
THE TEACHING

A Scriptural teaching is to be assemblies of the examination of how the
conducted in the public church.

By Jerry L. Cutter

Foreword

This book is presented in love to honest seekers of truth everywhere. These pages present a careful look at the pros and cons concerning the Scriptural method for teaching in the public assemblies of the church. In short, the book is an examination of the class method used for teaching in many churches of Christ. The writer has diligently studied the subject for 30 years, and has tested each statement by reading religious discussions and by personally debating the issue on four occasions. The first part of the book presents the Scriptural method the local church is to use for teaching in all its public gatherings. The last section deals with some of the many negative arguments brought against the truth on the matter, and the answers to the arguments.

The theme of this section deals primarily with the Scriptural method the local church is to use for teaching in all its public gatherings. First, a word about teaching in general is necessary.

Every Christian is duty bound to teach God's word to the fullest of his ability, and as the occasion demands, or the Scriptures allow. We are not to understand that every Christian is to be some kind of public teacher or preacher. All have not the ability. Neither is everyone allowed to teach publicly, regardless of his ability.

Who May Teach Whom?

The Scriptures are very explicit concerning who may teach whom. Both men and women may teach God's Word to anyone. A man may teach a man, woman, or child (2 Timothy 2:2). Also, Scripturally, a woman may teach a man, woman or child.

1) A woman may teach a man God's word: In Acts 18:2, we read concerning Aquila and Priscilla, a man and his wife. In the 26th verse, we read of how this man and his wife expounded unto a man, Apollos, "the way of God more perfectly" (Acts 18:26). Nowhere in God's word does it say a woman may not "teach over a man." We only read of where a woman may not "have dominion over a man" (ASV), or "usurp authority over a man" (KJV) (1 Timothy 2:11-12). Thus, a woman is not violating the principle of having dominion over a man by teaching a man

God's word. This she may do in the proper place, and at the proper time, as shown in Acts 18:26.

2) A woman may teach a woman. In Titus 2:3-5 older women were instructed to "teach the young women," and were told what to teach.

3) A woman may teach a child. Grandmother Lois and mother Eunice taught Timothy as a child "the holy Scriptures" (2 Timothy 1:5; 3:15).

4) Privately, and as individuals, a woman may teach anyone. Prophetess Anna spoke of Jesus "to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem" (Luke 2:36-38). Thus, women may teach a man, woman or child.

Where May Christians Teach God's Word?

No prohibitions or restrictions are placed upon the Christian man as to *where* he may teach. Always, though, he is to be regulated by good sense and wise judgment. But he is not confined. A man may teach publicly as well as privately (Acts 20:20).

As already shown, the Christian woman is not confined as to whom she may teach. Clearly, she may teach *anyone*. However, just as clearly, the Christian woman is confined as to where she may teach. She may not teach anyone anywhere. Simply stated, where a woman may teach she may teach anyone, even a man, and where she may not teach, she may teach no one, not even a child. To focus the issue, let us consider the various uses of the word *church*.

The Church: Its Meaning

Every baptized believer is in the church, and every Christian has a Scriptural right to teach in some capacity in the church. However, it is very important that we always clarify what we mean by teaching" in the church."

The word church is used three ways in the Scriptures. 1) It is used in the universal sense in Matthew 16:18, where Jesus said, "I will build my church." 2) It is used in the local or congregational sense in 1 Corinthians 1:2, where Paul speaks of "the church of God at Corinth." 3) It then is used to refer to the congregation assembled in 1 Corinthians 14:23-40, where we read of "the whole church being come together into one place."

We know the early church had assemblies, as is alluded to in James 2:2, and that these assemblies were not to be forsaken, according to Hebrews 10:25. Also, both believers and unbelievers frequented the assemblies, as is found in 1 Corinthians 14:23.

Exactly, then, what is an assembly of the church? Every Christian is in the universal church, but Christians are not always assembled. An assembly involves a coming together, 1 Corinthians 14:23, 26. This coming together must be under the direction of the local church. Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon, pp. 195-196: "Assembly: prop. (literally) A gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place; an assembly. An assembly of Christians gathered for worship, 1 Corinthians 14:19-35." When the people are gathered together by the local church for the express purpose of rendering spiritual service, we have an assembly.

