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WOMEN'S RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS
STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH

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Status of women in the Universal Church

This paper will be looking at the status of women from biblical times to their current position in the universal church. Throughout recorded history women have been considered the weaker sex. This concept is taken from biblical writings in the third chapter of 1 Peter “Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered” (1 Peter 3:7, King James Bible (KJB)). Although the text says “honor” and “being heirs together of the grace,” men chose to remember the term “weaker vessel”. The purpose of this paper is to explore the progression of the concept of the female sex being thought of as the “weaker vessel” and how that has evolved into the discrimination of women today, specifically those involved in the universal church.

The progression of this paper will move from Biblical times through current day. Where The Convention of the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, where (CEDAW) will be discussed and used as a lens to examine, the current status of women in the church. CEDAW, this document was crafted by the United Nations in 1979 and was ratified by all but seven countries; one of the seven countries not ratifying the document is the United States of America. According to United Nations Women,

The Convention defines discrimination against women as ‘...any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and

Fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field”(Un Women,2009, p.2).

The Weaker Vessel, In the Beginning

Ancient Egypt had one of the most progressive civilizations for women. The Egyptians believed that one of life’s greatest goals was the happiness and contentment of family and home, because of that, woman were important. The family and home were a woman’s domain, for that reason women were honored and given many rights unusual for that time. Women in ancient Egypt were considered equals to men in many ways, and were considered responsible for their own actions (Johnson, 2002).

From the beginning of written Biblical history, women have been seen as the weaker sex. Women were not created weaker, however as the stories recorded in the Bible were passed down verbally and then recorded by the scholars of the time, most of whom were men. In the article, Origins of the Written Bible (Schniedewind. 2008), Schniedewind writes that it was the “writing of priests ad kings, the elite men of the nation who interpreted these stories, thus placing the blame on Eve, woman as the cause of the fall of mankind”. Eve may have been easily tempted by Satan to desire knowledge and to be more like God, but Adam was easily tempted by Eve and both were gravely punished. They were not punished so much for desiring knowledge they were punished for giving in to temptation “First, one must realize that being tempted is not a sin. There has been no sinned until those tempted have given in to the temptation.” (Life Application Study Bible

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NIV, study notes). Adam and Eve were punished for giving into temptation of wanting to be more “godlike” by having knowledge of good and evil, and they were punished for disobeying God.

Many believe that because Eve was the first to give into temptation that she was weak willed and easily manipulated, that is why she needed to be “dominated.” This being supported by the later writings of 1 Peter when men chose to concentrate more on the words “weaker vessel” than “honor” and “being heirs together,” thus producing the picture of the woman being a lesser creation. Unfortunately this is belief has continue to this day.

The book of Genesis and the next four books of the Bible were written down for the first time between the years 1450 and 1407 BC. The authorship is still debated to this day but many scholars believe these books to be written by Moses with the exception of the last eight verses in Deuteronomy describing his death (Pelaia, Ariela, 2017). Moses was born a Jew, because of the persecution of Jewish children at that time he was set afloat in the Nile River, found by the daughter of the Pharaoh and raised as an Egyptian prince with many Jewish servants, including his own mother (His story is found in Exodus 2:1-10). As a grown man he learned of his heritage and left his life as the Prince of Egypt. He was later called by God to be a leader of the Jewish people, and in the years that followed, Moses led the Israelites, God’s chosen people to freedom from Egyptian rule. Among the exiles were many strong women, strong enough to survive forty years of travel and many trials.

It is believed Moses wrote down the teachings handed down to him through song and story. These stories are written in the first five books of the Bible called the Torah.

The Torah is still used as the basis of the Jewish religion and contain the over six hundred laws of the Jewish faith.

As the Ancient Egyptians believed women held the future of their culture, so the Jew's of that time believed. According to Rabbi Lubsvitcher (2009) who spoke for Jewish women's rights as early as the 1950's, he states: " the Jewish woman has a unique mission specific to her special qualities and sensitivities. The very future of the Jewish people depends on her success." (Chabad. Org. 1993-2017). In a recording on this website the Rabbi says that Moses was first told to deliver the Torah to the women because of their specific mission. "This is what you shall say to the house of Yaakov and speak to the children of Israel". The speech goes on to say, "Our Sages explain that the 'House of Yaakov' refers to Jewish women and 'the children of Israel' refers to the men; i.e., G-d told Moshe to approach the women first" (Shemos 19:3).

The laws delivered by Moses found in Deuteronomy 12:3-4 instructs the Jews from destroying the name of God or disrespecting the name of God. Because of the fear that the name would be erased from writings, when translating from the Hebrew to English the Jews use G-d instead of God. Other terms commonly used as substitutes for the name of God are Hashem, YHVH, Elohim, and Elshaddai (Gunsch, 2017).

Women were given a special place of prominence they but, they were restricted to learning only the laws dedicated to the Shabbat, (the Sabbath) and were directed to the keeping only these laws as well as keeping a kosher home and raising the children in the proper Jewish traditions concerning the laws of the Sabbath. The women were commanded to teach those specific laws to the children; when the sons were older they would be taught

to read and study the full Torah. The women were also required to learn the “Torah’s mystic dimension”, the “Pnimiyus Ha Torah.” In this section of the Torah the Jewish people are commanded to love and fear the Lord and to love one another. It also obligates the Jewish people in general to live by the Ten Commandments. To fulfill that command the Torah says “Know the G-d of your fathers and serve Him with a full heart” (1 Chronicles, 28:9), this they were also commanded to teach the children. Women may have been given a place of priority in the home, in the ancient times, but that place of priority did not extend to the outside world.

There were many restrictions that applied to most women in biblical times. The following list is found in the “Ancient Hebrew law code” outlined throughout the Old Testament. There are few details available but this is a summery of the information that has been found in other ancient legal systems such as the Babylonian and Roman systems concerning the status of the women of that time.

1. Un married woman were not allowed to leave the their home without the permission of their father, a married woman needed the permission of her husband;
2. A woman was taken in marriage;
3. While there was no death penalty in Hebrew law for property crimes, adultery was a capital offence for both participants;

4. Marriage and children were necessary to have a fulfilled life. A childless woman could call herself a mother by giving her maidservant to her husband as a second wife (assuming, of course, the maid-servant did indeed produce a child)
5. A widow had the right to marry her husband's brother if he lived in the same town.
6. Polygamy was permitted but uncommon;
7. Divorce was easy for a man and impossible for a woman;
8. Women could not appear in public venues and they were not allowed to talk to strangers;
9. The woman moved to the husband's home and family;
10. While the husband was clearly the boss, each expected love from the other and a wife had the legal right to support;
11. A Woman could not testify in court
12. Women had to be doubly veiled when they left their homes (Metzger, & Coogan, 1993,p 808-818).

In The book of Genesis there are two creation stories. In the first story in

chapter 1:27-22 says, “So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them”. There was no separation of gender creation in this story. Man and woman were created at the same time and were given equal rights, equal power. God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it” (Genesis 1:27-28 New International Version)(NIV). God said this to both Adam and Eve. Eve was not to be subservient but have the same status as Adam.

Eugene Peterson interpreted the Bible into contemporary language these verses read this way in The Message Bible: “God created human beings; he created them godlike, Reflecting God’s nature. He created them male and female. God blessed them and told them to Prosper! Reproduce! Fill Earth! Take charge!”(Geneses 1:27-28, The Message). Man and woman, equal and together. The second creation story in Genesis 2:7 says this; “Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being” (Genesis 2:7,NIV).

