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Is there equal pay for equal work?

SOME CONTROVERSIAL THOUGHTS ON AN UNCONTROVERSIAL TOPIC

BY CHRISTOPHER ATWOOD

ONE INDICATOR THE GOVERNMENT monitors in our society is the “earnings gap” between men and women. Last fall, new figures from the Bureau of Labor Statistics showed that the long rise in median weekly earnings of women employed full time stalled at 75% of men’s median earnings. Having risen from 62¢ on the man’s dollar, full-time women’s weekly earnings had reached 77¢ in 1993, but in 1997 were stuck at 75¢.¹ Reminding us of the basic principle of equal pay for equal work, the *Christian Science Monitor* pointed out that the “real issue isn’t that the numbers are going up or down, but that, 34 years after the Equal Pay Act was enacted, there is still a wage gap.” The bottom line was that women weren’t paid according to “responsibility and talent” but according to a “cultural bias against women workers” that companies needed to combat more vigorously.²



Can we agree?

At last, a piece of news on which Christians and agnostics, complementarians and egalitarians can agree—or so it would seem. When complementarian Christians deal with controversial issues about men and women in society, we often erect a firewall to our right, by proclaiming that, of course we support equal pay for equal work.³ Curiously absent, though, is any Biblical discussion of the issue. Perhaps a debate went on in the years after equal pay for equal work became law in 1963, but if so, it has disappeared without a trace. Christian ethicists have given little reflection to what the Bible might say on this topic.

This lack of debate is curious, since secular conservatives strongly reject the mainstream interpretation of the “60¢ on the dollar” slogans bandied about by feminists. Social scientist and columnist Thomas Sowell has pointed out that “equal pay for equal work” in practice means two quite dif-

see *Equal pay* on p. 3

Avoiding fallacies in interpretation

HOW FALLACIES DISTORT UNDERSTANDING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT GENDER PASSAGES

BY ANDREAS J. KÖSTENBERGER

THE LAST FEW DECADES HAVE WITNESSED an increasing awareness of the importance of hermeneutical procedure in interpreting the gender passages in the NT. Grant Osborne contends that “the determining factor in the discussion [of gender passages in the NT] is hermeneutical.”¹ Robert Johnston attributes the differences in approach regarding the role of women in the church taken by evangelicals to “different hermeneutics,” calling the study of women’s roles a “test case” of evangelical interpretation.²

If Johnston is correct, evangelical hermeneutics seem to have failed the test, since the existing exegetical conclusions on the NT gender texts vary widely. What is perhaps even

more disturbing is the apparent lack of consensus regarding a proper methodology.

The present essay therefore seeks to readdress some of the issues taken up in earlier treatments, taking into account developments since these studies appeared. It also attempts to sharpen further the discernment of improper methodology. It is hoped that the critique of fallacious methodologies will contribute to better hermeneutical procedures. This, in turn, might lead to a greater convergence of exegetical conclusions.

see *Fallacies and distortions* on p. 6

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*The purpose of the Council on Biblical
Manhood and Womanhood is to set
forth the teachings of the Bible
about the complementary differences
between men and women, created equal
in the image of God, because these
teachings are essential
for obedience to Scripture
and for the health of the family
and the Church.*

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Newsbriefs from the world

□ The Old Catholic Church in the Netherlands has decided to open the priesthood and all levels of the church hierarchy to women. The Old Catholic Church can now ordain women as deacons, priests and bishops. But the Dutch church does not expect to have many women priests or bishops in the immediate future. The church has only 7000 members and, like most traditional churches in Western Europe, is no longer growing. (*Ecumenical News International*, November 25, 1998).

□ The coed intramural soccer program has raised the gender equity stakes at Stanford University to new ludicrous heights of inequity as reported in *Campus* (Fall 1998). The university began the process by establishing several gender-based rules to govern play, including one which stated that at least three of the team's seven players on the field at any given time must be females. This rule however, fell short of the politically correct results desired by Stanford's sports engineers, so a rule was created to give women 1.5 points for every goal scored, while the same goal scored by a man counts for only 1 point. *Campus* editors asked rhetorically, "A bonus for women who accomplish the same task as a man? They call this gender equity? Looks more like condescension and patriarchy at work. What's the next sport to give women a helping hand? On the baseball diamond, will a female run count for 1.5 runs? Will a female touchdown be worth ten points instead of six?" They conclude, "On a more sobering note, what's the lesson being sent to women who will soon enter the workforce? Same pay for less work? Or is it more pay for the same work?"

□ With the attention given to women's sports under Title IX guidelines, many colleges and universities are scrambling to give appropriate complementary names to their men's and women's teams. Some particularly creative ones include: Lords and Ladies (Kenyon College, OH), Trojans and Women of Troy (Univ. of Southern California), and Yeomen and Yeowomen (Oberlin College, OH). But at the top of the list are the Lumberjacks and Lumberjills of Northland College in Ashland, Wisconsin, and the Vikings and Vi Queens from Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois. *Smithsonian*, October 1998.

□ A member of The Wesleyan Church has contacted CBMW about some recent changes in the denomination, and is looking for like-minded Wesleyans to join in a new initiative. He filed this report:

Most Wesleyans do not know that the 1996 General Conference authorized a unisex "inclusive language" rewrite of the Wesleyan Discipline, including the historic Wesleyan Articles of Religion (just like the unisex NIV published in Britain). Nor do they know that the Conference also changed the Discipline's provision on marriage, deleting the longstanding membership commitment to "duly constituted authority in the home" (which formerly cited Eph. 5:21-25). The vast majority

of Wesleyans are traditional Bible Christians who would not have supported these changes if they had known about them. In keeping with The Wesleyan Church's history of vigorous support for biblical inerrancy, a group of Wesleyans is now forming to urge the 2000 General Conference to reinstate both the historic language of the Articles of Religion and the biblical understanding of headship in marriage. Wesleyans have seen the liberal denominations go down this road ahead of us. We must urge our church to turn back while it is still relatively easy to do so.

