

Cutting Straight the Word of the Truth on Deuteronomy 19:14

What is the Meaning and Significance of “Boundary Marker?”

Since March of 2011, a dissenting worker who had been quarantined by the Body last year renewed her assaults against the elders and co-workers by borrowing Deuteronomy 19:14a. The sister attacked the elders as being “unscrupulous” and concluded that changes made in the numbering of the districts and clusters of the church is like the “moving of neighbor’s boundary marker” that Moses warned the Israelites against in this verse.

Was there anything out of the ordinary with the elders’ reassignment of the number of the districts and clusters? Was the sister proper in her impugning of the elders’ decision? Was she faithful in interpreting the Scripture by applying Deuteronomy 19:14 to the situation? Or is it yet again another one of her different teachings that she has been trying to force among the churches today?

While the sister applied God’s prohibition of the Israelites to move the neighbor’s boundary marker in Deuteronomy 19:14 to the physical reassignment of numbers of districts and clusters, it is worthwhile to see what the ministry says regarding the real meaning and significance of the “moving of the boundary marker” and how such a prohibition and warning is properly applied to our church life today.

In her attack, the sister said:

“Without fellowshipping with the clusters concerned, unscrupulously, all districts and clusters have been changed in the numbering! ... This is the reason for us to borrow Deuteronomy 19:14a to describe such a situation. ‘You shall not move your neighbors’ [sic] boundary marker which your ancestors have set’.”

To Move a Boundary Marker is to Change God’s Ordination

In a direct speaking on the subject matter in the Life-Study of Deuteronomy, Brother Witness Lee points out that the boundary marker pertains to God’s ordination:

“You shall not move your neighbor's boundary marker, which your ancestors have set, in your inheritance, which you will inherit in the land which Jehovah your God is giving to you to possess’ (Deut. 19:14). The land was eventually divided by lot, and boundary markers were set up. The moving of such a boundary marker was not allowed by the faithful God, who gave the children of Israel the good land to possess. To move a boundary marker was to change God's ordination.” (W. Lee, *Life-Study of Deuteronomy, Chapter 20, p. 142, LSM*)

To Move a Boundary Marker is to Be Greedy of Others’ Portion of Christ and Not Be Satisfied with the Portion of Christ that God Has Ordained for Us

Brother Lee spoke aplenty regarding God’s ordination, but he never applied the boundary marker to numbers or anything physical but rather to the measure of Christ which God apportioned to each one of us. Hence, to move the boundary marker is to be greedy of others’ portion of Christ and not be satisfied with the portion God has ordained for us as Brother Lee explained in the continuation of the same message:

“For the third pair, we have the word concerning the cities of refuge and the word concerning the moving of the neighbor's boundary marker. On the one hand, we have a word indicating that Christ is our city of refuge, that He is the place into which we can escape. On the other hand, we have a warning about greed. Those who are greedy may want to change God's

ordination by moving their neighbor's boundary marker. In order to get something more for themselves, they invade the land belonging to others. This is abominable in the eyes of God. Instead of being greedy and invading another's portion, we should learn to be contented with our Christ. As long as we have the portion God has ordained, we should be satisfied. Let us all enjoy Christ and be satisfied with Him." (W. Lee, *Life-Study of Deuteronomy, Chapter 20, p. 144, LSM*)

To Move a Boundary Marker is to Step Over the Boundary Measured Out to Us by God

First Corinthians shows us that the church is the Body of Christ and that every saved one is a member of the Body. After we are saved, we were given a certain amount of gifts. The gifts are the functions of Christ in man; they are the portion of Christ in us given by God. However, we must not overstep our boundary, but must instead function according to what is measured to us. Both brothers Nee and Lee exhorted us to remain within the measure of God's gift:

"We should function according to the portion measured out to us by God... May we hold to the Head in the smallest matter, supply the Body in the smallest matter without stepping over our boundary, and function according to the portion measured out to us by God." (W. Lee, *The Church as the Body of Christ, Chapter 15, p. 181, LSM*)

"Therefore, the ones who received five and two talents should not feel proud and self-satisfied. Neither should the one who received one talent feel ashamed, disappointed, or envious. Their abilities and their gifts are all ordained by God. Today the tendency is for believers to prefer the greater ability over the smaller ability. This is fleshly activity. We must remember that grace is given by God for us to do His business. We need only to do His business according to the measure of God's gift." (W. Nee, *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, Set 1, Vol. 15, Chapter 27, Section 7, LSM*)

God's Ordination for Woman in His Creation

In 1 Corinthians 11, a chapter on the divine order in God's administration, the apostle Paul wrote, "But I want you to know that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of the woman, and God is the head of Christ" (v. 3). This is God's ordination for woman since the creation:

"In the divine governmental ordination, woman is under the headship of man. God created the female in this way (Gen. 2:18-24; 1 Tim. 2:13). According to the nature (v. 14) created by God, woman is subordinate to man." (*Holy Bible, Recovery Version, 1 Corinthians 11, fn 3³, LSM*)