This now brings us back to the question of women teachers "in the church." A woman in a private, individualistic way, and as a member of the universal church, may teach anyone. However, no Christian woman may teach anyone, not even a child, in the local church assembled. And the local church is assembled when the people are called together for the express purpose of rendering spiritual service.

Purpose of the Assembly

In Acts 11:26 we read: "And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people." People are to be taught, not entertained, in the assembly. In Acts 15:6 we are informed of how the apostles and elders came together to consider a spiritual matter. This matter was considered in the presence of "all the multitude" (verse 12). When the people came together, the Word was so taught that "those that were unlearned, or unbelievers" attended and were "convinced" (1 Corinthians 14:23, 25). The purpose of the assembly is to teach the people, consider spiritual matters, convince the unlearned and unbelievers, and edify the body. When the teachers function properly "all learn" and are comforted (1 Corinthians 14:31). Also, the Christians assembled every first day of the week for the purpose of keeping the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7), and to contribute (1 Corinthians 16:1-2).

Public and Private Teaching

Men may teach both publicly and privately. Women may teach only privately. However, what do we mean by public and private? When the local church calls the people (citizens) together, we have a public assembly. This also includes calling the people to the Bible classes, which are sometimes called Sunday Schools. Bible classes, like the "general assembly," are organized, arranged, advertised and operated by the local church. They will not qualify as being private, nor will they qualify as the work of an individual, which we are terming private teaching. In Acts 20:20, Paul taught "publicly, and from house to house." A third type teaching situation, which some say the Bible classes constitute, and which some say is neither public nor private, cannot be found in the Scriptures. Under the class system some brethren will allow a woman to teach a child, but not a man. No such situation can be found in the Bible, for where she can Scripturally teach a child, she can also teach a man. Conversely, where she cannot teach the man, she

cannot teach the child. There is no middle ground. So, again, it is not a matter of whether, neither of whom, but of where a woman may teach. And the where is determined by whether the local church is involved in calling the people together, or whether it is simply the work of an individual. The where is important because there is a teaching situation under which the woman cannot speak at all, but must remain silent. In 1 Timothy 2:11-12, the writer says, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." Clearly, there is a place where she cannot teach, and where she must learn in silence. This brings us to the divine pattern for the assembly.

God's Rules (Divine Arrangement) **For the Assembly**

The rules that regulate the assembly are found in 1 Corinthians, Chapter 14. These rules apply to the local church when assembled. Paul is giving instructions to "the whole church come together into one place" (verse 23) or to the brethren when they "come together" (verse 26).

1) Tongue speakers: In the early church, these persons were endowed with the ability to speak a language they had not studied (1 Corinthians 14:27-28). This spiritual gift passed with the others. However, brethren may still speak a language (foreign) not understood by the assembly. The only place in all God's Word that one can appeal to in order to control such a one who wishes to speak without a translator is in these verses. Rule one is that all such speak "by course," and with "an interpreter." Otherwise he must "keep silence in the church."

2) The Prophets: Prophets were inspired teachers. Prophecy was also a spiritual gift in the first century church (1 Corinthians 12:1.11). Although we do not have inspired teachers today, for our teachers have the completed revelation, we still have teachers. First Corinthians 14:29-32 regulates the teachers. The church is instructed to "Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets." Rule two tells us that the teachers are to speak one at a time to the whole assembly (see verses 23 and 26 again), and that every teacher has a right to speak, but not while there is someone already speaking. This is the only place in the New Testament that explicitly regulates the teachers concerning decorum and the order to be followed. When these divine instructions are carefully followed "all learn," according to verse 31, and that without any dividing into classes, or segregation at all. God's plan for teaching the assembly is simple and complete. Human wisdom cannot improve it. Not only are the teachers to conduct themselves in the orderly fashion outlined, but the hearers must remain silent (Acts 15:12). These rules are so that confusion will be avoided and so that the assembly may be edified (verses 4 and 31).