Further in the second chapter of Genesis the message in verse 18 says; “The LORD God said, it is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him”(Genesis 2:18 NIV). The book of Genesis was written in Ancient Hebrew. The literal translation was not help mate, but correctly translated meant ‘help meet’ according to James E. Talmage, (2010). Therefore, according to Talmage, it should be interpreted as “unlike the other beasts of the earth, was ‘appropriate for’ or ‘worthy’ of Adam and was to be his helper or companion on the earth”. The Hebrew words for this term are *ezer*, meaning “strength” and *k’enegdo* meaning “fit for” or ‘in front of”, thus according to Talmage(2010), Eve was designed to be the opposite of Adam and to possess the other half

of the knowledge and strength needed to have dominion over the earth and its creatures, God's yin and yang. "Eve was Adam's complete spiritual equal, endowed with an essential saving power that was opposite from his", says Talmage.

The verse says "suitable for him" not subject to him. In the King James Version it reads: "help mate for him"(Genesis 2:18 KJB) someone to work along with him, not to be dominated by him. Peterson interprets this passage this way in the Message, " I'll make him a helper, a companion" (Genesis 2: 18 the Message). None of these versions say anything less than an equal partner. The Message continues with the following verses from Genesis:

He took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man'. (Genesis 2: 21-23 NIV).

Bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh not a lesser substance, but an important part of the body of man, to walk beside him. John MacArthur,(2005) Author of Twelve Extraordinary Women, explains that Eve was not made of dust as Adam was "but was carefully designed from living flesh and bone." This then making Eve not only the first, but also "the only living being ever created directly by God from the living tissue of another creature"(MacArthur, 2005, p1). MacArthur says Eve is a "singular marvel," he says there is nothing in the universe more wonderfully made than woman. Here is Eve, whom the author calls "the mother of all living" and yet today men have, but Eve and her gender at a level below that of the male gender.

After the fall, in the third chapter of Genesis, God tells Eve “I will greatly increase your pangs in childbearing in pain you shall bring forth children yet your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you” (Genesis 3:16 NIV). In Peterson’s words God continues saying to Adam:

Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from the very ground is cursed because of you; getting food from the ground will be as painful as having babies is for your wife; you’ll be working in pain all your life long. The ground will sprout thorns and weeds, you’ll get your food the hard way, planting and tilling and harvesting, sweating in the fields from dawn to dusk (Genesis 3:16, The Message).

Through out the Old Testament there are stories of men taking several women in order to produce many heirs, the story of Jacob and his twelve sons is a prime example. Jacob was married to Leah and then Rachel; he had children with Bilah and Zilpah, their handmaidens as well. The story of Jacob’s marriages begins in Genesis 29:15. Into current times, women have been doing both, bearing children and working in the field. Human beings often pick and choose what they would like to believe, men who were the story tellers and scholars of the time, chose to pick from both versions of creation. Humans were made in God’s image and women, had been made to be ruled by men.

The coming of Christ changed the status of women in the western world. Sue Bohlin, (2005), explains how Christianity changed the Old Testament view of Christian women and “lifted them from a status equivalent to dogs to a position as fellow heirs of the grace of God through Jesus Christ.” Bohlin,(2005) writes that not only were the Hebrew women viewed as property but this was also true of the ancient Greek and Roman women. Jesus however

treated women with respect and dignity. Luke tells of Jesus' visit to the home of Mary and Martha. Martha finds herself in the kitchen preparing the meal as women should be, but Mary is in with the men sitting at the feet of Jesus. Luke writes this in chapter 10 verses 40 and 41

But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"⁴¹ "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things,⁴² but few things are needed—or indeed only one. [a] Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her (Luke NIV).

Jesus recognizes Mary's right to make a choice. Women during that time were not given the freedom of choice as a rule. Jesus speaks with the Samaritan woman at the well, a woman Christ knew to have had many husbands. Yet he respects her and offers her salvation and she goes and delivers the news of the Messiah.

Jesus had women who were his loyal followers. It was a very unusual thing in that time for women to make that kind of independent move and a commitment of that kind, to follow a man, a religious leader. We know, several of the women who followed Christ, Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus were among the friends and followers of Christ. Joanna, whose husband Chuzas was Herod's steward, Susanna, Salome; Mary the mother of James, Mary the mother of Jesus and Mary called Magdalene. These were important women throughout the ministry of Jesus Christ. (The New Testament, Life Application Bible, 1988)

At the time of the resurrection Mary Magdalene literally became the most important woman in the Bible, as she was the first to bring the “Good News” that Christ had been raised from the dead. According to Jean-Yves Leloup, (2002) author of the commentary on The Gospel of Mary Magdalene, Mary was considered the founder of Christianity. The Gospel of Mary Magdalene was discovered in 1945 in the library of Nag Hammadi in Upper Egypt; it is part of the “first part so-called Berlin Papyrus”, says Leloup. There are other Gospels found in that collection, but the Gospel of Mary Magdalene is the only one attributed to a woman. Mary Magdalene is mentioned in all four of the Gospels chosen to be the Canon, books of the Bible that cannot be removed. In her own Gospel Peter says to Mary “ Sister, we know that the Teacher (Jesus), loved you differently from other women. Tell us whatever you remember of the words he told you which we have not heard” (Leloup, p. 31, Vs. 3-6). Mary continues to tell the apostles the secrets she shared with Jesus and later in the gospel they doubt her words asking as so many ask today, “Must we change our customs, and listen to this woman? Did He really choose her and prefer her to us?” (Leloup, p.37, Vs. 18-20). Mary answers them, Vs. 3-4, “ My Brother, Peter, what can you be thinking? Do you believe that this is just my own imagination”? Verse 6 “ Or do you believe that I would lie about our Teacher”? Later the apostles agree and question Peter’s reaction in verses 11- 14 “Yet if the Teacher held her worthy, who are you to reject her. Surely the Teacher knew her very well, for he loved her more than us.” (Leloup, p.39) In chapter 7 Luke is describing the followers of Christ, and tells of a prostitute,

Just then a woman of the village, the town harlot, having learned that Jesus was a guest in the home of the Pharisee, came with a bottle of very expensive perfume and stood at his feet, weeping, raining tears on his feet. Letting down her hair, she dried

his feet, kissed them, and anointed them with the perfume (Luke 7:37-38, The Message:).

Luke was a physician and a man who wrote his gospel in great detail; nowhere does he name Mary Magdalene as the prostitute and neither did the apostles who wrote the other gospels. Mary Magdalene was the woman possessed of many demons as described later in Luke chapter eight “and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out” (Luke 8: 2, NIV). This was the Mary Magdalene that would become very precious to Jesus and the first to see the risen Lord; and yet claiming she was the prostitute described in Luke chapter seven negated her importance. Unfortunately that is the description continued into modern times. In an article in U.S. Catholic, *Who framed Mary Magdalene* (Schlumpf, 2000), Schlumpf explains that because of the proximity of the descriptions in Luke, the scholars who interpreted the words of the Gospels chose, not to revere Mary, who was the most frequently mentioned woman in the New Testament second only to Mary the mother of Jesus, and the most important witness to the resurrection in all four gospels but to name Mary Magdalene the prostitute who washed Christ’s feet. This misinformation was allowed to continue as “gospel” for over two thousand years before the Catholic Church publicly corrected the mistake in identity. According to Schlumpf, “Many cradle Catholics are shocked to learn that there is no biblical evidence that Mary of Magdalene was a prostitute or public sinner” (p. 6).