"Since God's creation and purpose for men and women are different, the nature and function of men and women are also different. No one can deny this or overthrow this fact." (W. Lee, *Crucial Truths in the Holy Scriptures, Vol. 2, Chapter 3, Section 3, LSM*)

"Verse 8 [1 Corinthians 11] says, 'For man is not out of woman, but woman out of man.' This is God's ordination. Man did not come out of the woman at the time of creation. The woman was made from the rib taken out of the man during creation. The head was Adam, not Eve. Verse 9 says, 'For also man was not created for the sake of the woman, but woman for the sake of the man.' A woman must be submissive even for the sake of creation." (W. Nee, *Head Covering, Chapter 1, Section 6, LSM*)

God's Ordination for Woman after the Fall of Man

As a result of the fall that occurred when the woman assumed the headship contrary to God's ordination, God further ordained that the man would rule over the woman (Gen. 3:16b):

“The Lord also told Eve that her husband shall rule over her. According to this word, every sister should be under the rule of her husband. Why did Eve fall? [It is] because she did not care for her husband and assumed his headship.... Paul's teaching on this matter [in 1 Timothy 2:11-12] is based upon God's ordination in Genesis 3:16. I hope that the sisters will take heed to this divine word of the Bible.” (*W. Lee, Life-Study of Genesis, Chapter 21, p. 274, LSM*)

God's Ordination for Woman in the Church

The sisters have a particular role in establishing God's authority through their submission to the brothers' leadership in the church. Both brothers Nee and Lee affirmed this principle based on 1 Corinthians 11:3:

“In the church, the woman also has to submit to the man. First Corinthians 11:3 says, 'But I want you to know that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of the woman, and God is the head of Christ.' God appointed man to be the authority as a type of Christ and the woman to submit as a type of the church. For this reason the woman ought to have authority on her head for the sake of the angels.” (*W. Nee, The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, Vol. 47, pp. 160-161, LSM*)

“In God's creation man was ordained to be the head, and woman to be in subjection to man (1 Cor. 11:3). In the church this ordination should be kept.” (*Holy Bible, Recovery Version, 1 Timothy 2, fn 12², LSM*)

God's Ordination Concerning His System of Government

God's ordination for woman both in His creation and in the church touches the divine administration; He requires everyone to acknowledge His ordained system of government:

“Here, I will say a word to Christian women: God has ordained the man to be the head of the woman. In this day of ignorance concerning God's authority, God only requires the church to observe this.... In the church God requires every Christian to acknowledge His ordained system of government.” (*W. Nee, Head Covering, Chapter 1, Section 5, LSM*)

“Since woman is under the headship of man, she should keep her head covered, not exposed, when she touches the divine administration by praying to God or speaking for God. Otherwise, she disgraces or shames her head, as if her head was shaved, because she denies the divine governmental ordination by exposing her head to the observing angels (v.10) while touching the authority of God.” (*Holy Bible, Recovery Version, 1 Cor. 11:5, fn 5¹, LSM*)

God's Ordination for Woman Concerning Praying and Prophesying

It is God's ordination that the sisters may pray and prophesy in the meeting, but they should have their heads covered, staying within the boundary and not be presumptuous to teach and define truths:

“God is asking the sisters to be representatives. The sisters are responsible for the sign of submission on their head as a sign to the angels. This expresses God's system of government. In particular, God ordains that the woman should cover her head while praying or prophesying. The reason for this is that she should know God's government when she goes to God. Whether she prophesies before men for God or prays before God for men, whether it be prayer, prophecy, going out for God, or going to God, she must conduct these God-related activities by covering her head. This is for the purpose of expressing God's government.” (*W. Nee, Head Covering, Chapter 1, Section 5, LSM*)

“Every woman who prays or prophesies—touching the spiritual realm—should cover her head; this shows that the matter of head covering is not so much before humans and for the sake of humans but before God and the angels and for the sake of the spiritual realm.” (W. Lee, *Crucial Truths in the Holy Scriptures, Vol. 2, Chapter 3, Section 4, LSM*)

“On the one hand, the sisters should not be prohibited from giving testimonies or edifications in the meetings. On the other hand, the sisters should be careful to stay within the boundary and not presume to teach in the sense of defining doctrine.” (W. Lee, *The Conclusion of the New Testament, Msgs. 205-220, Chapter 2, Section 2, LSM*)

God’s Ordination for Woman Concerning Teaching

The apostle Paul clearly taught in 1 Timothy 2:11-12 that women should not be allowed to teach with authority. Brother Lee exhorted that in the church this ordination should be kept:

“The New Testament says in 1 Timothy 2:11-14, ‘Let a woman learn in quietness in all subjection; but I do not permit a woman to teach or to assert authority over a man, but to be in quietness....’ Because Eve did not keep her position according to the order of God’s creation and did not obey Adam who was formed first, she fell into transgression.” (W. Nee, *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, Set 2, Vol. 25, Chapter 10, Section 24, LSM*)