3) Women in the Assembly: Paul further instructs in verses 34 and 35: "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to

be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church." "Your women" applied to the prophets' wives, or teachers', that he had just addressed. These women were asking questions in the assembly. However, if they had questions, they were to direct them to their husbands, the teachers, at home. The reason they could not speak is that no woman could under the circumstances. Paul said it is a shame "for women (any woman) to speak in the church." This not only a prophet's wife, but a married woman, a single woman, a divorced woman, or any other woman, be it young or old. In the case of where a woman did not have a husband, she would have to seek out someone else to answer her question privately. No woman can speak in the assembly. Note, also: Singing does not fall in this category. If singing and teaching are parallel, then only solos may be sung, and that by men, for that is the way we teach. Paul is talking about teaching and not singing. Concerning this rule, we now notice 1 Timothy 2:11-12: "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." The only place the woman is to "learn in silence," and not to teach at all, is in the assembly, or when the people are called together for the express purpose of rendering spiritual service to God. She never has a right to usurp authority over a man, or have dominion over him, even where she is allowed to teach him (Acts 18:26). The Bible nowhere forbids a woman teaching a man. However, as shown, there is a place where she can teach no one, not even a child. And the local church never has a Scriptural right to divide the people into classes in order to do some of the teaching.

4) 1 Corinthians 14 is for all assemblies, for all time: The inspired writer says, "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace. as in all churches of the saints" (verse 33). Paul was giving instructions, not just to the church at Corinth, but all churches of the saints. These rules are for all churches, in all places and for all time. Also, some severe penalties are attached to those who will not obey them. Verses 36-38 say, "What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only? If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant." The word did not come from us, certainly, but to us. Thus, it is not up to us to decide what we think best when it comes to the items outlined. The prophets, and others with spiritual gifts, were in a position to "acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." What Paul wrote concerning the tongue speakers, the prophets or teachers, the women keeping silence in the assembly, and these rules being applicable for all churches for all time, are the commandments of the Lord. For those who refuse to recognize them he said, "But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant" The Revised Standard Version renders verse 38 thusly: "If any one does not recognize this, he is not recognized." These rules for all God's churches are commandments that are to be carefully observed.

Under the rules for the assembly we have learned that when the whole church comes together in one place, and when the teachers speak one at a time, without any classification, that all learn – men, women, children, believers and unbelievers.

Assemblies under the Old Law

Although we are not under the old law, it is interesting to notice how the reading of the law was to be done at the stated intervals. The following is recorded in Deuteronomy 31:11-13: "When all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law: And that their children, which have not known any thing, may hear, and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as you live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it." Relating to this, also read Joshua 8:34-35 and Nehemiah 8:1-3 and 8. When the law of Moses was read according to the special instructions given, even the children which had not known anything could learn, and this in the presence of the adults. No segregation, or classification was needed when Moses' law was read.

Parents and Children

We have seen that the early church had regular assemblies that were not to be forsaken. We have also seen the order these gatherings were to follow. But our learning and obligation to teach others does not stop with the assembly. Individual Christians are duty bound to teach others whenever an opportunity presents itself. Parents have a constant obligation to their children. Paul wrote: "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). The church has no right to invent an unscriptural method for teaching the children of negligent parents. The class method for teaching in the church falls in this category. As individuals, we must encourage children, and teach them whenever possible. Parents should bring their children to the assembly. In the assembly we draw spiritual strength from one another that sustains us in all our endeavors.

Conclusion

Quite obviously all churches of Christ do not observe the rules for the assembly, which the Apostle Paul laid down, and which are commanded of God. Some have added the Bible class method to God's plan, despite the fact that Paul said everyone could learn in the undivided assembly. This digression has disrupted and divided the body of Christ. It has also weakened it, as all error does, and since its introduction, has helped lead the church far from the truth in many other areas also.

After the introduction of Societies in 1849, the church soon took on other denominational trappings. The instruments were first introduced in 1859, and also about this time many churches accepted the Sunday Schools, especially the Christian churches. Along toward the end of the nineteenth century and in the early twentieth century they became very popular in the

churches of Christ. Much history could be presented to show when the Sunday Schools and Bible classes were introduced into the church.

In conclusion, the class method for teaching the church is completely foreign to the Holy Scriptures. Even those who use them readily report when they were first introduced into the denominations, and from there into the church. Bible classes are both unscriptural and anti-scriptural. They cannot be found in God's word, and clearly violate what is taught.

We must "learn not to go beyond the things which are written" (1 Corinthians 4:6 ASV), and to show our love for Jesus by keeping his commandments.