In the letters written by both Peter and Paul women were held in high esteem “Peter encouraged women to see themselves as valuable because God saw them as valuable.” writes Bolin (2005) as she refers to 1Peter: 3-4. Then there was Paul, who was

often thought of as a chauvinist, because of the anger he felt when he wrote his letter to the Churches in Ephesus and Corinth because those churches that were dealing with many problems that were being exacerbated by women, especially young widows, who were easily manipulated by false teachers (Taken from the letters to Timothy, the Corinthians and Ephesians).

The introduction to 1 Timothy (Life Application Bible, 2004) says that Paul thought of Timothy and Titus as sons, thus the letters he wrote were, as father would send advice to his children. There were problems that needed to be handled and Paul was a man of action. He was a man with a volatile temper, and these letters were angry and emotional as he tried to guide Timothy and Titus in dealing with these false teachers who preyed on young widows.

Paul writes this to Titus, saying,

As in all the congregations of the Lord's people. Women should remain silent in the churches, they are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church (1 Corinthians 14:33-35).

As previously mentioned, human beings tend to pick and choose what they want to believe and as opposed to accepting that Paul wrote this to churches dealing with specific problems with a few women in those churches, these statements have come down through the centuries as "law". Women should be silent in church. John W. Schoenheit, (2002)

wrote in an article on the Truth or Tradition website, quoting Paul's letter to the Corinthians, Schoenheit says:

The "Big Lie" that the New Testament text has been copied so many times that it is not reliable is just that: a big lie. However, occasionally a scribal change to the Greek text became generally accepted, and one of those scribal changes is the subject of this article. For many centuries women have not been allowed to lead or to teach in churches based in part upon what God supposedly stated in 1 Corinthians 14:34 and 35.

Schoenheit, (2002) goes on to say that there is "good evidence that these two verses were not part of Paul's original writing" (p.3). He explains that often scribes added text, he feels if these verses were added it was very early in the translations because they were added in the Greek manuscripts of 1 Corinthians.

In reading 1 Timothy, Paul describes the virtues and requirements of those who choose to serve the church and he says this: 11. "In the same way, the women are to be worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything" (1 Timothy 3:11, NIV). In Comparison Peterson uses these words: 11. "No exceptions are to be made for women— same qualifications: serious, dependable, not sharp-tongued, not over fond of wine" (1 Timothy 3:11, The Message). The NIV version being a little more gender specific than the Message, records it this way in verse 12-13: " A deacon must be faithful to his wife and must manage his children and his household well. Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus" (1

Timothy 3:12-13). Peterson makes his interpretation all-inclusive instructing both men and women, to be faithful.

Servants in the church are to be committed to their spouses, attentive to their own children, and diligent in looking after their own affairs. Those who do this servant work will come to be highly respected, a real credit to this Jesus-faith (1 Timothy 3:12, the Message).

Interpreters of both versions of the Bible claim Paul did not make a distinction between the possible responsibilities of either gender, but gave equal rights to both men and women to pursue the place they could best serve the church.

Many times before and after that letter, Paul mentions the importance of women in the church. In Romans 16 Paul greets several women, Priscilla, Phoebe, Julia, Aquila and many others who helped promote Christianity. Women who followed Christ were devout in their belief. Many women opened their homes for worship services and encouraged their entire families to become believers. Paul often sent these women before him or in his stead to teach and to lead, and he told the churches to which they were sent to honor them as they would have honored him. For example, in Romans 16:4 he writes of Priscilla and Aquila who worked beside him risking their lives for him and he gives thanks for them.

Paul changed the way people looked at relationships between a husband and wife when he wrote the very popular verses used in marriage ceremonies to this day.

In his letters to Ephesus, he wrote this, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh" (Ephesians 5:31 NIV).

Peterson writes it this way, “No one abuses his own body, does he? No, he feeds and pampers it. That’s how Christ treats us, the church, since we are part of his body. And this is why a man leaves father and mother and cherishes his wife. No longer two, they become ‘one flesh” (Ephesians 5: 31).

In Ephesians Paul goes on to ask the couple to remain faithful to each other and advises couples on how to live with the other person. The husband should love his wife as much as he loves himself. The wife, for her part, is required to honor her husband (Ephesians 5:25).

Peterson says:

This is a huge mystery, and I don’t pretend to understand it all. What is clearest to me is the way Christ treats the church. And this provides a good picture of how each husband is to treat his wife, loving himself in loving her, and how each wife is to honor her husband (Ephesians 5:29-33).

The men who followed Christ set a great example of the way God, created them, man and woman, equal, in His image. Equal, meaning for women and men to treat each other with love and respect, nether to be dominated or abused or limited because of gender. Those who contributed to the Bible, both old and new testaments wrote of many important women who changed the world mentioning one hundred and eleven of them by name.

The First Women

Having already looked at the first woman to confront the devil and rebel against God, Eve, and the very first woman to see the risen Christ, essentially the first apostle, Mary Magdalene, moving ahead several centuries to Colonial times in America where women were still subordinate to men during colonial time but all children were taught to read and write, as explained by Ellen Carol Dubois and Lynn Dumenil (2012). This was done so that the children could study the Bible. There were over nine hundred books published during that time, only four were written by women. Anne Bradstreet wrote three books during the 1650's, her last book published by her brother after her death.

Mary Rowlandson also wrote in the seventeenth century about her history and captivity in England in the 1630's. Her book, *A True History of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* was published in 1677 (Dubois & Dumenil, 2012, p.72).

Women were an active part of the revolutionary war supplying food and medical needs. Up to this point in history educational opportunities available to woman were limited to "finishing " schools where they were taught to run a household and dress properly for the most part. After the Revolution of 1776, women felt the need for a more substantial knowledge as the nation began to industrialize and the economy became more complex. Women like Mercy Otis Warren and Judith Sargent Murray realized that women needed to be educated in history and ideology and in financial matters so they would be equipped to teach the children more about patriotism and help them to meet the financial needs of the this new nation. In 1789 public schools were made available in the north for

both genders and this concept was quickly picked up and instated in the south as well (Dubois & Duminel, 2012. p. 147).

In a rather cyclical movement, in the 1630's Ann Hutchinson, a Christian and educated woman, perhaps the first woman preacher, began to speak to women about their faith coming directly from God. The clergy at that time preached salvation through "earthy obedience to Puritan laws"(biography.com, editors. 2016). Ann was eventually tried for behavior unbecoming a woman, the official charge was that she had "rather been a Husband than a Wife and a preacher than a hearer. Ann defended both her right as a woman to speak out and her religious beliefs. She was eventually excommunicated from the church and banished from the community. In 1636 Ann moved to Rhode Island and opened a haven for women who were escaping the Massachusetts orthodoxy. These, who contributed to this biography, say that Ann Hutchinson's controversy started an "undercurrent of female rebelliousness". The church leaders were so concerned about this rebellion that they no longer required women to publically state their commitment to the church for fear of them saying something controversial to the doctrine of the church, thus, the ministers were instructed to make the statements for them. Ann's encouragement for women to speak out in church led to women desiring more knowledge than just being what they needed to be sufficient in household duties. The article goes on to say this about Ann:

Though often viewed by today's standards as an advocate for freedom of religion and women's rights, Anne Hutchinson was neither. Within the social/political restrictions of her time, she was a courageous woman who spoke her mind and followed her conscience (biography.com, Ann Hutchinson, 2016. p.6).

