

Women Pastors and the LCA

A third disappointing item at the LCA Convention in 1997 was the decision to take a vote on having women pastors in AD 2000 at the next general convention. In this issue the LCA has painted itself into a corner. It will be a watershed for the church, in the sense that some can be predicted to be lost to the church as an organisation no matter which way the decision goes. If the next convention says "No" to women pastors, it can be predicted that some will either leave the church or continue to work for more time for their cause. Surely a cleansing will be a good thing, if the liberals, for whom Scripture does not decide that issue, though the passages are clearer than light (1 Cor 14:33-38; 1 Tm 2: 11-14), were to ship out. But can that realistically be expected? Nothing is ever declared "out of order" in the LCA. Several votes about membership in the NCCA were lost, but did the liberals give up? The course of gradualism has worked well for them in the past, so why should it not continue to? If "Yes" is said to women pastors, perhaps some will decide that the time has come for them to leave. Some may in disgust go nowhere. Given the number of "highly placed" Seminary lecturers and presidents who agree with having women pastors, a "Yes" vote is highly likely. Some will say, "Well, at least my pastor is not a woman, so there is no reason for me to leave just yet." And like frogs in a copper that is heating up, they will never decide that the time has come to jump out. They will boil there, to their own, and probably more so, to their children's, great loss.

Right across the churches of our modern times, the issue of women pastors is proving to be a test of the willingness of churches to be guided by the Word of God. It has become a "shibboleth." What God thinks of such disobedience is clear in 1 Cor 14:38. The reading supported by the best manuscripts there is the divine passive, "He will not be acknowledged." How dreadful! To the conservatives, the issue indicates where their closest friends are in other denominations. For the believers in the great bulk of churches who are going down the apostate ecumenical, broad paths, we can only pray, "Lord, have mercy!"