The Sunday School or Bible Class Question Arguments and Answers

The origin of the Sunday School or Bible Classes is well-stated in the following quotations:

SUNDAY SCHOOL, an observance usually connected with Protestant churches, teaches Bible study and religion. Such schools may have existed as early as the 1500's. But the present-day Sunday-school movement was started in Gloucester, England, by the publisher Robert Raikes. In 1780, he launched his "Ragged School." He tried to aid the children of the poor in his community by teaching them reading, writing, and the principles of religion.

World Book Encyclopedia, article "Sunday School."

In the book entitled The Mirror of a Movement, by Church of Christ preacher, and present President of Oklahoma University (1980), William S. Banowsky, we are informed as to when the classes began in the churches of Christ.

While long granting that one of the most vital sources of edification was through the systematic study of the Bible, churches of Christ were very slow to organize Sunday Schools in their local congregations. In 1786, just three years after Great Britain declared the thirteen colonies to be a free and independent nation, the first Sunday School was started on this side of the Atlantic.

The Sunday School got off to a belated start among the disciples. In its first years the Restoration movement was nurtured almost exclusively by evangelistic preaching. No need for a Sunday School was felt. Later, convictions prohibiting conference assemblies denied the movement the ideas and stimulation to be gained through participation in the National Sunday School Conventions. Because of the close ties between the Sunday School movement and denominationalism, the disciples assumed an early posture of belligerent opposition. "I have for some

time," wrote Alexander Campbell in 1824, "viewed both 'Bible societies' and 'Sunday Schools,' as sort of recruiting establishments to fill up the ranks of those sects which take the lead in them." Although he held this position for some years, in time Campbell changed his mind.

Like Campbell, Barton W. Stone also first opposed, then later approved the Sunday School ... By 1850, however, the Sunday Schools had gained a strong foothold among the more progressive congregations. And while refusing to align themselves with the Sunday School Union, the conservatives also slowly followed suit. By 1900, a great majority of the congregations had made provisions for at least a crude system of Sunday morning Bible study—though in most instances, very crude indeed.

(The Mirror of a Movement, pages 232, 233 and 234)

Churches of Christ which divide into classes to do some of their teaching sometimes call the classes "Sunday Schools" and other times "Bible Classes." For example, the Gospel Advocate Company of Nashville, Tennessee, advertised the following in October, 1958: "... Sunday school and church supplies. It (their catalog) is an essential tool for every preacher, teacher, and Sunday school and church worker ..." Certificates of attendance have been issued to students with a picture of Robert Raikes having the following inscription under the picture: "Robert Raikes, founder of Sunday Schools, 1780."

Sunday schools are found in *secular history* but *not in the Scriptures*. Instrumental music was introduced into the Roman church in about AD 670. Twelve hundred years later the innovation was picked up by the Restoration churches, and brought about the Christian Churches and Disciples of Christ, beginning in 1859 at Midway, Kentucky. The denominations introduced the Sunday School innovation in 1780, and in less than one hundred years they had become prominent in "the more progressive congregations," according to William Banowsky.

The following are the major arguments used by church of Christ preachers in the last half century endeavoring to prove Sunday School classes are Scriptural.

Arguments in Defense of the Class Method for Teaching the Church

1) ARGUMENT (by W. Curtis Porter): "Does the command "to teach" ever include methods of teaching?"¹

REPLY:

a) Yes. Jesus said, "Go teach" (Matthew 28:19), and this does include "methods of teaching." For example, there is the blackboard method, chart method, projector method, etc., none of which violates the principle set forth.

b) Matthew 28, then, includes methods of teaching, but Sunday School and Bible Classes are not methods of teaching but *for* teaching. Dividing into classes does not constitute teaching. One can sit all day in a class and learn nothing. However, this method *for* teaching violates the rules for the assembly as set forth in 1 Corinthians 14:27-40.

2) ARGUMENT (P. J. Taylor): "Women spoke publicly. "Yes; they spoke as Joel said they would. Was this a public place (Acts 1:14-15)? Yes, there were 120 people there and the women taught in public."²

REPLY:

a) The above does not prove the class method for teaching. If the reasoning is correct, it proves that women can preach, or teach the whole assembly.

b) If these women taught in public, as contended, it is of interest to note that they taught an unsegregated, undivided audience of both men and women. (See Acts 1:14-15.)