Jay Rogers (2008) wrote this about Ann's teachings, "As I do understand it, laws, commands, rules and edicts are for those who have not the light which makes plain the pathway. He who has God's grace in his heart cannot go astray." Rogers goes on to write that Hutchinson's preaching did not contradict the Puritan beliefs; the point of contention was the "role of authority in the colony" (Rogers, 2008. p. 3). The home meetings Ann held threatened the male clergy and they charged Ann with blasphemy. Being an "outspoken female in a male hierarchy" she could not defend herself. Ann was tried and sentenced by the General Court. Hutchinson moved her family to Rhode Island then to New York. After moving to New York Ann and some of her family were massacred by the Indians (Rogers, 2008)

Mother Ann Lee who made great strides to increase the opportunities for both religious rights and better education for women. Ann Lee was born in England in 1736. In 1770, Lee was imprisoned by English authorities where she had a vision and was convinced that "sexual lust impeded Christ's work" (Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, (1999). After convincing her husband and family to move to America, she and her six followers who also made the move began the Shaker religion. Mother Ann Lee, the founder of the "Shaker" religion, so named because they would shake and dance as they sang. Mother Ann was also the preacher and "considered herself to be a prophet." In 1782 Ann and her followers were literally dragged out of Harvard, Massachusetts because they were accused of dancing naked in the woods. In spite of this displacement under Ann's leadership, the Shaker Religion grew and became known as, "the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing or the Millennial Church." Ann encouraged religious enthusiasm among her followers inspiring the shaking and dancing that occurred during the services. The

new Shakers believed that Lee's pronouncement of the coming millennium, and that Shakers practice of following practices would insure that the promise of sexual equality and wild religious worship expressed through the body-in dancing, speaking in tongues, fasting, and practicing celibacy would indeed please God. The Shakers, under Lee's guidance were segregated by sex, this continued on after her death in 1784. Ann believed in the equality of the sexes and for that equality to be maintained there was no interaction between men and women. Congregants were not allowed to sit on the same side of the worship space once Meetinghouses were built under the leadership of James Whittaker. When housing was provided men and woman were not allowed to use the same stairways to return to their living quarters (Nicoletta, 2001). Today there are several "Shaker Villages" across the United States but only two people who practice the religion. Sister Francis Carr past away in January 2017 in Portland Maine leaving only Brother Harold Hadd, 60 years old and Sister June Carpenter age 78 to carry on the Shaker age 78 to carry on the shaker traditions (Bidgood, 2017).

Jemima Wilkinson, a former Quaker, believed she was the reincarnation of Christ. Jemima Wilkinson had a host of followers. She refused to answer to her female name and demanded to be called the "Public Universal Friend"(Dubois & Dumenil, p.149). Jemima was born in Rhode Island in 1752. Her life had not only some religious influence but there were also some "political consequences" as a result of her settlement in, New Jerusalem, in up state New York. It is believed that Wilkinson was a direct descendant of the "French Prophets or Camisards". After her mother passed away when she was twelve she did not have much guidance. She was according to this publication an "imaginative girl". She was influenced by the "surcharge of emotional religion" that was taking place during that time

period. Her Quaker upbringing led her to believe in “power and grace of the Holy Spirit”. She believed that spirit ordained her for the ministry. In 1776 Jemima became ill and it is believed she died, she was revived and claimed from that time on that;

On the contrary, Jemina testified that she had died, had gone to Heaven, and there she visited with angels. There, too, the Spirit of God had possessed her, and she thus returned to life, sent back to earth to make God’s will known to all people. The new Spirit within her was the “ Publick Universal Friend” who was to preach to a sinful dying world. As Jesus was the First Messenger of God, she was a newly sent Second Messenger of God (Martin, 2005).

Some of the new denominations that were started in this time period such as the Northern Baptist were progressive enough to allow women to vote for church officials and act as lay preachers. The Congregationalist, a spin off from the Separatists, not only allowed women to act as lay preachers, but also gave them “just rights... to speak openly in the Church”(Dubois & Dumenil, 2012. p.149). In some of the larger religions women were allowed to lead small groups, but still had no rights in the church politics.

The Second Great Awakening, beginning about 1795 and lasting through 1830 opened more doors for women in the church. As women’s roles increased in the public sphere, their rights in the church increased as well. White women were so moved by this religious freedom and that religious movement also inspired a few of the African American women who began to speak out for Christianity. The Slave population, both male and female, slowly became followers of Christ.

In 1817 Jarena Lee, a free black woman, became the first African American woman to preach the gospel publically. As she sat in the African Methodist Episcopal church in Philadelphia, Jarena, a servant woman who felt the desire to share the gospel took advantage of an opportunity. The preacher that morning, Reverend Williams, was unable to speak, on an impulse Lee stood and addressed the congregation. Lee later wrote, "During the exhortation, God made manifest his power in a manner sufficient to show the world that I was called to labor according to my ability, and the grace given unto me" (Washington, 2017).

Jarena Lee had spoken to the bishop some eight years prior to this Sunday, but he did not feel "comfortable letting a woman speak for the pulpit," writes Eric Washington the author of this article. That day changed the bishop's mind and history, Jarena Lee began a public speaking career, becoming the first African American woman to preach in churches across the country, across the denominations, and across the races (Washington, 2017).

As women became better educated in both life matters and religion and as the "public schools" for the young men and women became more popular, the need for higher education for women became more prevalent. Schools copied the curriculum of Philadelphia's Young Ladies Academy which offered the classes required for young ladies, like needle point and other skills needed to run a household, these schools now began to teach history and mathematics to the women as well. The Bethlem, Pennsylvania, Moravian seminary offered in addition to the above mentioned studies, classes in geography, grammar, logic and philosophy. In an essay by Benjamin Rush (1787) as cited in Dubois & Dumenel (2012) he offers several reason for the further education of women, for instance, women will be more valuable if they are able to manage the property while

their husbands are enhancing their fortunes, women's education should be expanded so they will be able to participate in various avocations that will allow them to share equally in the growth of the nation (Dubois & Dumenil, 2012, p.174).

Judith Sargent Murray also promoted better education for women. She was extremely religious and active in the Universalist Church. After the American Revolution Murray began to share her beliefs about the need for women's independence and that higher education was the pathway to that independence. She also stated that the strong emotions of a mother were not a liability but a great strength that only a woman possesses. These strengths were the foundation of the term "Republican Motherhood." Murray believed that an educated woman would be a better mother, providing her children with the tools needed to become more competent and productive adults (Dubois & Dumenil 2012. p. 175-179).

In 1792 Mary Wollstonecraft wrote, "The neglected education of my fellow creatures is the grand source of the misery I deplore" (Dubois & Dumenil, 2012. p.364). According to Dubois and Dumenil (2012) women had been allowed to teach the children for the past fifty years, yet the women were not provided an education beyond high school. It was not until 1833 when Oberlin College, an evangelical Protestant institution admitted women to its baccalaureate program. The most famous woman among those admitted to the program was Lucy Stone, who graduated in 1847 from the "ladies program." The "ladies program" offered women simpler language and mathematics courses than those required for the baccalaureate program. Lucy became an activist for woman's rights organizing the first woman's rights convention held in Massachusetts in 1850. After becoming partners with Henry Blackwell, the older brother of Elizabeth, who became the

first woman to graduate with a medical degree, Lucy and Henry “start a suffrage weekly newspaper, *The Woman's Journal*.” Lucy was also the first person to be cremated in New England (Lewis, 2017).

