues but only refers to Joel's prophecy, in which nothing is said about speaking in other

tongues, but about prophesying. Besides, who would dare to maintain that speaking in other tongues, laying hands on the sick and making them well, and other remarkable things belong only to the apostolic era?

It is therefore no wonder that even the reformer Luther has the same biblical view, that women ought to speak. In one of his pastoral letters to the Bohemian brethren, where he rises against the judgment of the Pope, he proves that the words in 1 Peter 2:9—"You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light"—was not at all written only for "smooth-shaven priests," but for the whole church. He says explicitly, "Each and every child of God, including women, has the right to use the Word, baptism, and the Lord's Supper."

In Acts 21:9 we read of the evangelist Philip's four daughters who prophesied. They prophesied, without a doubt, in the same way the other sisters prophesied on the day of Pentecost. There were 120 speakers on the day of Pentecost, and if two thirds of the believers then, as is often now the case, were women, then the number of prophesying sisters on the day of Pentecost would have been about eighty. In any case we can assume that just as Jesus had previously sent out seventy brethren, on the day of Pentecost seventy sisters alongside them were equipped for the work of the Lord.

In Romans 16 we find the names of several sisters who worked for God. In verse 1 it is sister Phoebe. It has been thought that she was a deaconess, or a nurse, but this does not appear to have been the case, for the sick in the apostolic era seem not to have been cared for by the deacons or deaconesses but by the elders and, apparently from James 5, were treated by means of prayer and anointing. The Greek word "diakonon" is here used of her as it is of Jesus himself in the preceding chapter: "For I tell you that Christ became a servant (diakonon) to the circumcision" (Romans 15:8). The same expression is also used to indicate the work of the apostles, for example: "What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants 'diakoni' (1 Corinthians 3:5); "But as servants 'diakoni' of God we commend ourselves in every way" (2 Corinthians 6:4).

Theodoret said of Phoebe: "Her fame was spread over the whole world. She was known not only among the Greeks and Romans but also among the barbarians." Phoebe had, as it appears, traveled almost all over the world and was without doubt a much blessed evangelist in her time.

In Romans 16:3,4 we read that there was a church in the house of Prisca and Aquila. Prisca was a teacher of even the renowned Apollos (Acts 18:26). After the family moved to Rome they opened their house for meetings in which, no doubt, Prisca, in keeping with what happened on the day of Pentecost, took part by prayer, exhortation, and comfort. In verse 7 we read about two persons, Adronicus and Junias, whom Paul calls his fellow prisoners and "of note among the apostles." Chrysostom and Theophilus, who surely ought to understand their own mother tongue, hold that Junias was a married woman.

In verse 12 we read about three women, Tryphaena, Tryphosa, and Persis, who labored in the Lord. The expression used for the work of these women is a little different from, for example, that used about Mary (verse 6), of whom Paul says that she "has worked hard among you." Mary's labor seems to have been help in earthly matters, but no so with the labors of the others.

In Philippians 4:3 we read, "And I ask you also, true yokefellow, help these women, for they have labored side by side with me in the Gospel." Paul had the same vision as his great Master, in that he was not ashamed to have women as fellow workers and helpers in the Gospel.

In 1 Corinthians 11:5 we read clearly how they were to be dressed when they prophesied, which would, of course, be unnecessary if they had not been permitted to make an appearance. They were to appear according to the customs of the Greeks and Romans, with their heads covered, otherwise they would dishonor their husbands. In public only prostitutes went about with uncovered heads; this, together with their cut hair, was their distinctive mark. Paul held that their taking the only mark of immoral women and laying aside the veil would be tantamount to also accepting the second mark of distinction: cutting off the hair. What Paul hereby would teach the prophesying daughters of our time is not that they must necessarily cover their heads when they pray and prophesy, but that they should consider various customs relative to clothing and other things in the lands where they sojourn, so as not to bring offense to anyone. In China, for example, the missionaries must from time to time set up a dividing wall between men and women in their churches; a violation of this custom would be cause for indignation. Uncovered heads in our lands cause no offense. In order to understand Paul's real meaning in this passage, we should remind ourselves how braided hair in our time is regarded as more modest than the freely hanging long hair, and yet Paul forbids braided hair (1 Timothy 2:9, 1 Peter 3:3) and requires long hanging hair because the hair was given for a covering (1 Corin-

thians 11:15). Some people speak of this passage as though Paul, by pointing out what was not appropriate in prophesying, was forbidding the actual prophesying. If one argues in that way, one could just as easily prove that Paul, speaking in the same chapter of things that were improper in the enjoyment of the Lord's Supper (verse 20), wanted thereby to speak against the Lord's Supper itself.