“To teach [in 1 Tim. 2:12] here means to teach with authority, to define and decide the meaning of doctrines concerning divine truth. For a woman to teach in this way or to exercise authority over a man is to leave her position. In God’s creation man was ordained to be the head, and woman to be in subjection to man (1 Cor. 11:3). In the church this ordination should be kept.” (W. Lee, *Life-Study of 1 Timothy, Chapter 4, pp. 36-37, LSM*)

“Eve was deceived by the serpent (Gen. 3:1-6) because she did not remain in subjection under the headship of Adam but overstepped her position to contact the evil tempter directly without her head being covered. This is the strong ground for the apostle not to permit the sisters in a local church to teach with authority and to assert authority over men....” (*Holy Bible, Recovery Version, 1 Tim. 2:14, fn 14², LSM*)

God’s Ordination for Woman Concerning Exercising of Authority

In relation to God’s governmental ordination, women are not permitted to exercise authority over men; rather, they are charged by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 14:34 to be in subjection to men and maintain her position of subjection to a man’s authority. Brother Lee explains:

“According to the New Testament principle, for women not to be permitted to speak in the church meetings means that women are not permitted to teach with authority in relation to the defining of doctrine. In this sense they should be silent in the church meetings.... This is related to the matter of authority ordained by God in His government. In God’s governmental ordination, women are not permitted to speak with authority over men. They may pray and prophesy, that is, (mainly) speak for the Lord and speak forth the Lord. However, they must do this under the covering of the brothers, because they are charged here to be subject.” (*Holy Bible, Recovery Version, 1 Corinthians 14, fn 34², LSM*)

“The most dangerous situation, one which invariably creates many problems, occurs when a woman is the head in every matter, controlling and asserting authority over a man. It is a protection and a blessing for a woman to maintain her position of subjection with a man’s authority covering her head. This is well pleasing to God.” (W. Lee, *Crucial Truths in the Holy Scriptures, Vol. 3, Chapter 7, Section 4, LSM*)

God’s Ordination for Woman Concerning Submission to Authority

When many sisters in the church stand in the position of a woman and cover their heads, an unspoken and implicit testimony is displayed before the angels in the air. It tells them that God has gained what He is after in the church. Therefore, the woman should have the sign of submission on her head for the sake of the angels:

“The sisters today should testify before the angels that they are satisfied with the position God has given them. They should express their obedience to the order of God’s creation and stand in the position of a woman to acknowledge the headship of man and obey.” (W. Nee, *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, Set 2, Vol. 25, Chapter 10, Section 24, LSM*)

“God not only wants Christ to be our head; He also wants the man to be the head of the woman. Thus, in His ordained arrangement, there is another level in which the man is the head of the woman.... Oh, may God show the sisters that their submission can cause people to sense the authority and glory of God and Christ! In the universe the sisters have this function with respect to God and Christ; it is an extremely glorious matter. They can demonstrate the beauty of God’s orderly arrangement in the universe through their submission. This is a very sweet matter.” (W. Lee, *Crucial Truths in the Holy Scriptures, Vol. 2, Chapter 3, Section 2, LSM*)

“In God’s arrangement, the man is the head of the woman. Therefore, sisters have no administrative power in the church.... The covering of the sisters’ heads indicates that they maintain the order in the Body, that they submit to Christ as well as to the authority of the Body.” (W. Nee, *The Mystery of Christ, Chapter 8, Section 3, LSM*)

God’s Ordination of Deputy Authority for the Body

The Bible clearly shows us that God delegates deputy authority on earth for the carrying out of His administration. It is God’s ordination that there would be a deputy authority in the Body:

“It is impossible to reject deputy authority without rejecting the authority of the Head at the same time. Deputy authority is God’s ordination for the Body.” (W. Nee, *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, Set 3, Vol. 59, Chapter 18, Section 2, LSM*)

“From reading the Scriptures we can also see that there is deputy authority in the church....” (W. Lee, *The Vision of the Building of the Church, Chapter 10, p. 150, LSM*)

“We cannot deny the fact that among God’s people there is such a thing as deputy authority, that is, the authority of God delegated to His representatives. We find such deputy authority both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament.” (W. Lee, *Life-Study of Numbers, Chapter 37, p. 272, LSM*)

“Let us apply this matter of deputy authority to the church.” (W. Lee, *Life-Study of Numbers, Chapter 8, p. 59, LSM*)

God’s Ordination of the Elders as His Deputy Authority in the Church

God has His appointed authorities in the church; they are the elders who take the lead well and those who labor in word and teaching. Both brothers Nee and Lee asserted this ordination of God in the church:

“There is also delegated authority in the Body of Christ. The New Testament shows us clearly that in the local church there must be a government with elders appointed by apostles (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5).” (W. Lee, *The Organic Building Up of the Church as the Body of Christ to be the Organism of the Processed and Dispensing Triune God, Chapter 5, p. 78, LSM*)