Following the progress of women and education in late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, women began to receive college educations as early as the 1840's. Lucy Stanton Day Session, born in Britain in 1831 the first Black woman to complete a four -year education at Oberlin College was not awarded a degree because women were not granted degrees. Lucy went on to be an educator and abolitionist both in the United States and in Canada, teaching fugitive slaves (Garner, 2006).

Some twelve years later Mary Jane Patterson was the first American born Black woman in America to receive a Bachelors of Arts degree from Oberlin College in the year 1862. Ms. Patterson was born into slavery in North Carolina in 1840. She became an educator, which was what most women who could read and write did if they needed to earn a living in the 1800's. It is unclear how her family arrived in Oberlin Ohio, but she attended a preparatory school and went on to college to received her degree with high honors and taught at a school for young black children in Philadelphia, Patterson then moved to Washington D.C in 1869 where she established the High School for Colored Youth. This was the first public high school for African Americans and today is known as the Paul Lawrence Dunbar High School. Elizabeth went on to become principal of that school, serving in that position for a year until an African American man with a degree from Harvard was given her position and she was asked to serve as assistant principal.

Patterson then returned to school and was the first African American woman to receive Medical Degree and became a force in promoting women in the medical field (Fletcher, 1943).

The Morrill Land Grant of 1862 gave women more opportunity for education as the taxpayers who supported public education demanded, “their daughters as well as their sons be admitted to higher education” (Dubois & Dumenil, 2012. p. 364). Many felt that “coeducation” would corrupt the women and distract the men. By 1870 school in the midwest, like the University of Chicago and Northwestern opened enrollment to both men and women. In the West, Stanford in California did the same. These schools were soon followed by other major universities across the country, such as Tulane and Grinnell; Dubois and Dumenil(2012) state that by the end of the century these “institutions granted degrees to approximately four thousand woman a year”(p.364). The first of these was the University of California; they graduated the first woman, Rosa L. Scrivener in 1874. Soon after the university’s Law school was opened to women and by 1882 more than thirty percent of the students were women. Mount Holyoke began a women’s seminary in 1843, in 1888 they became know as Mount Holyoke Seminary and College, changing their name again in 1893 to Mount Holyoke College. After the Civil War, colleges for women began to open all over the country, Vassar College opened 1865 in Poughkeepsie, New York. The Smith and Wellesley colleges in Massachusetts and Bryn Mawr College outside of Philadelphia opened in 1891. Amazingly about sixteen hundred women graduated each year from these colleges equaling about forty percent of the all college graduates, male and female (Dubois & Dumenil,2012. p.365).

The first woman to graduate with a medical degree was Elizabeth Blackwell. Ms. Blackwell was born in Britain in 1831. Along with becoming the first woman to receive a medical degree in the United States, Blackwell is also the first woman on the United Kingdom Medical Register.

Blackwell was an educated woman who found the challenge of reading medical journal interesting and began to apply at universities offering medical degrees. Her applications were rejected on the simple basis that she was a woman until she applied at the Medical College at Geneva New York. Administration at the college actually polled the students about whether or not to admit a woman. The student thinking it was just a lark agreed to accept her, believing it to be practical joke.

Much to the surprise and dismay of the student body, the college and the townspeople, Blackwell turned out to be a serious student. She was often not allowed to be part of the medical demonstrations because faculty felt they were inappropriate for a woman to view. Over time she not only impressed the teachers and her fellow students by her ability and persistence, but she befriended many of her fellow students. In 1849 she graduated top of the class and became the first woman to practice medicine with a medical degree. According to the editors of her biography, Blackwell was instrumental in make the education of women in medicine in the United States and in the United Kingdom more readily available. She was also very influential in the social and moral reform in both the United States and in the United Kingdom. Her sister Emily was the third woman in the US to get a medical degree (Biography.com Editors, 2016).

The United Methodist Church lists several women who were an important part of the history of the church but not ordained pastors. The mother of American Methodism

was Barbara Heck who in 1768, encouraged young preachers in New York City and designed the John Street Chapel. As early as 1787, women were given permission to preach in the Methodist Church, but they were not given authority. Sarah Mallet was actually granted permission to preach by John Wesley, as long as she “proclaimed the doctrines and adhered to the disciplines that all Methodist preacher were expected to accept”. A freed slave woman, Isabella Bomefree, who changed her name to Sojourner Truth co-founded the Kingston Methodist Church in 1827 and followed her call to preach in 1843. Charity Opheral was licensed to preach in the United Brethren Church in 1849. All these women called to serve God in the Methodist Church before 1853, when the Universal church started to officially ordain woman (Historians United Methodist Church, 2011).

According to the article written by Bruce Robertson (2015) the following information is offered on the many of the first woman ordained pastors. As early as 494CE the Robertson states “ There is a scrap of evidence that female priests existed in the early Roman Catholic Church.” This information was found in a letter from Pope Gelasius condemning a woman-celebrating communion because she believed that privilege should not be reserved only for males.

As earlier mentioned the Quakers or Society of Friends have been the forerunners of women in the pulpit since the 1800’s, believing that there is “an element of God’s Spirit is every human soul”. This belief that all persons are considered of “equal worth” was justified by the pamphlet *Woman Speaking*. (Fell, 2013) In the pamphlet Fell wrote the following:

Women speaking justified, proved and allowed of by the Scriptures, all Such as speak by the spirit and power of the Lord Jesus, and how women were the first

that preached the tidings of the resurrection of Jesus, and were Sent by Christ's own command before He ascended to the Father (John 20:17) (Fell, 2013).

In an article written by Reverend Phebe A. Hanaford in 1899, entitled *Woman in the Pulpit: The American Woman in Action*, Reverend Hanaford wrote of the women of her time that preached “the unsearchable riches of Christ.” It was not unusual for a woman to speak out when a convention of women was held in her city. Often the women who spoke were invited to fill the pulpit of a nearby church on a Sunday morning. Hanaford asks what the cause of this was and believes as a result of these women who preached the gospel riches of Christ.

“It has come in the providential progress of events, and it argues a success hitherto unknown in the march of civilization and the spread of Gospel truth. ‘Other thing being equal’ why may not a woman preach and pray and preform pastoral duty as well as a man”(Hanaford. 1899.p1-2) ?

The article further states the Hanaford saw no reason why a woman should not preside over the sacrament of the church and therefore be able to bless those who wish to give their lives to Christ.

Hanaford writes of the woman ordained in the church during the mid to late 1800’s, the first of whom was Antoinette Brown. Brown attended Oberlin College; she was a friend of Lucy Stone who was among the first women to graduate from a four-year college program. Antoinette Brown was ordained a Congregational Pastor in 1853. Many ministers attended her ordination from other denominations. Brown lived in New York City at the time. In 1856 She married Samuel Blackwell, Lucy Stone’s brother-in-law.(Lesser n.d.)

In 1869, Brown and her friend and partner, Lucy Stone separated from other preeminent women's rights activists to form the American Woman Suffrage Association in support of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution. In 1873, she founded the Association for the Advancement of Women in an attempt to address women's issues that similar organizations ignored. She was elected president of the New Jersey Woman Suffrage Association in 1891, and helped found the American Purity Association. She also lectured during this time, on behalf of the poor of New York City. (New World Encyclopedia, n.d. p.8)

Blackwell's ordination was rejected by the Congregational Church causing her to leave that church and become a Unitarian. Antoinette wrote several books during her life and at one point resigned her pastorate because she could not align her religious beliefs and the new scientific information of the time (Lasser, n.d).