3) ARGUMENT (by E. C. Fuqua): "I use the word 'class' as a direct antithesis of 'public' each class, then, is a private gathering, as contrasted with the public gathering of the church."³

REPLY:

a) First, Fuqua directly contradicts what Taylor said about women in the church (Argument 2).

b) If each class is a private gathering then a woman may teach a class of men, because there is Biblical evidence of a woman teaching a man in private (Acts 18:2, 26).

c) Inasmuch, then, as women are not allowed to teach men's classes, this shows these classes are not private gatherings.

4) ARGUMENT (by T. N. Thrasher): "1 Timothy 2:11-12: Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." Notice the two restrictions that are placed on women. She may not (1) 'teach' or (2) 'usurp authority' ... The passage plainly declares that she is restricted from teaching 'over the man.' Hence, the woman is forbidden to (1) teach over man, or (2) usurp authority over man."⁴

REPLY:

a) "Usurp authority over" is a prepositional phrase in English but is only one word in the Greek, and means "Exercise dominion over one ... 1 Timothy 2:12" (Thayer's Lexicon, p. 84). In short, "over" is not connected with "teach" in 1 Timothy 2:12, but only with having dominion over the man, or the second part of the verse.

b) The Bible does not say, "I suffer not a woman to teach over the man!" The passage says nothing about "teach over." Rather, it says, "I suffer not a woman to teach," nor to do something else.

c) Compare these two parallel passages:

(1) 1 Timothy 2:12: "I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man." If "over the man" modifies both "teach" and "usurp authority," consider the following and see the contradiction:

(2) Leviticus 19:14: "Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling-block before the blind ..." Shall we say that the prepositional phrase, "before the blind," modifies the first prohibition? If so, the passage merely means, "Thou shalt not curse the deaf before the blind." In other words, according to such logic, it would be perfectly all right to curse the deaf, provided it is not done before the blind.⁵

d) "Silence" in addition to "subjection" is also imposed on women in this passage.

e) Wherever this passage applies, the woman is not to teach anyone, not even a child.

5) ARGUMENT (by E. R. Harper): Concerning 1 Timothy 2:11, 12, "This did not say one word about WHERE she is NOT to teach. This is just a blanket statement that she is not suffered, allowed 'to teach,' but be in silence, in subjection. The entire idea here is that she is to be in subjection and is not to teach with the spirit of usurping over a man."⁶

REPLY:

a) The apostle said, "Let the woman learn in silence." The woman cannot learn in silence while teaching a class.

b) Paul said in 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35, "It is a shame for a woman to speak in the church." A woman is to be a learner, not a teacher, in the church.

c) If silence means subjection, then Paul said, "let the woman learn in silence (subjection) with all subjection."

6. ARGUMENT (by E. R. Harper): "According to Acts 18:26, "We know that Pricilla taught ... a woman can teach, and she may teach a man."⁷

REPLY:

a) No one denies that a woman can teach a man in private.

b) If classes are private, as contended nowadays, and a woman may teach a man, then a woman may teach a class of men.

7) ARGUMENT (by Curtis Porter): "We are going to say there are two congregations ... meeting six blocks apart. There are two assemblies there. The two assemblies are moved together: Well, just how close can they get before the thing becomes unscriptural?"⁸

REPLY:

a) Congregations, or assemblies, were used to prove Bible Classes.

b) Thus, classes, by this reasoning, are on a par with church assemblies, a fact many of us have sought to show for years.

c) Which of these congregations (called classes once under the same roof) could a woman teach, inasmuch as it is believed that a woman may "teach some of them"?

d) These congregations can observe the Lord's Supper and have a collection. Thus, the same could be done in the classes, if both are parallel, thus making the classes church assemblies.

e) The above argument is spurious. It does not prove that the church can use the class method for teaching, but would, if correct, prove the female ministry; for congregations are built of men, women and children.