“The elders are the highest deputy authority in a local church.” (W. Nee, *Authority and Submission, Chapter 20, Section 2, LSM*)

“The administrative power in the church is altogether upon them. Therefore, the elders are without a doubt the deputy authorities that God has established in the church.” (W. Lee, *The Vision of the Building of the Church, Chapter 10, p. 150, LSM*)

God’s Ordination Concerning Submission to God’s Deputy Authority

It is God’s ordination that we submit to the elders who are His deputy authority in the church; it is something no one can overturn. Whoever resists authority opposes God’s ordination:

“We must submit to God’s ordained authority in the church, that is, the responsible brothers.” (W. Nee, *Messages for Building Up New Believers, Vol. 3, Chapter 16, Section 9, LSM*)

“The elders are the authorities in the local church. All the brothers have to submit to the elders...” (W. Nee, *Authority and Submission, Chapter 20, Section 2, LSM*)

“All the brothers and sisters in the church have to learn to submit to the authority of the elders. We obey the elders because they are the Lord’s deputy authority in the church.” (W. Nee, *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, Set 3, Vol. 61, Chapter 20, Section 3, LSM*)

“The elders in a local church are God’s deputy authority. Dealing with them is a solemn thing before God.” (W. Lee, *Life-Study of 1 Timothy, Chapter 10, p. 86, LSM*)

“Submission to the elders is something that no one can overturn.” (W. Nee, *The Assembly Life, Chapter 1, p. 21, LSM*)

“In Romans 13:1-3 Paul said, positively, that every person should be subject to those over him, and negatively, that whoever resisted authority opposed God’s ordination.” (W. Nee, *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, Set 3, Vol. 59, Chapter 15, Section 2, LSM*)

God’s Ordination in Maintaining and Upholding His Deputy Authority

God wants to maintain His deputy authority whom He has ordained. We have only one way with the deputy authority, which is the way of submission:

“This chapter tells us that man cannot overstep the deputy authority to submit to the direct authority. Since God has handed out His authority, even He Himself will not overstep His deputy authority. Even He Himself is bound by the deputy authority.... God wants to maintain His deputy authority. Therefore, we have only one way with the deputy authority, which is the way of submission.” (W. Nee, *Authority and Submission, Chapter 7, Section 4, LSM*)

“The whole New Testament upholds deputy authority. Only in Acts 5:29, when the Sanhedrin persecuted Peter by forbidding him to preach in the Lord’s name, did Peter say, ‘It is necessary to obey God rather than men.’ Only when the deputy authority obviously defies God’s commandment and offends the Lord’s person can we refuse the deputy authority. Hence, this kind of word can only be spoken under such a circumstance. Other than this, we have to submit to the deputy authority in any other circumstance.” (W. Nee, *Authority and Submission, Chapter 7, p. 65, LSM*)

God’s Ordination Concerning Offending God’s Deputy Authority

We should not presume that we can afford to offend deputy authority. No one should offend God's authority, and no one should offend God's deputy authority. Offending God's deputy authority is the same as offending God's own authority:

“An offense against God's deputy authority is the same as an offense against God's own authority. Many people say that they will only listen to God, not to any deputy authority. Please remember, however, that if we do not listen to God's deputy authority, we are not listening to God's authority. If we offend God's deputy authority, we are offending God. Deputy authority is God's authority.” (W. Nee, *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, Set 3, Vol. 59, Chapter 14, Section 4, LSM*)

“Today some are teaching that it is not necessary for believers to submit to a deputy authority, that believers should not be under anyone. This erroneous teaching is very damaging. First, it is damaging to those who teach in this way, and then it is damaging to the ones who receive such a teaching. Those who accept the teaching that the believers should not submit to deputy authority will be spoiled by this teaching. Some may even be spoiled without remedy in their youth. Therefore, it is a serious matter to teach that we should not submit to deputy authority, and it is also a serious matter to receive this teaching.” (W. Lee, *Life-Study of Numbers, Chapter 10, pp. 70-71, LSM*)

“The opposing ones have also rejected the truth concerning deputy authority, claiming that they are under the direct headship of Christ. This is nonsense.... According to the divine revelation in the holy Word, there is also deputy authority in God's economy, both in the Old Testament, such as with Moses and the priests who taught the people the divine oracle, and in the New Testament, such as with the elders, who take care of the church (1 Tim. 3:5; 5:17; Heb. 13:17)....” (W. Lee, *The Practice of the Church Life According to the God-ordained Way, Chapter 3, pp. 43-44, LSM*)

“There is an explicit injunction in the Bible to submit to elders and apostles.... If we have not met or found our deputy authority, it simply means that we are, in Peter's words, animals without reason. No remark can be stronger than this one. If someone wants to offend authority, let him offend; but as for us, we choose to submit absolutely. The Lord rebukes the antagonizers. They either fall down or slide back. If they remain in the church, we can ignore them, mark them out, and refuse to communicate with them.” (W. Nee, *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, Set 3, Vol. 59, Chapter 24, Section 3, LSM*)