One of Blackwell's famous quotes is

God created the first pair equal in rights, possessions, and authority. He bequeathed the earth to them as a joint inheritance; gave them joint dominion over the irrational creation; but none over each other (Blackwell. n/d).

Hanaford writes that ten years after Blackwell's ordination in 1853, Olympia Brown was ordained in Malone, New York in the Universalist Church and that Hanaford herself became the first woman to be ordained in New England about five years later. Hanaford goes on to say that as early as the 1870's there were more than forty women ordained as pastors in many protestant denominations (Hanaford, 1899).

In 1866, Helenor Alter Davisson was a circuit rider in the Jasper Indiana for the Methodist Church. She was ordained the First Woman Methodist Pastor, later the church

challenged the ordination of women in general. Margaret Newton Van Cott was the first woman issued a license as a local preacher in by the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1869.

According to the United Methodist Church, Van Cott “heard a voice calling on her to turn over her life to the Lord. That moment she stood on the pavement in front of Old John-Street Methodist Episcopal Church, and from heaven light streamed in upon her soul. She was soundly, powerfully converted”(UMC history retrieved 2017). It was not until 1920 that the Methodist Episcopal Church granted licenses allowing women to preach but not ordaining them. By 1924 women were granted ‘limited clergy rights” as Methodist Episcopal elders or deacons, but were not granted conference membership. It was not until 1956 when Maud Keister Jensen was the first woman to receive full clergy rights in the Methodist Church. The Methodist Episcopal and Evangelical United Brethren Churches united in1968 forming the United Methodist Church we know today. The merged church affirmed full clergy rights for women. In 1980 Reverend Marjorie Matthews was elected the first woman bishop of the United Methodist Church (UMC History, retrieved 2017).

The Episcopalian Church was an offshoot of the Church of England. When the colonies formed in the new world the church gained its independence and became the Episcopal Church.

"The long struggle for women's ordination as priests in the American Episcopal Church began in the mid-1850s and lasted for almost 125 years. It ended in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on September 16, 1976, when the General Convention of the Episcopal Church voted to approve women's ordination to the priesthood and the episcopate" (Robertson, 2016).

The Episcopalians ordained the first eleven women in 1974 as Deacons and in 1976; the church changed their status to Priests, according to Bill Tammeus. Tammeus interviewed

The first woman Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori in 2014 and tells us that “Today, women make up almost half of those ordained to the priesthood each year in the Episcopal Church. Roughly one-third of all Episcopal priests now are female” (Robertson, 2016).

Even in the Roman Catholic Church, women have been officially ordained in the Roman Catholic Priesthood or to serve as deacons. There are currently ten women bishops.

The first Ordination took place in Germany in 2002 when the follow seven women were ordained in Apostolic Succession as Roman Catholic Priests.

Pia Brunner of Germany

Angela White of the United States

Gisela Forster of Germany

Christine Mayr-Lumetzberger of Austria

Iris Muller of Germany

Ida Raming of Germany

and Adelinde Theresia Rotinger of Germany

Giesela Foster and Christine Mayr-Lumetzberger were ordained as Bishops that same year (Roman Catholic Women Priests, 2015).

Most of the one hundred forty-five women priest and bishops today serve all-inclusive churches in smaller communities. These women are loved and respected in the communities they serve. The organization Roman Catholic Women Priests Movement

(RCWP) has challenged the Churches Cannon Law 1024 “an unjust law that discriminates against women.” According to the Website of the Association of Roman Catholic Women Priest (ARCWP) these women study and prepare the same as the men who serve the Catholic Church. Women like Mary Sue Barnett, who states in her biography, on the ARCWP website, that she currently serves as the Director of the Women’s Center at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Barnett was ordained in 2013 and serves on the pastoral team at Christ Sophia Inclusive Catholic Community in Louisville Kentucky, she is also an activist for CEDAW working “for the ratification of CEDAW, the United Nations Bill of Rights for Women (Barnett, n. d.).

In spite of the qualifications of these women and the work they do for all human rights, Pope Francis, in an article posted on The Guardian.com in 2016 says; “

Saint Pope John Paul II had the last clear word on this and it stands, this stands,” Francis said in his initial response, referring to a 1994 document stating that women could never join the priesthood”(Pope Francis, 2016).

The document of 1994 is a letter written from Pope John Paul II to the bishops of the Catholic Church regarding the priestly ordination. Pope Paul says this about the position of the Catholic Church;

She holds that it is not admissible to ordain women to the priesthood for very fundamental reasons. These reasons include: the example recorded in the Sacred Scriptures of Christ choosing His Apostles only from among men; the constant practice of the Church, which as imitated Christ in choosing only men; and her living teaching authority which has consistently held that the exclusion of women from the priesthood is in accordance with God’s plan for his church (John Paul II. 1994).

The Pope Francis says he has studied this document carefully and he upholds the stand taken by Pope John Paul II therefore, he has excommunicated these one hundred plus womenpriests for the Catholic Church. When asked about their excommunication with women priest made this statement:

“Roman Catholic Womenpriests reject the penalty of excommunication issued by the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith on May 29, 2008 stating that the “women priest” and the bishops who ordain them would be excommunicated *latae sententiae* (upon ordination, or as soon as the law is broken). Roman Catholic Womenpriests are loyal members of the church who stand in the prophetic tradition of holy obedience to the Spirit’s call to change an unjust law that decimates against women. Our movement is receiving enthusiastic responses on the local, national, and international level. We will continue to serve our beloved church in a renewed priestly ministry that welcomes all to celebrate the sacraments in inclusive Christ-centered, Spirit –empowered communities whenever we are called.” (RCWP.2015)

That is a strong statement and a strong stand for all women who serve the Universal Church, our country, their families and their employers.

CEDAW, Convention on the Elimination of all forms Of Discrimination Against Women

When the Convention of the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) document was presented to the United Nations it was ratified by all but the following countries: Iran, Palau, Somalia, Sudan, Tonga, and the United States.

Although the United States did not ratify this document, many states and cities took on the responsibility of accepting CEDAW and it’s provisions to further the process to eliminate

discrimination against women in all forms. The states and cities that ratify this document are working to:

- End all forms of discrimination against women
- Incorporate equality in the legal system, end discriminatory laws and adopt laws promoting gender equality.
- Establish institutions to ensure effective protection of women
- Ensure private persons, group and enterprises promote and protect women's rights.

In an article in the Courier, *Comment I Kentucky Stands for Women's Rights*, written in April 2016, contributor Teena Halbig says:

History was also made in late 2014 when Louisville Metro became the second *city* to pass a CEDAW Resolution. After passage by Louisville Metro Council, Mayor Greg Fischer held a ceremonial signing with some of the coalition members, including United Nations Association of the United States of America, Kentucky. (UNA-USA KY. 2016)

Halbig explains that almost one half of the work force in the United States is composed of women many of whom are single parents and the main source of income in the home, yet Halbig states that the "Department of Labor show women making seventy nine cents to a man's dollar, African American women sixty three cents and Hispanic and Lanina women fifty four cents in 2014."(Halbig, T. 2016) In 2016 the state of Kentucky House of Representatives voted to support CEDAW not only to help regulate the income of women living in the state but to support and develop the programs stated in the CEDAW document. This is a monumental step for CEDAW as this is the "first US State Resolution to pass in the United States." (LMCLEOD@PILNET. 2016) The membership now looks forward to the

document being presented to and passed by the Kentucky State Senate. The passing of CEDAW gives governments the guidelines to promote the safety and wellbeing of women and girls no matter their age, race or religious beliefs. The city of Louisville is 52% women as Councilwoman Tina Ward-Pugh pointed out in the resolution she presented to the House of Representatives (Ward-Pugh. 2014). Along with the state of Kentucky and the city of Louisville, the Cities of CEDAW have many other supporters across the United States. There are five states in which the Cities for CEDAW have an official ordinance. Sixteen cities have CEDAW resolutions and another nineteen cities are exploring the options of ordinances or resolutions to support this document (Cities for CEDAW. 2016).