8) ARGUMENT (by Roy Lanier): "Women cannot teach while their groups form part of a public assembly, hence segregation of their groups is necessary. This being true, the church has authority for recognizing these groups and teaching them separately."⁹

REPLY:

a) Lanier contends women could not teach in the public assembly, while Porter used public assemblies to prove classes (Argument 7), and Taylor contended a woman could teach an undivided, unsegregated audience publicly (Argument 2).

b) Lanier's argument says that a woman cannot teach in the public assembly unless the assembly is divided, and that this dividing of the public assembly makes the parts private.

c) However, Lanier would insist that the assembly be divided according to age and or sex before a woman could teach some part of the division. If the part of the divided assembly make for a private situation, a woman could teach any part or group or class. (See reply "b" to Argument 3.)

d) If just dividing the public assembly makes the parts private, then most children are not really attending "public schools," but private, because schools are divided into classes.

e) A situation is not private merely because only those of a specific age or sex group are invited. Everyone is invited in the newspapers, on church signs, from the pulpit, etc., to attend the classes. A woman is teaching a public assembly when she teaches a class. (Read 1 Corinthians 14:33-34; 1 Timothy 2:11-12.) Just announcing a thing does not make the thing announced public; however, classes have all the other essential elements to make a public assembly.

9) ARGUMENT (by D. H. Tallman): "The idea of a Sunday School or Bible study is found in Acts 2:1-12 and among other places in Acts 19:9." Further, "The only scriptural Sunday School is that divine institution the church, working as a Sunday School." "For I especially called your attention to the Sunday School recorded in Acts 2:1-12, where at least some, if not all the teachers and classes are mentioned and it was on Sunday, therefore a Sunday School. The apostles were the teachers. The classes are named in verses nine, ten, and eleven ..."¹⁰

REPLY:

a) The apostles were teaching nations. If different apostles were teaching different nations, and these different nations are equivalent to classes, and a woman can teach "some classes," then according to this reasoning a woman can teach some nations. Also, nations are comprised of men, women, and children; thus, Acts 2 will not prove the class

method for teaching, but if the reasoning is valid it will prove the female ministry Scriptural.

b) The apostles did not divide the people into various nationalities in Acts 2. "The multitude came together" (v6). "How hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?" (v8). "Peter lifted up his voice, and said unto them" (v14).

c) If, as contended, the church is the only Scriptural Sunday School, it follows that Sunday Schools are, in reality, the church.

d) If "the only scriptural Sunday School is ... the church," then each Sunday School class can have all the items of worship, and it will be "a shame for women to speak" in any of them.

10) ARGUMENT (by Roy Lanier): Acts 5:25 says, "Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people." This proves that "several persons taught in the same building at the same time."¹¹

REPLY:

a) To say that "they are teaching the people" does not necessarily mean that all are speaking simultaneously.

b) In Acts 3:12-26 Peter was preaching; however, in Acts 4:1, 2 the priests and captain were grieved because "they spoke" and "taught the people." "They spoke unto the people" as the priests and captains "came upon them." Yet only one man (Peter) was speaking. This proves conclusively that when a plurality of persons authorize one person to speak, and concur with his remarks, it is proper to say "they spoke."

c) In Acts 5:27-29, "Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men." There is only one class (the council) here. Yet, Peter and the other apostles preached "then" to "them." Were they all shouting at the same time?

d) And those who make a to-do about the "tense" should notice that the verb tense in Luke 2:46 agrees exactly with the tense of Acts 5:25. Luke records, "And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions." The apostles were found "teaching the people" (Acts 5:25), and when Jesus was found He was "hearing them" (the doctors of the Law). All the doctors were not speaking at the same time. Lanier's argument is deceitful. The fact that the apostles were "teaching them" does not prove that "several persons taught in the same building at the same time."

11) ARGUMENT (by Curtis Porter): Of the woman, he said the following: "But in the public assembly she can sing. And when she sings, she teaches, because Paul says so. If she doesn't teach when she sings she is not doing what Paul said to do."¹³

REPLY:

a) Porter was trying to prove that classes are Scriptural and that a woman may teach a class because she may sing in the public assembly. If the woman can teach the whole public assembly of men, women, and children by singing, then she would not have to wait until she assembled in a class before she continued. Or, is it that she can sing only to women and little children in the public assembly?

b) Singing is not on a par with speaking. If so, the singing would have to be by solo, or one by one, because that is the way the speaking is to be done (1 Corinthians 14:31).

c) Conversely, though, if singing and speaking are parallel, then the speakers do not have to speak one by one, because we do not have to sing that way. Jesus and the apostles jointly sang a hymn; however, we speak one by one. There is a marked difference between the two.

d) If singing and teaching are absolutely parallel, then the above argument has the woman teaching the whole public assembly, not a class. This is only some more of the "Scriptural Proof" given for the class method for teaching.

