

Women Pastors?

In spite of the fact that I Timothy 2:12 specifically and emphatically forbids women from teaching and ruling over men, the evangelical world is moving rapidly in that direction.

Pentecostal, and some holiness churches have tolerated and even encouraged women preachers and pastors for decades, but inroads toward clergywomen are being made now in larger denominations that have previously held closer to the word of God.

Women now constitute almost 50 percent of the enrollment at some seminaries and divinity schools in the Boston area, and are said to be making their presence felt strongly at those schools. At Harvard Divinity School and Boston University's School of Theology, the number of women stands at a record 40 percent and is rising, according to a Boston Globe report. Women now comprise nearly half the student body at Andover Newton Theological School and about 30 percent of the population at the Episcopal Divinity School, according to the report.

The Globe study found that the "startling" rise in women's enrollment is bringing "sweeping changes" to classroom curricula and is forcing administrators to reconsider the whole concept of the ministry.

These schools may hardly be considered evangelical, but it marks a departure from their historic tradition.

Southern Baptists, the largest evangelical denomination on this continent are moving in this direction also. According to The Baptist Message, John Sylvester and Joy Johnson, a husband-wife team, have been called as co-pastors of Twenty-third and Broadway Baptist Church in West Louisville. The couple, both graduates of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, will alternate preaching and share equally in every respect as pastors, but will divide responsibilities as time progresses.

Some may want to blame this poor state of affairs on the recent "women's lib" movement. But I think both have a common cause: Rejection of the Bible as the authoritative word of God, and with it, all authority and obedience it enjoins, including God Himself.

- C. M.