

WOMEN'S ORDINATION: SHALL ANGELS OR DEMONS GUIDE US?

by Ty Gibson / June 10, 2015

Adventism is heating up as we approach the GC Session in Texas, during which a vote will be taken on [women's ordination](#). In all my years as a member of this church I love, I have never seen so many of our people so roused about any other issue.

It would be so very cool if we were to get this passionate, articulate, fired up and mobilized about liberating sex slaves, feeding the hungry, visiting the sick, and bringing the gospel of Christ to the countless millions who have never looked with breathless wonder into His beautiful heart of redeeming love.

But that's another topic for another time...I guess.

For the moment we are energetically discussing whether it is okay with God for women to have official church hands laid on them in acknowledgement of their sense of calling to go, teach and baptize in the name of Father, Son and Spirit. So as we continue engaging in our current debate, we might do well to pause and consider a few rather sobering thoughts from a woman God inspired to tell us some rather straight stuff.

Brace yourself.

IF THE HEART IS FILLED WITH PREJUDICE, SATAN IS BESIDE YOU, AND HE WILL SET THE PLAIN STATEMENTS OF GOD'S WORD IN A PERVERTED LIGHT.

When our church was engaged in another theological dispute way back when, Ellen White issued this warning to the disputers:

“The spirit in which you come to the investigation of the Scriptures will determine the character of the assistant at your side. Angels from the world of light will be with those who in humility of

heart seek for divine guidance. But if the Bible is opened with irreverence, with a feeling of self-sufficiency, if the heart is filled with prejudice, Satan is beside you, and he will set the plain statements of God's word in a perverted light.

“There are some who indulge in levity, sarcasm, and even mockery toward those who differ with them. Others present an array of objections to any new view; and when these objections are plainly answered by the words of Scripture, they do not acknowledge the evidence presented, nor allow themselves to be convinced. Their questioning is not for the purpose of arriving at truth, but is intended merely to confuse the minds of others” (*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 108).

This essentially means that if we engage in Bible study with a settled opinion to sustain, or with an arrogant attitude, or with a choice of words geared toward putting down those with whom we differ, that very spirit, or orientation of mind, repels holy angels and invites Satan to guide us in our theological formulations and conclusions. If I posture my position on a subject with accusations of unfaithfulness and apostasy against those with whom I differ, then the Holy Spirit has no choice but to back up and disassociate Himself from my study process. Satan then moves into the vacancy to become the unseen “assistant” at my side. And as a result, I will extract from Scripture unsound perspectives that tend to divide rather than unite the people of God. As we get all hyped up about the *issue* of women's ordination, God is more interested in the *spirit* with which we relate to one another on the matter.

While we are focused on proving our side of the issue right and the other side wrong, here is what the heavenly universe is looking for:

“The grace of Christ must mold our entire being, and its triumph will not be complete until the heavenly universe shall witness habitual tenderness of feeling, Christ-like love and holy deeds in the deportment of the children of God” (*Amazing Grace*, p. 235).

While we draw battle lines in the sand within the church, heaven would be full of joy if we would simply **love one another in our political process**:

“The church of Christ, enfeebled, defective as she may appear, is the one object on earth upon which He bestows, in a special sense, His love and His regard. The church is the theater of His grace, in which He delights to effect transformations so wonderful that the angels look upon them with astonishment and joy. Heaven is full of rejoicing when the members of the human

family are seen to be full of compassion for one another, loving one another as Christ has loved them” (*Special Testimonies To Battle Creek Church*, pp. 18-19).

While we are eager to reform others, God would very much like us to refrain from doing so with blunt expressions and exaggerated censure:

“Angels take note of our works, of our words, of the spirit which actuates us. Those who desire to reform others must begin the reformation in their own hearts, and show that they have acquired kindness and humility of heart in the school of Christ. Those who have charge of others must learn first to master themselves, to refrain from blunt expressions and exaggerated censure” (*The Upward Look*, p. 59).

REFRAIN FROM BLUNT EXPRESSIONS AND EXAGGERATED CENSURE

While we resort to the cutting turn of a phrase to triumph with words over those with whom we disagree, God wishes we would just be genuinely polite as we converse, and that we would guard one another’s reputations as we dialogue:

“The truth is designed to sanctify the receiver, to fashion and mold the entire man, externally as well as internally, by abasing pride and disposing his heart to be kind and amiable and condescending. Yes, the religion of Christ is a system of the truest politeness, and its triumphs are complete when a world may look on a people professing godliness with a united front, believers showing habitual tenderness of feeling and kindness of deportment and sincere regard for the reputation of each other” (*Our High Calling*, p. 237).

While we argue about the evils we believe are creeping into the church from the popular culture, there is a great evil present among us that we scarcely mention:

“It is a great evil, and one which exists among our people to a great extent, to give loose rein to the thoughts, to question and criticize everything another does, making mountains out of molehills, and thinking their own ways are right, whereas, if they were in the same place as their brother, they might not do half as well as he does. It is just as natural for some to find fault with what another does as it is for them to breathe. They have formed the habit of criticizing others,

when they themselves are the ones who should be brought severely to task and their wicked speeches and hard feelings be burned out of their souls by the purifying fire of God's love....

“A person who will allow any degree of suspicion or censure to rest upon his fellow workers, while he neither rebukes the complainers nor faithfully presents the matter before the one condemned, is doing the work of the enemy. He is watering the seeds of discord and of strife, the fruit of which he will have to meet in the day of God” (*Counsels on Health*, pp. 296-298).

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While we imagine that the most vital thing for the church is to be factually correct, God is waiting for our correctness to be charged with love for one another:

“The life of Christ was a life charged with a divine message of the love of God, and He longed intensely to impart this love to others in rich measure. Compassion beamed from His countenance, and His conduct was characterized by grace and humility, love and truth. Every member of his church militant must manifest the same qualities, if he would join the church triumphant” (*Review and Herald*, November 17, 1891).

While we are concerned with whether or not the sinful culture of the unbelieving world around us is creeping into the church, God has been longing for us to *show* the world something that will attract them with a power more powerful than merely *telling* them how wrong they are:

“From the beginning it has been God's plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency...the final and full display of the love of God” (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 9).

Apparently, it's possible to be right in all the wrong ways.

So here's what I have been telling my sinful self every step of the way in the women's ordination upheaval, and I offer it to you as your brother in Christ:

I may be right in my view of the subject, or I may be wrong, but regardless of whether I am theoretically right or wrong, it is imperative that I be right, by God's grace, in my spirit toward those with whom I differ, *especially* toward those with whom I differ.

Father of all pure love, please father Your love to maturity in my soul toward those who see things differently than I do. Holy Spirit, flood my spirit with Your sweet affection for those who don't agree with me. Beautiful Jesus, beautify my heart with the tender feelings You feel toward us all.