12) ARGUMENT (by E. R. Harper): In reply to the question, "Does the Bible give us the right to have classes for the purpose of teaching the Bible?" he responded by asking for the Scripture that forbids them."¹⁴

REPLY:

a) The Bible specifies how the teaching service is to be conducted. (See the first section of this booklet.)

b) When a thing is specified, everything else is excluded. For example, God specified gopher wood in building the ark, thus excluding all others. God specified singing and making melody in the heart, thus excluding playing an instrument. God specified baptism by immersion, thus excluding sprinkling, etc.

c) The Scriptures forbid going beyond what is written (1 Corinthians 4:6), and according to the above argument there is no Scripture for classes.

d) The class system, or any other practice, is thus forbidden by God's silence, where He specifies what should be done. In all such cases, a practice is considered unscriptural although not specifically forbidden.

13) ARGUMENT (by E. R. Harper): "I am suggesting now that the Bible divides up into classes or groups, which is all a class is. I am affirming ... the principle for teaching in groups or classes is in the Bible, and that the Lord lays upon the Elders of each congregation the duty of seeing that each class or group is properly fed."¹⁵

REPLY:

a) The Bible recognizes individual differences and needs but does not authorize the class arrangement to supply these differences and needs. (See the first section of this booklet, and also read Deuteronomy 31:12, 13; Nehemiah 8:1, 3; Joshua 18, 13; 1 John 2:12, 13.)

b) The Bible nowhere divided into classes, or groups, those to be taught.

14) ARGUMENT (by E. R. Harper): "I am suggesting now that the Bible divides up into classes or groups ..." "Now I maintain that in this chapter (Hebrews 5:12-14) is the principle upon which our classes are formed. Paul here never told the exact method of getting this milk and strong meat fed to the 'babes' and the 'full age groups.'"¹⁶

REPLY:

a) Since it is insisted that the exact method is not stated by Paul, how does one know the Class Method is the exact one?

b) Paul does give the exact way the church is to be taught so that all may learn (1 Corinthians 14:26-40).

c) The Bible nowhere divides any audience "into classes" for the teaching of God's word.

d) Further, Harper is taking the spiritual milk and feeding it to literal children, and a 40-year-old man just converted (a babe in Christ) will be placed in the "full age group" and fed meat instead of milk.

15) ARGUMENT (by Curtis Porter): In explaining Mark 9, Porter said this: "And so we have teaching going on in the group Jesus left behind. He took one group away and taught that group, and the group that was left behind was also taught." This thus "proved" that Jesus divided His audience to teach it."¹⁷

REPLY:

a) The audience was not segregated into age groupings, and the women were not teaching anyone. But if Mark 9 authorizes classes, then which of the above classes could a woman have taught?

b) Moreover; the so-called classes did not even meet on the same day. Thus, there was no simultaneous teaching of the same audience, as Porter wished to prove. (Read Luke 9:37.)

16) ARGUMENT (by E. C. Fuqua): "The so-called 'no Sunday School' theory originated in the mind of Satan ..."¹⁸

REPLY:

a) We were given "all things that pertain to life and godliness" but were never given the class method for teaching, any more than we were given sprinkling for baptism, or the instrument to aid in our singing.

b) Christ and the apostles never once used this "better method for teaching," despite strenuous efforts by many preachers to prove otherwise.

c) Historically, Sunday School originated in England in 1780. Yet, in spite of this, some would deign to say that not believing in them "originated in the mind of Satan."

17) ARGUMENT (by E. C. Fuqua): In reply to the statement that there is "No Scriptural precedent for the class study," he said, "True" and "No precedent is needed."

REPLY:

a) Fuqua said that the no Sunday School theory originated in the mind of Satan, and then turned right around and admitted that there is "No Scriptural precedent for the class study."

b) Why did Porter, Lanier, and the many others try to prove that there is Scriptural precedent when really there is none?

The following are unpublished arguments commonly used by class brethren in debates.

18) ARGUMENT: The assembly is divided for baptism, and women speak in the dressing room. Thus, it is all right for women to speak in a divided assembly.