God's Ordination is Contrary to Women's Liberation Movement

According to 1 Peter 3:1-7, the females are weaker vessel in God's ordination in His creation. Hence, subjection of the female to male is necessary. Any teaching or practice otherwise is against the Bible and against God's ordination. Brother Lee made a comment regarding today's so-called women's liberation and gender equality movement:

“This kind of word is certainly contrary to the emphasis of the so-called women's liberation movement. That movement is against the Bible, for it is against God's ordination in His creation with respect to male and female. Using Peter's expression (3:7), God created the females weaker vessels.” (W. Lee, *Life-Study of 1 Peter, Chapter 22, p. 199, LSM*)

Changing of God's Ordination is Abominable to God

Because men rebelled against the teachings of the Bible, they drifted with the current of the world. Adam was created first and then Eve (1 Tim. 2:13). Man is the head of the woman (1 Cor. 11:3), and the woman was created to help the man (v. 9; Gen. 2:18). These are unchanging principles of the Bible:

“The present women's liberation movement tries to overthrow God's ordained order. How sad it is! Originally, women did have their own position... However, for anyone to change the positions which God has ordained for male and female is abominable to God.... The Bible is the only standard for our words and actions.” (W. Nee, *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, Set 1, Vol. 07, Chapter 17, Section 4, LSM*)

“Those who are greedy may want to change God's ordination by moving their neighbor's boundary marker. In order to get something more for themselves, they invade the land belonging to others. This is abominable in the eyes of God.” (W. Lee, *Life-Study of Deuteronomy, Chapter 20, p. 144, LSM*)

God's Dealing with the Changing of His Ordination

It is not a small thing for anyone to change God's ordination in the church. Strong warnings were made by brothers Nee and Lee in the Life-Studies of Proverbs and Deuteronomy and other portions of the ministry:

“According to [Proverbs] 22:28 and 23:10-11, we should not remove the ancient boundary marker, which our fathers have set up, or go into the fields of the fatherless; for their Redeemer is strong; He will plead their cause against us.” (W. Lee, *Life-Study of Proverbs, Chapter 7, p. 47, LSM*)

“Deputy authority is God's authority; it is authority given to man by God, and it is something initiated by God.... It is not a small thing to speak against God's deputy authority. It invites God's wrath.... Touching God's deputy authority is the same as touching God's authority.” (W. Nee, *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, Set 3, Vol. 59, Chapter 14, Section 4, LSM*)

“He who resists authority opposes God's ordination.... Anyone who opposes authority is opposing God's ordination. Those who oppose will receive judgment to themselves.” (W. Nee, *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, Set 3, Vol. 60, Chapter 27, Section 3, LSM*)

“The result of such a touching and repudiation is death upon the offenders. God requires us to come directly under not only the authority of the Lord but also the authority of those who represent His authority in the Body.” (W. Nee, *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, Set 2, Vol. 44, Chapter 19, Section 2, LSM*)

“To each of the curses in [Deuteronomy] 27:15-26, the people were to say, ‘Amen.’ The ones who were cursed included the following: the man who makes an idol (v. 15); the man who dishonors his parents (v. 16); the man who moves his neighbor's boundary mark (v. 17)....” (W. Lee, *Life-Study of Deuteronomy, Chapter 24, p. 169, LSM*)

The Psalmist's Exhortation Concerning Not Overstepping God's Ordained Boundary

The psalmist in the Old Testament expressed his desire not to go beyond his own measure to overstep others. We should likewise return to our position in the Body, be restricted by the Body, and be submissive to the Body:

“To go beyond one's measure is to overstep others; it is to intrude upon others and to push others out. We must remember that consecration leads to submission to Christ, whereas humility leads to submission to the Body. The psalmist said, ‘Nor do I go about in things too great/Or too wondrous for me’ (Psa. 131:1). Things too great and things too wondrous are the things that are beyond one's measure. If everyone behaves this way, and if no one exercises himself in great matters or in things too wondrous for him, every member will function according to the measure of each one part.... We should return to our position in the Body and be restricted

by the Body. In this way the church will not suffer any loss.” (W. Nee, *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, Set 2, Vol. 38, Chapter 17, Section 2, LSM*)

The Apostle Paul’s Pattern of Not Overstepping God’s Ordained Boundary

The apostle Paul’s word in 2 Corinthians 10:13-14 reveals that he is good example of a person fully under God’s restriction, conducting himself so as not to overstep the boundary of his measure:

“Verse 13 [of 2 Corinthians 10] says, ‘But we will not boast without measure, but according to the measure of the rule which the God of measure has apportioned to us, to reach even as far as you...’ Based on this principle of God’s measuring, Paul told the Corinthians that whatever he did and spoke was not beyond his measure. Paul always acted and behaved within his measure. Using today’s terminology, he acted within his jurisdiction... Paul conducted himself so as not to overstep the boundary of his measure. He is a good example of a person fully under God’s restriction.” (W. Lee, *Life-Study of 2 Corinthians, Chapter 51, Section 3, LSM*)

