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SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

by Thomas Coates

Dwight E. Stevenson in "The False Prophet" (Abingdon Press) presents some interesting points that would be well worth considering, pertaining to our attitudes toward our Center and congregation:

As a minister it has at times sobered me to realize that my salary was first presented at the altar in an offering to God. The dollar that I spend for my groceries on Saturday was first placed on an offering plate and presented to God, the previous Lord's Day . . .

This simple fact of economic dependence upon the religious institution may easily warp my perspective . . .

The connection between the church offering and the prophets living may not be as apparent to us now as it was a few years ago in some rural congregations and as it still is in some mission lands . . .

A minister who is centered upon the church as an institution, and who in consequence begins to use people to advance the success of the institution, soon comes to look upon people not as persons who need love but as troublesome obstacles who must be cleared out of his path or as slow-moving beasts who must be driven. Pastoral concern turns into executive efficiency; and when efficiency is thwarted, as it almost inevitably must be, ministerial energy is consumed in frustration and anger. And it flares out as punishment.

It is not merely that we take our living economically from the church institution. We also take our success from it. A young minister recently appeared on Television. After the young minister had been introduced, he was asked the question that the world asks, and that ministers frequently ask themselves: "Do you have a big church?" It was with a visible letdown that he answered, "No, I'm afraid I have a very small church." But, just as obviously, he wanted it to be a big church--so that it could become the stairway to the stars of his personal glory.

Now consider the harvest of consequences: Instead of fastening his compassionate eye upon the people of the lonely crowd who are under his care, that minister puts the church as institution at center. The chief end of "His" church members is to serve the church--that is to say, to swell its treasury, to expand its membership roll, to build for it new buildings, to make it a beehive of activities, to gain recognition for it in the community, and in his denomination. The chief end of these church members is to serve the institution; and the chief function of God is to preserve it . . .

WOMEN OR MINISTERS OF GOD?

by Ruth L. Seaton

There seems to be a growing concern among some of our women ministers that women in the work are not only being pushed aside but will actually be pushed out of the work because the men ministers are taking over. We have been told over and over again that it is getting harder and harder to place women in the field as leaders. Many of our women ministers have foolishly accepted this false belief and are disturbed about their future in the field.

I am not concerned about this because I do not believe that it is a man or a woman who is placed as a leader of a work, but rather an individual, male or female, who has received "the call" and is willing to say: "Here am I, Lord; send me. I willingly dedicate myself to be Thy mouthpiece so that the word of Truth may go forth and bring light to the people." Any minister, man or woman, who has received "the call" and has dedicated himself or herself in this way will never be pushed out of the work, but will move along with the Holy Spirit movement into an expanded ministry. I am a woman, in the sight of the world; but first, last, and always I know myself to be a minister who has been "called." I know there will always be a place for me in the work of the Holy Spirit activity that is moving Unity around the world.

Any woman minister who feels that she is being pushed aside or can be pushed out of the work is one who is concerning herself more with the fact that she is a female than with her calling as a minister. Or perhaps she has forgotten that she has been called by the Holy Spirit activity, which is absolutely impersonal in its action. The woman who has been "called" into the work has a deep, sincere desire to grow and unfold spiritually so she can better minister to the people who are drawn to her. In her growing awareness of the Truth she knows that no one can move her out of her commissioned post of service. Women ministers will feel insecure, inferior, inadequate, or unwanted only when they fall into the temptation of believing that they work as women instead of as part of the Holy Spirit expression.

The woman minister who truly believes in the principles she is teaching knows that her personal experiences are always the result of her own states of consciousness, and will not give thought or feeling to the foolish belief that women are being pushed out of any place. She knows the wisdom of the words of Job: "For the thing which I fear cometh upon me, And that which I am afraid of cometh unto me." The success or failure of any minister's work, male or female, depends on the individual's consciousness and nothing more.

The woman minister who is constantly working to expand her own consciousness, her own understanding, seeking ways to improve herself in every way, so she may be "approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth" will not find time to indulge in the luxury of self-pity, in the fear of being pushed out. Perhaps some of our women feel as they do because they

inwardly know that there is a lack within themselves. Rather than admit this and get busy and do something about it, they yield to the subtle temptation of believing that something can keep their good from them. Unfortunately they have made our men ministers their "scapegoats."

As women ministers, let us be grateful that capable, dedicated young men are being "called" into the work. Let us accept these men and see the good they bring with them. Let us learn from them, knowing that we also have something to give them, because we have all been "called" to a unity of purpose, into a great spiritual movement that is going to move onward. Do we women ministers want to move with it? Then it is up to us to straighten ourselves out and know that "He who has called me will sustain me." Let us never forget that in the eyes of the world we are women, but we are "called" to be ministers, commissioned and ordained by the Holy Spirit.

Every day before we start our work, let us take into our hearts the words found in Luke 4:18&19: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor: He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, And recovering of sight to the blind, To set at liberty them that are bruised, To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." Let us forget not that the men ministers have received the same anointing.

To the women ministers I would like to say this: "Let us act like ministers, not like frightened women. Let us make ourselves good enough to make a place for ourselves, and we will always be needed in the Unity work."

To the men ministers, I would like to say: "God bless you! We need you, we want you, we appreciate you; and I, for one, am willing to learn from you so that I can become a better minister."

INTRODUCTION TO RESOURCE BOOK MATERIALS

3L Spiritual Research

"Architecture of the Mind" by Lew Morse. An address delivered to the 1965 UMA Conference.

4A Prayer Ministry

This is a list of Prayer Guide topics for the year of 1966, to help you in planning Sunday lessons, classes, special services, prayer group meetings, and messages for your monthly bulletins.

4U Quotations for Bulletins -- November 1965