

# POLICIES

## WOMEN TEACHING ADULTS

The elders presented a teaching on the role of women in the church in October 2003. A Compact Disc recording of that presentation is available. Below is an outline of the case that was presented.

The ontological argument: Before God, women and men share equally the same responsibility and authority in creation, and the same inheritance in redemption. There is nothing inherently inferior in a woman's nature that would disqualify her from teaching children, women, or even adult men.

The passage in question, 1Tim. 2:11, "But to teach, a woman I do not permit, nor to exercise authority over a man, but to be in silence," presents four possible positions:

- A. Women may not teach anyone
- B. Women may teach women and children, but not adult men
- C. Women may teach the whole congregation, including men
- D. Women may teach with ecclesiastical authority, as an elder or pastor

Position A conflicts with Titus 2:4 and Prov. 1:8. Position B conflicts with Acts 18:24-28, 1 Cor. 11:5 (with 1 Cor. 14:31), 1 Cor. 14:26, and Col. 3:16. Position D can stand only if Paul is addressing a cultural restraint, limited to the first century setting at Ephesus. This conclusion is denied by the reference to the order of creation in verses 13 and 14. Paul anchors his point in the fact that "Adam was formed first, then Eve".

Position C provides the most reasonable interpretation.

1. It enjoys harmony with the rest of the New Testament.
2. The context suggests that Paul is providing the first restriction on who can become an elder. To follow the creation order (man as head), women may not serve in this role.
3. The Greek word used for teaching is a word used mostly for authoritative didactic teaching that is to be reserved for those who are responsible for upholding the doctrines of the church, elders.
4. The infinitive in the present tense of the verb "to teach" implies an ongoing habit or practice of teaching, implying the function of an elder.
5. The Greek word, "silence" is not an absolute command forbidding speaking. Rather, its basic meaning is "peacefulness."

Possible objections include:

1. Women are more easily deceived than men. Eve is the proof for this.  
*Answer:* a) The Bible does not state this; b) If this is true, then women should not teach children or other women; c) Men should not teach because, they, like Adam, would be easily persuaded.
2. Women are "wired differently" than men.  
*Answer:* This may be true, but the Bible does not refer to this difference as a means of disqualifying a woman from teaching.

3. 1 Cor. 14:33-35 instructs women to be silent in the church.

*Answer:* a) Not absolute silence – see points above; b) The context suggests that Paul is referring to the evaluation of prophecy. Women are not to embarrass their husbands publicly, usurping their authority, by questioning their prophecy.

The question is, “May a woman teach adults, including men and women, in a formal church setting?” It is our conclusion that the distinction lies not between men and women, but between elders and non-elders. Anyone who teaches in the local church, does so *under the elders*. The elders are ultimately responsible for all teaching (choosing teachers, setting curriculum, correcting errors, etc.). All teachers, both men and women, share the same opportunities and responsibilities under the elders. In light of the points above: 1) women may not serve as elders, but 2) should not be disqualified from teaching simply because they are women.

### **A PASTOR OR ELDER WHO YIELDS TO SEXUAL SIN**

Sexual sin shall consist of fornication, adultery, incest, bestiality, homosexuality, transvestism, prostitution, pedophilia, exposure, voyeurism, or viewing pornography. Pornography shall consist of that material (audio, video, print) that is designed to provoke sexual lust. It may consist of, but is not necessarily limited to, the following: A) Viewing “soft porn” magazines such as Playboy; B) Watching triple -X or erotic NC-17 movies; C) Accessing sex websites; D) Calling sex hotlines; E) Reading “adult” books or literature.

Any pastor or elder who yields to sexual sin shall be terminated immediately. The congregation will be informed of the reason for the termination. If the pastor or elder is remorseful and repentant, the termination shall proceed nevertheless. However, the congregation will be made aware of his repentance and no further action will be taken. The termination of office is not to be regarded as punishment, but for failing to maintain biblical qualifications. A man’s leadership is only as good as the trust and respect the congregation gives him. While he may be forgiven for his sin, he has demonstrated a character flaw that disqualifies him from office.

If the pastor or elder is not repentant, and persists in the sin, even after his employment or office is terminated, he will be subject to church discipline for the purpose of repentance and restoration.

### **FUNDRAISING**

It is the general policy that the *church treasury* is the source for needed funds. However, certain programs within the children’s or youth ministries may be appropriate for some types of fundraising. In these cases the activity to raise the funds is seen as a benefit as much as, if not more than, the actual funds raised. Therefore each fundraising activity must be considered by the elders on a case-by-case basis. The following guidelines will be used to help determine approval.

1. Funds raised are to be used for educational or mission projects and not recreational or self-serving purposes. The project must have a ministry focus. Examples: A winter ski trip would not be approved; meeting the expenses of attending Summit Ministries would be approved.

2. We prefer the fundraiser offer an actual service (labor involved) rather than merely reselling goods. Car washes would be approved. Selling home-baked items would be approved. However, selling magazine subscriptions, boxed candy, or published cookbooks would generally be discouraged.

3. People are not to be approached on a one-to-one basis to buy or contribute. Items to be sold may be displayed on a table, or announced to the church body from the pulpit and/or newsletter. Under no circumstances should individuals be pressured to participate.