“In 2 Corinthians 10:14 Paul said, ‘For we are not extending ourselves beyond our bounds, as if we did not reach you.’ Yet many people have not seen their own capacity. As a result they overstep their boundaries. Those who overstep their boundaries are trampling others under their feet; they are kicking others, pressing upon others, and usurping the portion of other members.... We should not behave in this way. We should turn back and take our place in the Body and be limited by the Body. If we do this, the Body will be spared from damage.” (W. Nee, *The Mystery of Christ, Chapter 5, Section 2, LSM*)

Exhortation to Everyone Concerning Not Overstepping God’s Ordained Boundary

We must know our own capacity, maintain our position, and recognize the measure that God has ordained for us, not going beyond it, that is, overstepping the limit God has given us:

“To each one of us grace was given according to the measure of the gift of Christ’ (Eph. 4:7). It is essential for the development of the Body that we each recognize our measure and not go beyond it. This is a basic requirement for the growth of the Body.” (W. Nee, *The Mystery of Christ, Chapter 5, Section 2, LSM*)

“Every member should know his own capacity and not consider himself more highly than he should. If everyone does this, there will be no jealousy, ambition, or craving to do what others can do.” (W. Nee, *The Mystery of Christ, Chapter 5, Section 2, LSM*)

“God has made definite arrangements and instituted order in the Body of Christ. We must be careful to discern the Body, as 1 Corinthians 11:29 charges us to do. We cannot be careless in the Body and make proposals lightly or overstep presumptuously. Every member must be in proper order and walk in an orderly way.... Authority comes from the Lord’s arrangement and is for the Body life. We should be clear about our position in the Body and maintain our position. In the Body life, we all must walk according to the order in the Body.” (W. Nee, *The Mystery of Christ, Chapter 8, Section 3, LSM*)

“In any situation we should not overstep the limit the Lord has given us.” (W. Lee, *Speaking Christ for the Building Up of the Body of Christ, Chapter 12, Section 1, LSM*)

Exhortation to the Workers Concerning Not Overstepping God’s Ordained Boundary

It is God’s ordination that we submit to God’s deputy authority and not rebel against them. This is the portion that we, especially the serving ones, must keep; otherwise, we are not qualified to work for the Lord or touch His work:

“If a man does not fulfill the portion that the Lord has assigned to him, no one else can replace his portion. Yet it is equally bad for someone to overstep another person's portion.” (W. Nee, *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, Set 2, Vol. 41, Chapter 17, Section 1, LSM*)

“In the church service we need to realize that God has only measured out so much to us, and we should not overstretch ourselves. We need to know our limitation, our jurisdiction, and not go beyond it into others’ territory. Like Paul, we should move and act according to our rule, that is, according to how much God has measured to us.” (W. Lee, *Life-Study of 2 Corinthians, Chapter 51, p. 452, LSM*)

“A person who tries to confront God's deputy authority always runs into problems.... Only a rebellious and proud man is blind to authority; only he will not submit to God's deputy authority. If we cannot submit to His deputy authority, or if we say that we do not sense God's authority on earth today, we are not qualified to touch God's work; we cannot work for the Lord.” (W. Nee, *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, Set 3, Vol. 59, Chapter 15, Section 4, LSM*)

Exhortation to Young People Concerning Not Overstepping God’s Ordained Boundary

The young people in the church must not learn of the ways in the world; instead, they must know what God has measured and apportioned to them and stay within the boundaries and restrictions. They must likewise keep their position of submission to the elders in the church:

“Young people, you must know your rule, your limit. This means that you must know how much God has measured to you, how much He has apportioned to you. This restriction, this limitation, is a very practical dealing with our flesh. Our natural man wants to be without limitation. However, God knows our problem. Therefore, He sets up boundaries and restrictions so that we may stay within the measure He has apportioned to us.” (W. Lee, *Life-Study of 2 Corinthians, Chapter 51, p. 453, LSM*)

“In the church, even if the elders are not so adequate, your position is to submit. This will help your growth. There is more need in the church for submission on the part of the young people.” (W. Lee, *Life Messages, Vol. 1 (#1-41), Chapter 11, Section 1, LSM*)

Exhortation to the Sisters Concerning Not Overstepping God’s Ordained Boundary

A sister, no matter how gifted she is, must keep her position as a sister and not overstep it. By the grace of God she should learn to submit to the leading brothers who are God’s ordained authority in the church, for the question of position and authority is more important in the Bible than the question of gift and ability. Brothers Nee and Lee’s clear speaking stressed this point:

“A sister should be quiet soberly, not foolishly. As a sister exercises herself to be quiet and not to overstep her position, she needs a keen discernment within. Her spiritual sky should be clear, without clouds or smog. Then she will be clear, careful, and discreet.” (W. Lee, *Life-Study of 1 Timothy, Chapter 4, p. 39, LSM*)