Since the many passages already mentioned are so clear regarding the right of women to public evangelistic work, it is remarkable that the only other passages (1 Timothy 2:12,13 and 1 Corinthians 14:3,4) can be given such a contradictory meaning. We will now examine these two places. "But I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve."

Here—it is said—it is clear that the woman must not teach and this prohibition is grounded in creation itself. Through which, dear brethren, the various heresies in Christendom have no doubt arisen! Indeed, it is through this process of grounding a doctrine on one or two passages in the Bible, without reading them in context, that heresies arise. What is the context, then, of these verses? We will examine that. In verses 9,10 it says also that "women should adorn themselves modestly and sensibly in seemly apparel, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly attire; but by good deeds, as befits women who profess religion." Since Paul knew full well that this teaching which was very necessary for the women would meet with resistance, he appends in the eleventh verse: "Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness." What does this teach? Naturally, that which he had been talking about, that is, that they should learn to appear publicly in modest attire. After the words of verse 11 come these words: "I permit no woman to teach." In what, then, should she not appear as teacher over against her husband? Naturally, in the same things in which, according to verse 11, she was to be a disciple (student) over against her husband, namely, with regard to modest apparel and such things in the household. The man has the right in such respects to exercise authority over his wife, not the other way around. Therein the wife shall let herself be taught (verse 11) and not be the teacher, and that because the man was created first, not the woman, and that the woman was deceived and not the man. Paul understood very well the woman's weak points. He knew that the woman was deceived by the beautiful fruit, so she is easily deceived by beautiful, captivating clothing and is open to using the money that she ought use for God in his work for beautiful clothes, nice houses, costly furniture, splendid gardens, social functions, and so forth. But, that prohibition against women's evangelizing and

prophesying could be found here, hence against making known salvation's universal truth to the unconverted and against exhortation, edification, and comfort for the converted, even though not a word has to do with anything like that, only proves how much power the devil has in the world yet today to hinder God's work. If, on the other hand, teaching were forbidden, than the instruction which Prisca gave to Apollos would also be against God's command, and Paul's order to women to be "good teachers" (Titus 2:3) would be abrogated, and then women's work in Sunday schools, in public schools, and in the teaching they convey through books and articles in religious papers would all be forbidden. The only conclusion that can be drawn, then, from these verses is that the woman in such *earthly* matters as are here discussed is forbidden to teach others and thereby make herself master over the man. In spiritual matters that application cannot even be considered. Suppose the woman has an unconverted or an ungodly husband. How can her relationship to her husband in spiritual matters be grounded on the physical creation! No, here a new creation is needed (2 Corinthians 5:17). In the spiritual creation it cannot always be maintained that the man was created before the woman (1 Timothy 2:13), for the wife must often wait many years before the husband through the new birth comes to a new creation. Shall a wife who, for example, has been a child of God for twenty-five years in spiritual matters receive instruction from her unconverted or perhaps recently converted husband? Paul never meant any such thing; he says in Galatians 3:18, "There is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus." With regard to 1 Timothy 2:8,9, it appears that Paul, conscious of man's as well as woman's weak points, turns against the inappropriate in both sexes in that he, in verse 3 [sic, should be 8], exhorts the men—who are often slothful in public prayer in the congregations so that the sisters must often pray alone—that they should "pray everywhere" and orders the women in verse 9 to appear in modest apparel. But just as he has not, in verse 9, forbidden men to appear in modest apparel, just so he has not in verse 8 forbidden women to pray in public, which would have been directly contrary to 1 Corinthians 11 and contrary to the whole Bible.

The only passage that really appears to be against the public appearance of women in the congregation is probably 1 Corinthians 14:34. "The women should keep silence in the churches." The danger of founding a doctrine on a single text, without comparing it with hundreds of other texts that speak of the same theme, cannot be emphasized enough. For example, the worship of certain sects in California consists only of playing with beads or dolls—children's playthings—because of the Bible passage "Unless you are converted and become as little children. . . ."