There are valid many reasons to ratify the CEDAW document “women’s rights are human rights.” There are those who object, some of the most common reasons for not ratifying CEDAW are simply myths as compiled by S. Albert, L. Milani, and K Purushotma. (2004) the first of which is that CEDAW promotes abortion on demand. CEDAW does not promote abortion, but it does promote the right of women to choose to give birth or not especially in cases where pregnancy may cause the death of the mother. CEDAW does encourage the education and use of contraceptive in order to lessen the number of abortions. Following that thought, those who oppose CEDAW claim that this document “makes prostitution legal”(Albert, Milani,& Purushotmo, 2004), again not true. CEDAW seeks to eliminate the sexual exploitation of women and girls, its goal is to help put an end to human trafficking and the need for young girls to become prostitutes just to have a place to live and food to eat. CEDAW’s purpose is to empower women not put an end to Mother’s Day, but to support the mothers who need to provide for their families. The CEDAW document is very clear in the fact that CEDAW does not to want infringe on the sovereignty

of any country, state or city but that they should each implement the policies and laws necessary to support this movement in a way that would best meet the needs of their citizens (Albert, Milani, & purushotmo, 2004).

Because the United States did not ratify CEDAW there were few comments from the United States Government on this document. Therefore this paper will offer statements from the review Committee of the Canadian Women's Organizations who prepared the agenda for the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women of Canada's 5th report. The national report was prepared by the Feminist Alliance for International Action here after referred to as FAFIA and the British Columbia (B.C.) report by the B.C. CEDAW group. (These reports can also be found on the following web sites; FAFIA Web site at <http://www.fafia-afai.org>. The B.C. Report is also on the Povnet Web site at <http://www.povnet.org>).

These reports provided the committee members with the situation of Canadian women in great detail. In reviewing these reports one finds the status of women in Canada does not differ a great deal from that of women throughout the United States and most of the free world. However the situation for women living in those countries that have not yet gained their freedom is much more grave.

In the review of the women of the B.C. CEDAW committee it was revealed that the changes in government downsizing, deregulation in the markets, and the cuts in social programs have had a negative impact mostly on women not only in Canada, but again, throughout the world. Committee members were appalled at learning the results of both the Women's Nongovernmental Organization in Canada, and CEDAW that showed the "extent of poverty among women in one of the wealthiest countries in the world".

The CEDAW committee presented many questions to the Canadian government as to why there was so much discrimination against women in the country and also what the plans were to change that in the future. The committee asked for programs to provide for live-in caregivers and more help for single mothers. They did not ask that single mothers receive more welfare, but that more childcare programs were provided so that single parents could support their families by working in jobs provided by either the government or private corporations. Other requests were for programs that guaranteed safer provisions for women seeking asylum, are there facilities especially for these women? If not, why not (Day, 2003)?

In an article by Madeleine Kunin written in 2012, she states women have been presenting these problems for hundreds of years. A major push was made during the 1960's and 70's to draw attention to the equal rights of women. The feminists asked then for workplace flexibility, childcare, better early education. Women then were facing problems like being recognized for the differences they make in the business world.

Women need to know what is needed to create equal opportunities in the workplace. How can they, or more importantly we as a nation, can deal with child property? These questions asked several decades ago and still today we are asking the same questions. Kunin (2012) asks, "How can we win?" Kunin (2012) continues to ask if women in the United States are "where they thought they would be?" The author pointed out that in 2012 more than sixty percent of the college graduates were women yet only seventeen percent are on the boards of large corporations and only five percent are on the boards of Fortune 500 companies.

CEDAW reaches women all around the world. In 2015 the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) held a conference in Geneva. Reverend Solange Yumba wa Nkulu whose

role is national coordinator for women, youth and family work for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Congo was strengthened and encouraged by the information presented to the twenty-five women and eighteen men that attended the conference. Rev. Yumba wa Nkulu says: “this one has made all the difference in the way I perceive my work for women’s rights.” The LWF was joined by the World Council of Churches (WCC), the World Young Women’s Christian association, ACT Alliance and Finn Church Aid, together they studied reports from CEDAW and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) individual countries’ human rights situations. Yumba wa Nkulu reported that this experience gave her

A comprehensive understanding of my DRC context can specifically contribute to sharpening LWF’s global advocacy. Women have suffered all sorts of violations..... Learning how the UN Human Rights Mechanism works, knowing the tools that I can sue locally to mobilize, engage and influence important global decisions for women’s empowerment was particularly important. (Yumba wa Nkulu, 2015. p.3)

Maria Cristina Rendon, who was the co-organizer of the LWF workshop, says:

faith-based organizations are part of the critical grassroots that holds the governments accountable at national level for the implementation of CEDAW and UPR recommendations as well as the UN Security Council resolution on women, peace and security. (LWF. 2015)

The many women serving in the church today have the same needs as those in the corporate world. Society from ancient times through today has placed women in a less than capable mode because to the fact that a woman’s time is often limited by the needs of her family. These limitations would not be an issue if some of the recommendations of the CEDAW made in this decade had been met when they were made six or seven decades ago. The need for support of CEDAW, support rights for women in the church may not have been

as important in the 60's and 70's. Women who serve as leaders in the Universal Church today can be strong proponents of women's rights, not to change the world or the structure of our society, but to protect the lives of women and young girls who are so often preyed upon. There are statistics available from 1994 to current time show that the number of woman in leadership roles have increased greatly in just twenty years, thus one could assume the percentage of women ordained in the universal church being much lower seven decades ago made it not as much of an issue as it is today for all these recommendations be met by the church as well as the state. This would be a big step forward toward the elimination of discrimination against women in all areas of life.

Conclusion

According to a 2008 survey, female clergy lead only 94 of the twelve hundred United Methodist churches in the United States with one thousand or more members. The survey also reports twenty seven percent of United Methodist clergy are female. (UMC timeline of women in Methodism 2008) Still, today, there are many other denominations in the Christian Church that do not allow women to have a place in the leadership of the church. In the United States there are twenty five percent more women who graduate college than men. Many more women graduate from seminaries and are ordained than men, however our society continues to take the word written by Paul to Timothy as "gospel." 1Timothy: 11-15 "I don't let women take over and tell the men what to do. They should study to be quiet and obedient along with everyone else" (1Tim: 11:15, 2002). Women struggle against these beliefs in every religion today in every church.

At the time of Ledbetter's (2009) writing, "fewer than one-tenth of one percent of the almost forty two thousand Southern Baptist churches have a woman serving as senior

pastor, according to a study by Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.” At the Southern Baptist Churches Convention in Orlando Florida in 2000, the convention upheld their policy that the “office of pastor be held by a male.” At that time ninety nine percent of the Southern Baptist churches had male pastors. Because of this practice several women have left the Baptist church and serve congregations in other denominations.