### **WORSHIP GUIDELINES**

1. Songs must be doctrinally correct. If an expression may seem confusing or unfamiliar then the worship leader should offer clarification.

2. Worship is our subjective response to God's objective truths. Our time of praise and singing should be seen as a part of our on-going attempts to disciple and train the believers.

3. Songs that speak about God's truths are better than songs that merely speak about our feelings, actions, or our own acts of praise. However, subjective songs should not be totally prohibited (note some of the Psalms), but we should be conscious of placing them appropriately with the more didactic songs.

4. Songs that ask God to sanctify us (or similar requests) that are sung from the perspective of a prayer also have value, especially if the song contains strong content about God's character.

5. When all else is equal, songs that are sung from the corporate perspective ("We") are better than individual perspective ("I").

6. Interaction between the song leaders with the congregation should be encouraged (pointing out significant truths in certain verses, explaining difficult expressions, etc.). Again, the song service should be seen as an opportunity to teach and exhort the congregation with sound truths.

### **SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS AND YOUTH SPONSORS**

Requirements for those involved in instructing others include: 1) Membership at TEC; 2) signing *Evangelical Affirmations* and *Supervisory Policies*; 3) being involved in a home group or participating in book assignments; 4) demonstrating regular attendance on Sunday mornings; and 5) meeting standards for a church servant ("deacon[ness]") in 1 Tim. 3:8-13.

## **WEDDINGS**

*By Wendell Brane*

I am often asked to officiate at weddings. Many times I am unable to accommodate these requests because of certain policies that I have established. For the sake of brevity, my purpose here is to simply outline these without explanations. As always, I would be happy to discuss my reasons in person for anyone interested.

The policies and guidelines listed below do not necessarily represent any doctrinal conclusions by TEC. The elders allow the current pastor to establish his own rules and procedures.

1. I will only officiate weddings for **believers**\*. Such believers also need to be **members** of TEC. The reason for this is straightforward: a) Believers should be rightly related to a church body; b) both the bride and the groom should be in agreement on which church will serve as their church home; c) because the pastor of that church is "over them in the Lord," he should be the one solemnizing their vows. (In light of this, TEC members are discouraged from asking other clergy to perform their weddings.)
2. I will not officiate a wedding where either partner has a history of divorce. Exceptions could be made if the previous spouse was guilty of adultery, or if he/she deserted the marriage because of the Faith. These situations would have to be considered on a case-by-case basis.
3. I reserve the right to refuse participation in any wedding I believe to be unwise, unscriptural, or causes me unrest in any way. Sexual purity before marriage is expected, and I may withdraw or postpone involvement if this is compromised.
4. Those seeking marriage must undergo premarital counseling that I provide. Couples are also expected to have established guidelines in place to ensure purity during their courtship.
5. It is my intent to honor the wishes of the bride and groom and incorporate their ideas into the wedding ceremony. However, I have a planned order of service that I work from and it should be understood that I have the last word. Special music, readings, testimonies, and other parts of the service must be in good taste, honor God, and uphold the tradition of marriage.
6. I do not perform civil unions.

---

\* It is my conviction that we do a disservice to unbelievers when we accommodate them with a Christian wedding. The couple is left with the impression that God has sanctioned their relationship and is pleased with their standing before Him. To ask God to bless them with the pomp and circumstance of a church setting, complete with a Minister of the Gospel, is a clear contradiction as they have rejected the church and the Gospel.

## **YOUTH WORKER'S SUPERVISORY POLICIES**

The following policies apply to all workers, volunteer and staff, who may be involved in serving children under 18 years old. This would include, but is not limited to: nursery workers, Sunday School teachers, and youth group sponsors. The term “**children**” will be used to refer to anyone under 18 years old, including infants. The term “**youth worker**” will be used to refer to adults (volunteer or paid staff) who work with children.

### **1. Qualifications**

Anyone with a criminal history of abusing or molesting children will not be qualified to serve as a youth worker.

### **2. Multiple Adults**

As a general rule, a minimum of two adults should be present during any church activity involving children. See below for Sunday School exceptions. Under no circumstances should one male adult ever be alone with one female child unless they are blood relatives.

### **3. Sunday School**

Sunday School classes typically involve one adult teacher. This is permissible when the following conditions are met: 1) The window in the classroom door must not be obstructed; 2) There are at least three children in the class; 3) The door must be kept ajar if the teacher is male and all students are female.

### **4. Parental Permission**

The church encourages all youth workers to avoid situations where an adult is alone with a child. However, there may be some situations where it may not necessarily be inappropriate. Examples would include a youth sponsor taking a teen out for a Coke in a public place, or an adult providing transportation for a child. In such situations, the following requirements must be met: 1) The child must be the same sex as the adult; 2) Permission from the child's parent must first be obtained.

### **5. Report Suspicious Behavior**

Should you observe any suspicious behavior between an adult and a child, you should immediately confront the adult and investigate the situation. After you can guarantee the safety of the child, the incident should be reported to the Pastor or an Elder. Any such event will be thoroughly investigated by the eldership.

### **6. Adequate Supervision**

Any program involving children should always include adequate supervisory personnel.

### **7. Membership**

All youth workers must be members of the church, in good standing.

### **8. Application**

All youth workers must fill out and sign the *Youth Worker's Screening Form* and be approved by the eldership to work in this capacity.