In examining 1 Corinthians 14:34 we must first consider that the exhortation to silence is found three times in the same chapter, twice for men (verses 28,30) and once for women (verse 34). How would it be if those men who strongly emphasize the third text which speaks of silence would lay the same stress on the other two texts which speak of the same thing? What life would there be in a church if the preacher would be silent when something was revealed to one of those sitting! Furthermore, we should note that the apostle here does not, properly speaking, have in view general meetings for edification and still less revival meetings, where only generally accepted truths are held forth, but meetings where things are discussed about which different conceptions and strife may appear (verse 29). What is principally spoken of here is discussion meetings among God's children to which only occasionally an unconverted person might come (verse 24). The kind of prophesying that took place there was "not for unbelievers but for believers" (verse 22) and was to be judged by the others (verse 29). The question of authorization of women to evangelize is not touched on here. In the third place, all unmarried sisters and also those who have unconverted husbands are excluded from this prohibition, for it is clearly stated that if they wish to learn anything, they should ask their husbands at home (verse 35). The prohibition, therefore, does not concern daughters or maidservants, but married women who have believing husbands. In the fourth place, we would add that not even married women must always remain silent. It has been said, "If women are to remain silent, then they have no right to sing either." A prominent preacher who was against women's speaking showed the error in this conception. "The expression 'remain silent' here does not stand in opposition to singing, but in opposition to speaking." To this one may reply that if to remain silent is understood in connection with what took place in the meetings described in verse 26, then singing is in the very first place. "When you come together," says Paul, "each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification" (verse 26). It is clear that "keep silence" in 1 Corinthians 14:34 can hardly have these five things in view, but these verses must be taken in connection with the nearest verse (verse 35), which is, of course, much easier than to go all the way back to verse 26. Some assume that verse 33 is the end of a section and verse 34 is the beginning of a new one; then the important question is, "What then does the word 'keep silent' refer to?" Answer: It is not in opposition to either singing or speaking in general but to that special kind of speaking which consisted in asking questions. It has nothing to do with teaching others, but of learning for oneself, and that in an unfitting manner, namely, through asking questions rather than listening. But then someone asks: What is unfitting about that,

that a woman poses a question in the congregation when there is something she does not understand? It is not always fitting for men, and still less for women, to ask questions instead of waiting quietly until God either through his Spirit or through one of the speakers (brothers or sisters) makes the unclear clear. But for women there is another problem with publicly posing questions, when we remember that in Jewish synagogues questions were often asked that brought about strife and confusion. In earliest times much active use was made of the Jewish prerogative of propounding questions, for example, in John 8 where Jesus was interrupted ten times in his speech, in Acts 13:45, and in many other places. This custom of men posing questions was, therefore, something God's church had inherited from the Jews. But now when the Corinthian women, on the ground of New Testament freedom, began also to pose questions, this had to be (according to the understanding of many) forbidden to them here, because the almost inevitable disparities of meaning could often give the impression that married women were not subject to their husbands. It could easily happen that a wife, by her questions, could seek to make valid another meaning than that which her husband had expressed in the same congregation. The married woman was not permitted to say anything which could not be reconciled with subjection. The Greek word for speak, *lalein*, means speak, discuss, and command. She was not permitted, by her questions and her discussion, to make her appearance as a teacher in the congregation in matters in which she might come into opposition to her husband. But when we examine the text more carefully, we find that that which was objected to was not the *public* asking of questions; it appears that Paul's words in this matter point to questions of a more private character—therefore, not publicly posed questions but private ones, not even directed to their own husbands but to the husbands of other wives. This inappropriate liberty caused Paul to say that when a wife wanted to learn something, she should wait until she came home and then ask her own husband. We are all the more strengthened in this interpretation when we understand that *lalein* can be translated not only "speak" (in general), discuss, command, but also, from time to time, chatter (gossip).

This passage appears, however, not to have anything to do with the impartation of instruction but with the reception of instruction; even if it had to do with the impartation of instruction, *why should it be used as an argument against evangelism?* If a woman is to be forbidden anything, then she should be forbidden to teach. But God has teachers installed in the church, apostles (such as Barnabas, Acts 14:14, and present-day missionaries), prophets, evangelists, pastors, and miracle workers—and in no