The following statistic on this sheet shows the growth of women in ministry between 1994 through to 2015. The numbers from the 1994 graph were compiled by Tammi Reed Ledbetter and published in the Southern Baptist Church and Women Pastors, Comprehensive Report in October 2000. The statistic from 2015 were compiled using Data from United Kingdom Church Statistics 2005-2015 by Peter Brierley

Denomination	Total Clergy in 1994	% Female Clergy	Denomination	Total Number Of Ministers 2015	Number of Women	% of Woman Ministers
American Baptist Churches	5758	12%	Anglican	9,615	1,928	20.05%
Assemblies of God	18,570	8%	Baptist	2,953	400	14.54%
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)	5469	18%	Independent Churches	2,204	62	2.81%
			New Churches	2,934	405	13.80%
Church of God (Anderson, IN)	2955	10%	Pentecostal Churches	7,474	1,252	16.75%
			Smaller Denominations	1,954	741	37.92%
Church of the Brethren	1163	12%	Methodist	2,186	879	40.21%
Church of the Nazarene	3413	11%	Total Churches	36,636	6,146	20.05%
Episcopal Church	11,314	12%				
Evangelical	13,225	11%				

Lutheran Church in America						
Free Methodist Church	1878	1%				
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)	14,578	19%				
Southern Baptist Convention	35,130	4%				
Unitarian-Universalist Association	1236	30%				
United Church of Christ	7297	25%				
United Methodist Church	20,617	15%				
Wesleyan Church	2190	11%				

Should women be prohibited from certain leadership roles within the church?

Everyone views no answer to this question as correct. In fact, the responses of Christians to this question tend to fall into four major groupings. (Cachila, J.B. 2017) First, some Christians see a clear distinction of social roles based on gender; they believe the Bible mandates that only men hold church leadership positions (1Tim 2: 12– 14). Others believe that part of the consequence of the fall is that women must take a subordinate social position to men (Gen. 3: 16)— in other words, women must submit to men because of the fall. In contrast, some Christians believe Jesus brought women and men into a new age that gives equal social responsibilities and opportunities to all “There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither slave nor free; nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Gal 3:28); they believe that both men and women receive and should use and develop their spiritual gifts (1Co 12: 1– 31). Finally, some maintain that the church is the new creation of God (2Co 5: 16– 17); they anticipate the social order of Jesus’ eternal

kingdom— where every person, female and male, will express their full potential. The book of Revelations chapters 21 and 22 (NIV) talk about “ His people”, there is no distinction between male and female. Verses 9 and 10 read:

⁹One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.”¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.

The Holy City, God’s place, God’s wife, is there a higher honor for a woman? While each position has solid Biblical support, there are also clear exceptions that keep debates on this topic ongoing. For instance, Israel’s traditional society was shaped by divine laws that made priesthood a male occupation specific to the men in the family of Levi; God told Moses “The Levites are mine” (Numbers 3:11 NIV). Still many women served in high places in the Old and New Testaments, Deborah served as a primary religious and political leader (Jdg. 4: 1– 5: 31), and Anthelia was recognized as queen (2Ki 11: 1– 20). And while Jesus called only males to be in his close group of 12 disciples (Mt 10: 1– 4), he honored women in unique ways that upset entrenched social sensibilities. For example, Jesus healed women as well as men. Jesus healed the crippled woman (Luke 13: 10– 17), affirmed women eager to learn and affirmed women’s right to choose in Luke 10: 38– 42. Jesus often used women as examples in parables: for instance, the widow looking for justice in Luke 18: 1– 8, and the story of Mary Magdalene has shown in Luke 8: 1– 3. Jesus chose a woman to be the first witness to his resurrection making her the most important person in the New Testament, the first to share the “Good News” (Mt 28: 1– 10). Paul, who in some circumstances gave specific instructions limiting women’s roles in the church, also spoke of women who

prophesied (1Co 11: 5) and recognized women in the church leadership positions of deacon and apostle (Ro 16:1 & 7)

The United Methodist Church published a pamphlet in 2017 stating their stand on women’s role in the church. In working with the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women (GCSRW) the United Methodist Church states to “advocated for full participation of women in the total life of the church.” The UMC acknowledges the amount of work ahead necessary for all congregations to accept this stance. The pamphlet points out the following problems (GCSRW,2017.p1).

- Many United States congregations still refuse to accept a woman pastor.
- Women are underrepresented as clergy, superintendents and bishops.
- Women are five times more likely than men to be targets of sexual harassment and misconduct in the church.
- Women are less likely than men to hold top leadership roles – such as chairing the finance or staff-parish relations committees(General commission on the status and role of women 2017.p2).

Gender	U.S. clergy	U.S. Lay members	General Conference Bishops	Delegates to General Conference	U.S. Bishops
Male	73%	42%	90%	56%	65%
Female	27%	58%	10%	44%	35%

The above information printed on a graph within the pamphlet shows the percentages of women represented in the United Methodist Church in the United States (GCSRW. 2017.p1)

The United Methodist Church pledges to address the above statistics and issues through further “ training, education, research and monitoring the GCSRW.” Through this action the UMC will address gender discrimination on all levels. They will nourish clergy and lay leaders and will work to raise awareness of women’s issues and opportunities in the church.

The United Methodist Church will continue and increase education for church leaders “on sexual ethics, response teams and policies.” The Church will support victim of sexual harassment or abuse and work to develop guidelines for language that includes both male and female leaders. The UMC will work to make sure that all general conferences will be all inclusive allowing equal time and opportunities for both the men and women serving in the church (GCSRW. 2017. p3)

In a survey conducted by the Evangelical Alliance in 2012 the questions was asked of a group of seventeen thousand Christians, “Women should be eligible for all roles in the church the same way men are.” The responses were as follows:

- 51 % agreed strongly
- 20 % agreed a little
- 9 % were unsure
- 10 % disagreed a little
- 10 % disagreed strongly (eauk.org. 2012)

Crystal McDowell (2013) wrote an article entitled the “*10 Awesome Traits of a Godly Woman.*” Ten points that really could apply to not only women in the Universal Church, but Christian women from the pew to pulpit. Traits such knowing your scriptures, being

compassionate, being forgiving, having a commitment to prayer, confessing your sins, having a light heart and a bright outlook. Other traits are to be task orientated, to give wise advice, she is to have courage and strength and a calm spirit. McDowell supports each trait biblically, saying no woman is perfect and my not always exhibit all these traits, but explains that each day in one's own way, a women of God grows strong in these traits (McDowell, C. 2013).

Among the organizations that support women in ministry is the International Association of Women Ministers. (IAWM) This organization was founded by Madeline Southard way before being a woman in ministry was fashionable. Southard started IAWM in 1919, During that time the IAWM has supported women in ministry through the publication of books dealing with the issue women church leaders face. They also hold events and seminars available to member of the organization, information on the books and events can be found on the organization's website, womeninministry.org/site (IAWM.2017).

The book *Why We March* (2017.Kindle location 13) begins this way "On January 21, 2017 millions of women and men around the world gathered for the Women's March." Millions of people separated by streams, rivers, lakes, seas and oceans came together over one objective, to end discrimination and violence against women and girls. Mothers and grandmothers, fathers and grandfathers gathered to promote a world where women could contribute on an equal basis with men, to build a better world for their children to grow up in, a world where we work and play on equal ground no matter, race or ethnic background, no matter age or gender, one world, one people striving to make a better place to be. (Di Biase, R, designer 2017).

With the support of groups like CEDAW, LWF, NOW, IAWM, the UMC and even a part of the Roman Catholic Church, women are moving forward in the quest for equal rights, because, Women's rights are Human rights.

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