

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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“Our sister will now lead us in prayer.”

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This statement will now be common place in the Highland Church of Christ in Abilene, Texas. A recent statement from Highland’s elders read to the congregation on October 10, 2004 was designed to bring the congregation up to date regarding the trend of women participating in their worship services.

The announcement took the congregation back to the beginning when over a decade ago the elders began studying the issue. *“The result of that interaction was a congregation-wide study a few years ago on the role of women in public worship. After that period of study, the Highland elders decided that it was time to encourage the participation of women in various ways in public worship.”* While the announcement assures us all that *“These are hardly men who make decisions because of the prevailing culture.”*, why did they feel the need to study this issue only ten years ago? Even if the elders are determined to not be influenced by prevailing culture, but only be led by Scripture, one would have to admit that prevailing culture has moved the issue into the con-

sciences of the elders. Why did they only start thinking of this issue seriously in the last few years? Have women only begun to show up in worship services a decade ago?

Implementing the changes of women taking a more leadership role in the worship services have been done with the intent *“to implement these changes in roles carefully...”*. Notice the results of this gradual implementation: *“Ministry reports, congregational announcements, the sharing of testimony, and participation in praise teams and dramatic presentations by women have become fairly common. More recently, you have witnessed women reading scripture, serving communion, and leading prayer.”* The practice of women standing before the congregation with men comprising “praise teams” in assisting the congregation in singing has now moved to the practice of women standing before the congregation all alone in “leading prayer”.

How long will it be before the congregation at Highland is ready to accept “women preachers”? While the elders have communicated to the congregation that

it is not their intention *“to place women in the role of elder or preaching minister”*, they do not protest against it in in this announcement. If the women at Highland can participate in “the sharing of testimony”, “read scripture”, and originate the thoughts the congregation is to offer up unto God by “leading prayer”, why can not a woman stand before the congregation and originate thoughts of exhortation in compliance with the scripture she reads aloud? Do you not see the proverbial frog gradually boiling in the waters of apostasy?

The Holy Spirit guided Paul to write, *“But I permit not a woman to teach, nor have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness...” (I Tim. 2:12)*. Is not a woman *“acting on her on authority”* or *“having dominion”* when she leads a man in the thoughts he is to pray? Paul writes, *“I desire therefore that the men...”* as distinguished from the women *“pray in every place...” (I Tim. 2:8)*. The Highland elders assuring us that their practice is scriptural does not change the clear teaching of Scripture to the contrary.