sense can women be excluded from these offices. The same apostle who prescribes for the sisters what they should wear when they prophesy and assures them in the same chapter "He who prophesies edifies the church" (1 Corinthians 14:4) cannot possibly forbid women to fulfill that purpose, to edify the church. That unclear, somewhat clouded passage in 1 Corinthians 14:34 ought not and need not be understood in such a way that it comes into disharmony with other plain words of God which establish it as a clear truth that brothers and sisters are permitted to proclaim the pure Gospel for the revival of the unconverted and for the exhortation, comfort, and sanctification of God's children and that no one should be hindered in this. God be praised that this interpretation is winning more and more acknowledgement, so that in our day in many lands large numbers of women are going out into home mission work as well as into mission work in heathen lands. Let us thank God that the bread of life is being brought to a dying world. For married women, naturally, the proviso should remain that they do not neglect their domestic duties. The objection that women are superfluous is often made out of lack of love for sinners or even out of jealousy. Just as weak is the objection that there is enough work for women without their appearing in public. Jesus, who commands in Luke 19:13 to trade with the pounds (gifts), desires that we do it in the most vigorous way (verse 16). If a sister can more easily bring souls to the Savior through a public meeting than, for example, a house call, then she sins if she does not use those gifts that God has given her. How uncharitable it is, besides, to assign the hardest and most thankless parts of the work to women and not permit them to take part in the easier work. The one who makes house calls soon finds out that she cannot visit more than a half-dozen families, or a dozen, before she is completely exhausted by again and again answering the same kind of objections and so forth. How much easier it is, then, to speak just once to *all* of these! The objection has also been made that Peter has said that the men should be won without words by the quiet behavior of the wives. In 1 Peter 3:1 it is clear that the wife cannot constantly constrain her husband to be converted. Her word would thereby lose its power; in such cases her behavior will preach more than words. It is noteworthy that Peter says that such men as do not believe the Word may be won without words through the behavior of the wives. The word, therefore, was to be the first means that the wives were to use to win them, but if that was not effective, they were to have faith that through their quiet behavior they could be of blessing to their husbands. Some hold that women are in their right place when they confine themselves to women's meetings, but, for example, if twenty women have come together in one place and there are not many others converted, then God's church has gathered, and then each and

every one must keep silence in the church. It is remarkable that those who understand the word "brethren" to exclude the sisters could not see that they consequently come to the conclusion that Mary Magdalene must then have brought the message given her by the Savior only to the brethren, for Jesus said, "Go to my brethren" (John 20:17). From this passage it could just as well be proven that Mary Magdalene was forbidden to hold women's meetings and could only speak to men. She had to bring the message of Jesus' resurrection to 500 brethren, but no woman was permitted to be among them. One comes to such absurd conclusions through such narrow understandings of God's Word. Praise be to God that at least as many women as men are being sent out to the mission field from England and America, which was not at all the case twenty years ago, and every year greater and greater numbers of brothers and sisters go out. One thing, however, all missionary sisters in the homeland must be careful about, and that is not to try, especially publicly, to defend preaching by women. As soon as they do that, they appear as teachers on a controversial question and enter thereby into an area where their place, to say the least, is ambiguous. It is enough that they themselves have assurance in their own hearts of the Word of God, that they have the right to evangelize and don't need much discussion of the subject. If mission houses or churches are for the time being closed to them, they should take that from God, for it will help them to come to those places where the needs are greatest and which would otherwise be neglected if much attendance at meetings were required of them. May now the Lord of the harvest continue to send out many laborers into his great harvest in order that the number of those who belong to God's wedding party may be complete and that he, our highly praised Savior and bridegroom of the soul, might soon come and take us home! Amen. Come quickly, Lord Jesus!

EVANGELICAL ROOTS OF FEMINISM

Donald W. Dayton, librarian and assistant professor of theology, North Park Theological Seminary, Chicago, Illinois.

The historical process sometimes plays strange tricks on us. Later developments and history written from within a new situation often obscure the character of earlier events and alter our present self-understanding. Feminism is a good case in point. The contemporary "women's liberation" movement derives largely from secular sources and is often characterized by fierce opposition to the church and the assumption that Christianity has been a major force in the oppression of women. This sense of conflict has affected the way in which history has been written. Such history then reinforces the feeling among Christians, especially conservative or evangelical Christians, that feminism is anti-Christian in character and to be resisted as a pagan ideology that if embraced would undermine a biblically based lifestyle and world view.

Actually, the contrary is more nearly the case. Though Christian and biblical themes have been used to "keep women in their place," biblical Christianity has been a major force in the elevation of women. This has been clearest when Christianity has been introduced by missionaries into other cultures, where, as in the first century, Christianity has brought a new value to women and a new equality with men. Such elevation has not always incarnated all the values of feminism as we know it today, though it has often leaned in that direction. But beyond this more general contribution of Christianity to the status of women, I would like to argue that, historically at least, feminism has particular affinities with that branch of Christianity identified as evangelical and that the roots of feminism as it emerged in pre-Civil War America are clearly to be found in evangelicalism.

This is not to insist that there are not other forms of feminism rooted in other traditions or thought forms. There is obviously also an Enlightenment-grounded feminism that found expression in eighteenth-century Europe, in some circles of nineteenth-century America, and in our own day. Nor would I want to suggest a strict cause and effect relationship between evangelicalism and feminism. Historical causation is, of course, infinitely more complex, and not all evangelicals do become feminists. I shall be satisfied to argue that evangelical soil is a