“In managing the affairs of the church, God wants the man to be the head of the woman. Therefore, the sisters should learn to submit by the grace of God. If there are some among the sisters who can serve others, they can do the work of this service. But if anything needs to be decided, the decisions should be made by those who are responsible as the elders.... Some sisters may have the gifts and may be respected by other brothers and sisters, but the question of position and authority is more important in the Bible than the question of gift, and the question of God’s truth is more important than the question of ability....” (W. Nee, *The Assembly Life, Chapter 1, pp. 27-28, LSM*)

SUMMARY

From the rich and clear speaking of the ministry of brothers Nee and Lee excerpted above, we have come to know that “to move a boundary marker” in Deuteronomy 19:14 is to change God’s ordination. The spiritual significance of this allegory serves a strong warning concerning greedy ones who may intend to change God’s ordination by “moving their neighbor’s boundary marker.” In life, we should all be contented with the portion of Christ that God has ordained for us. In service, we should be satisfied and not overstep our boundary but should instead function according to the portion measured out to us.

In God’s divine, governmental ordination during the creation, woman is under the headship of man and is thereby subordinate to man. Eve failed to keep her position of a woman in subjection to man. Instead of deferring to the man God had provided as her head covering, she overstepped her bound by dealing with the serpent directly herself. The result was the fall of man. Due to the fall that occurred when the woman assumed the headship contrary to God’s ordination, God further ordained that the man would rule over the woman (Gen. 3:16b).

The same ordination applies to the church today. The sisters have a particular role in establishing God’s authority through their submission to the brothers’ leadership in the church, for God has appointed man to be the authority as a type of Christ, and the woman to submit as a type of the church. This ordination both in the creation and in the church must be kept because it touches the divine administration. God requires everyone to acknowledge His ordained system of government. Based on 1 Timothy 2:11-12, while the sisters are permitted to pray and prophesy in the meeting, it is God’s ordination that they should have their heads covered, staying within the boundary and not presume to teach to define truths, for to do so would be to assert authority over man. The Bible, as emphasized by the ministry, underscores the principle of the sisters’ submission to the authority in order to maintain God’s order in the Body.

The Bible also shows us that God delegated deputy authority in the Body for the carrying out of His administration. Without a doubt, the elders are the deputy authority God established in the church. God wants to maintain and uphold His deputy authority and He requires that we all subject ourselves to such ordination by our submission to the elders. Whoever resists the elders opposes God’s ordination. No one should offend God’s deputy authority just as no one should offend His authority, for offending God’s deputy authority is the same as offending God’s own authority.

Today’s so-called woman liberation movement is against the principle in the Bible; it is against God’s ordination in the roles God has assigned for male and female in His creation and in the church and seeks to change that ordination. Hence, insubordination and rebellion against God’s ordination in any manner in any place is a serious offense to God; He will “plead His case” against them (Proverbs 22:28; 23:10-11) and bring curse to them (Deut. 27:17).

The apostle Paul, on the other hand, presented himself a good example of a person fully under God’s restriction, conducting himself so as not to overstep the boundary of his measure (2 Cor. 10:13-14). The psalmist in the Old Testament likewise committed himself to not going beyond his measure (Psa. 131:1). These are truly in keeping with God’s ordination of remaining in our position in the Body and be restricted by the Body.

God has made definite arrangements and instituted order in the Body of Christ. First Corinthians 11:29 charges us that all the members must be careful to discern the Body. We cannot be careless in the Body and overstep our bounds presumptuously. We must know our own capacity, maintain our position, and recognize the measure that God has ordained for us, not going beyond it, that is, not overstepping the limit God has given us.

Therefore, it is God’s ordination that we submit to God’s deputy authority and not rebel against them. This is the portion that we, especially the serving ones, must keep; otherwise, we are not qualified to work for the Lord or even touch it. In the same principle, the young people in the church must not

learn of the ways in the world; instead, they must know what God has measured and apportioned to them and stay within the boundaries and restrictions. They must similarly keep their position of submission to the elders in the church.

Finally, the sisters must keep their position as sisters and not overstep it no matter how gifted they are. By the grace of God, the sisters should learn to stay within their bounds and submit to the leading brothers who are God's ordained authority in the church. In the final analysis, the question of position and authority is more important in the Bible than the question of gift and ability.

CONCLUSION

The opposing sister has gone to great lengths in enumerating the history of how the different clusters and districts of the local church she was attacking and their respective number came about. In the end, she described with acerbity the changes in the numbering of these districts and clusters made by elders after she was quarantined as "moving the neighbor's boundary marker," citing Deuteronomy 19:14a out of context. Comparing her teaching with brother Nee's and Lee's concerning the boundary marker and God's ordination, we can arrive at the following two conclusions:

First, the dissenting sister's application of Deuteronomy 19:14 is in error and her interpretation is a clear deviation from the ministry. Hence, it is an eccentric and different teaching. If the sister literally interpreted and physically applied the changing of the numbering of the districts and clusters' geographical locations and boundaries in Malabon to the moving of the boundary marker in Canaan, then, as a corollary, the land of Canaan must be the city of Malabon, not Christ! It is incongruent to apply the good land to Christ on one hand and apply the boundary marker to the districts' and clusters' number of her local church on the other hand, for proper Biblical exposition requires that we do not interpret a Bible verse literally and spiritually at the same time.