REPLY:

a) Everything done in a dressing room could not be done in a class, and vice versa. A dressing room is for dressing. A class is for teaching. Everyone of the same age group is invited to the class. Only a selected few are invited to the dressing room.

b) One (the classes) is public, and the other (the dressing room) is private.

c) In a variation of this argument, Porter used two congregations to justify classes (Argument 7).

d) The dressing room displays nudity, is strictly private, and baptism among most churches is done after the assembly is dismissed.

19) ARGUMENT: In Acts 15:4-6, we have a group assembled by the church which is smaller than the whole group. This was a private gathering alluded to later in Galatians 2:2.

REPLY:

a) Galatians 2, refers to the time of the Acts 15 incident, but not to the Act 15 meeting.

b) In Acts 15, the apostles and elders "came together" (v6), with "all the multitude" (v12). Verse 22 states: "Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church ..." to send chosen men. And verse 25 plainly says that they were "assembled with one accord."

c) In Acts 15 there is no classification mentioned. Brethren may meet privately, as in Galatians 2:2, but Bible classes are not private meetings, as shown in several of the above arguments.

20) ARGUMENT: What the church can do and the woman can do, the church can use the woman to do. Both the church and the woman can teach women and children, thus the church can use a woman to teach women and children.

REPLY:

a) These arguments are designed to deceive the unsuspecting. What was not said was that a woman may also teach a man (Acts.18:2, 26).

b) If the argument is true, then a woman could teach a class of men, which those who are making the argument would never allow.

c) Privately, a woman may teach a man, woman, or child. Publicly, she can teach no one, not even a child.

21) ARGUMENT: "I find these two restrictions on women teachers. She may not (1) Speak in church (1 Corinthians 14:34), (2) Have dominion over a man (1 Timothy 2:11-12).

REPLY:

a) First, the brother conveniently failed to define "church." Secondly, wherever the verses given apply, a woman is not to speak at all.

b) This same brother would not deny a woman could teach a man privately (Acts 18:26), but would not allow a woman to teach a man in a class, showing the classes are not private, and are more than class brethren will openly admit.

c) The question is: If a woman may teach a man in the home, and she may (Acts 18:26), and the home and classes are parallel, then why cannot the same woman teach the same man in a class?

CONCLUSION: Jerry Cutter and Jack Rudd had a public discussion on the class method for teaching at Highway City, California, in 1960. Cutter asked Rudd the following question: Can you give the scripture of where a woman ever taught in the church where the word church is used to mean an assembly?

THE REPLY: Can you give a scripture for plate?

In the several public discussions this writer has been in, that is the nearest anyone ever came to giving a Scripture to justify the class method for teaching the church.

FOOTNOTES

¹ W. Curtis Porter and J. Ervin Water, The Porter-Waters Debate (Wesson, Mississippi: M. Lynwood Smith, Publisher, 1952), pp. 138, 177.

² P. J. Taylor and J. N. Cowan, A Debate on Women Teachers and Division into Classes (Mr. and Mrs. T. F. Stewart, publishers, 1928), p. 12.

³ E. C. Fuqua, "Woman's Place in the Church," p. 4.

⁴ E. H. Miller and T. N. Thrasher, The Miller-Thrasher Discussion (a written discussion under way at time of this writing, Sept. 1970), Thrasher's First Affirmative, p. 10.

⁵ Van Bonneau, Teaching the Word, 1942, p. 35.

⁶ L. H. Knight, Reply to Harper on Sunday School Question, 1947, pp. 4, 5.

⁷ Knight, *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁸ Porter and Waters, *Op. cit.*, pp. 184, 185.

⁹ D. J. Whitten and Roy H. Lanier, The Whitten-Lanier Debate, 2nd ed., p. 77.

¹⁰ J. P. Watson and D. H. Tallman, The Sunday School Class Question, 1930-31, pp. 6, 20.

¹¹ Whitten and Lanier, *Op. cit.*, p. 79.

¹² Bonneau, *Op. cit.*, p. 30.

¹³ Porter and Waters, Op. cit., p. 213.

¹⁴ Knight, Op. cit., p. 1.

¹⁵ Knight, Op. cit., p. 1.

¹⁶ Knight, Op. cit., pp. 1, 2.

¹⁷ Porter and Waters, Op. cit., p. 183.

¹⁸ E. C. Fuqua, "The No-Class Heresy," 1949, p. 4.

¹⁹ Fuqua, Ibid., p. 6.

Printed By
ROBERT STRAIN
Harrodsburg, Lid. 97439