Moreover, from the ministry of brothers Nee and Lee, we learned that the Israelites' entering into the good land of Canaan—a land flowing with milk and honey—typifies the believers' entering into and enjoyment of the all-inclusive Christ today. On one hand, the Christ we all received is the same. But on the other hand, our measure of the gift of Christ varies as Ephesians 4:7 indicates, "To each one of us grace was given according to the measure of the gift of Christ." In His divine ordination, we were given different measures of the portion of Christ, particularly in service. It is essential as well as crucial that we each recognize our measure and not go beyond it by moving the "boundary marker" God has ordained for us. Both in the footnote in the Recovery Version of the Bible and in the Life-Study, Brother Lee clearly explained that to move a boundary marker is to change God's ordination due to greed and go beyond our portion measured out for us.

Hence, the dissenting sister's allegations and accusations against the elders using the "boundary marker," analyzed under the light of the Scriptures and the ministry, is unscriptural, baseless, and patently erroneous. This is not the first time the sister was found to be teaching differently from the apostles' teaching. A number of articles published in the past have shown her pattern of deviation from the truth of the Scriptures while promoting her own agenda in order to promote her eccentric practices while denigrating the co-workers and elders. May we all take heed lest we be carried away by these winds of teaching in the sleight of men from the central line of God's economy.

Second, while the dissenting sister used the "moving of boundary marker" to wrongly and maliciously attack the elders, it is ironic that her actuations and words over the years in public and in private exactly fits the work of one who is moving the boundary marker.

Satan's fall was a direct result of his exceeding his boundary in rebellion against God's authority and ordination (Isa. 14:12-15). In like manner, man's fall was a result of his joining Satan in rebelling against God's authority (Gen. 3:1-6). When Christ came, the kingdom came because in His humanity He lived a life of absolute submission and obedience to the Father's authority and will (Matt. 26:39; John 8:29; Phil. 2:6-8).

The entire New Testament upholds the place of God-ordained deputy authority and submission to them. In the Gospels we find Christ exercising submission when He answered the high priest who questioned Him in the name of God. In Acts we find Paul doing the same thing when he faced Ananias the high priest. Brother Nee gave much importance to this matter and reminded us of Numbers chapter 30 where God shows us that He will not allow a person to overstep His appointed deputy authority even if it is under the excuse of obeying God directly. No one can say that since he or she has received a word from God, he or she will obey God only and does not need to take heed to the fellowship of the co-workers and elders whom God has ordained for the work and the church, and abide by the fellowship and decisions they made in behalf of the Body.

The dissenting sister's effusive words and works in recent years have openly challenged God's ordination for women in His creation and in the church that a woman must submit to man and take man as her covering. From her speaking and writings, it is clear that the sister is averse to submitting to God's deputy authority that He has ordained in the church and in the work – the brothers who are the elders and leading co-workers – especially to the ones who do not hold the same views as hers in teaching and practice. She overstepped her bounds as often as she squarely opposed and defied the elders and impugned their decision and creating an issue out of non-issues like the reassigning of districts' and clusters' numbers. Instead of keeping to the proper position of a woman in quietness, modesty, and sobriety, she takes pride in her unrestrained disparaging of the elders and co-workers. Her intractable stance opposite to God's divine ordination on headship regarding the sisters' position in the divine administration is a direct challenge to God's order of authority and governance in the church. In a feat of irony, the opposing sister has herself "moved the boundary marker," that is, changing God's ordination, as she words and actions fit the very description of what she warns against.

Brother Lee stressed that if a person depreciates the truth or emphasizes "success" in work rather than God's economy, like what the sister has been doing, this one has deviated from the teaching of the apostles. In carrying out an independent work that is not answerable to the Body, she overstepped her bounds in rebellion against the Body and thus is in rebellion against the Head. Such is a factious and divisive person the apostle Paul charges us to turn away from and refuse (Rom. 16:17; Titus 3:10). The fact that the dissenting sister, while assiduously and acrimoniously undermining the leading co-workers and elders, continues to overstep and arrogate unto herself the teaching and interpretation of Biblical truths and insists on forcing her teachings and practices on the churches shows an unrepentant spirit of rebellion and divisiveness, which only reinforces why the saints should all the more take heed to the standing warning of the co-workers and elders to quarantine her lest the saints be contaminated with the germs of divisiveness and rebellion. We should not be deluded to think that benign personal contacts and misplaced sympathies will not unduly and negatively influence us. May the Lord be gracious and merciful to keep us all absolute, pure, simple and open to Him and to the Body. May we be faithful to serve yet be tempered and built up with others. Let us hold on to the truth in love and grow up into Christ the head in all things, so that all the Body by being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love (Eph. 4:15-16).

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