If you are a member of The Wesleyan Church—or know someone who is—and would like more information about joining this grass-roots initiative, please contact the CBMW office. Postal and email addresses and phone numbers are in the masthead at left.

□ Recently, the Conservative branch of Judaism issued an updated manual for rabbis that features, among a host of revisions, gender-neutral language, modernized prayers, guidelines on end-of-life medical decisions and the first-ever "grieving ritual" for a couple after an abortion. The *Rabbi's Manual* is being published by the Rabbinical Assembly, whose members serve 750 Conservative synagogues in North America and 200 elsewhere. The manual rewrites the 1982 *Jewish Publication Society Bible* to adopt gender-neutral language, using "monarch" instead of "king" and "mortal" instead of "man." A prayer for the sick now includes the women's names Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah along with the traditional "Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." Even in Judaism, adaptation to gender-neutral language is accompanied by adaptation to contemporary theology. The manual relaxes the tone of mortification in the "Confessional Prayer" recited at the end of life. In the earlier version, published in 1965, the congregant prayed, "Forgive me for all the sins which I have committed in my lifetime. I am abashed and ashamed of the wicked deeds and sins which I committed. Please accept my pain and suffering as atonement and forgive my wrongdoing".

The 1998 rewrite employs euphemisms as follows: "Forgive me for all the times I may have disappointed You. I am aware of the wrongs I have committed. May my pain and suffering serve as atonement. Forgive my shortcomings". From an Associated Press story by Richard Ostling in the *Greenville (SC) News*, October 20, 1998.

□ Good news for sporting women: *The Wall Street Journal* (October 16, 1998) reports that there is a wave of state "potty parity" laws being enacted which mandate public stadiums, arenas and theaters to install more women's restroom fixtures than men. This follows several studies that show women—um—take longer. Now what does this have to do with CBMW? We don't have an official position, but of course we support any measure that recognizes legitimate differences between men and women, and that is thoughtful toward women!

Equal pay

continued from page 1

ferent things: (1) either equal payment for employees, male or female, whose market value to the employer is equal, or (2) the idea that women, on average, ought to earn as much as men.⁴ Option 1 is equivalent to option 2 only if the two sexes are in fact equally productive in economic terms as an average of all the thousands of jobs they do. Only then, in an efficient labor market, should women's median pay equal men's median pay.

But isn't it true, argued the *Christian Science Monitor*, that "companies should value all their employees, women included"? If full-time women don't earn as much as full-time men, aren't companies saying that they just don't value women equally? Clearly an equation is being set up here: companies that value women and men equally will give both sexes equal average salaries. If they reply that women's family roles, for example, result in lower productivity outside the home, aren't they expressing a "cultural bias" that undervalues women? Since women's work must be of equal value to men's, women's median earnings in any organization ought to be equal to men's, if the "equal pay for equal work" is to be achieved. But what about productivity? Is any consideration of productivity simply a smokescreen to deny women equal worth in the work place?

Productivity or discrimination?

There are two possible explanations for the difference in median earnings between men and women: either men are for some reason more productive and thus their labor has greater market value or else employers (or "society") pervasively discriminate against women. Mainstream commentators see the possibility of men and women's productivity being different as unthinkable. Hence they see women earning on average 75¢ to the men's dollar as a serious problem needing further enforcement of civil rights laws, further soul-searching by employers, and further government intervention in the labor market. But is there empirical evidence to decide between the two alternatives?

As Thomas Sowell points out, the evidence shows that the key issue here is not sex itself, but the interaction of sex and marital status. In general, when men marry, their engagement in paid labor and their earnings go up, but when women marry, their engagement in paid labor and their earnings go down. The relatively higher earnings of single women are reflected widely in the statistical record. Thus, in 1982 single women earned 91¢ on the single man's dollar. In 1971, women who had remained single into their thirties and worked since high school actually had higher median earnings than men of the same descrip-

tion and so on.⁵ Thus, if employers are bucking the law, they are doing so only against married women, something that is hard to believe. Women's lower average pay is linked to choices they make, specifically the choice to get married.

Choices women make

The solution to this puzzle and the key to evaluating how social policy affects families is to realize that most wives and mothers forego some or all of their possible income, in order to boost the continuity of employment, and hence earnings, of their husbands. Even if married women go back to work full-time after the children are older, the temporary lower engagement in the labor force leaves its mark in lost seniority, experience, etc. Most women in past decades, and many still today, prepared for jobs that do not require heavy time commitments in prime child-bearing years, and do not harshly penalize periodic withdrawal

from the labor force. They tend to become nurses not doctors, or study English, not math.⁶ Conversely, few college-educated career women successfully combine career and motherhood. Harvard professor Claudia Goldin (a distinguished cliometrician, and a divorced, childless woman) has shown that half of the women who graduated from college in

1910 never had children. For college graduates in 1972, the numbers are not very different; only 13 to 17% have both children and a career and about half of those with careers are childless.⁷

These choices, linked to women's biological role as wives and mothers, make them less productive than men in the paid work force. Employers pay the market price, no more or less, for women's labor. If the "gender gap" was simply the result of discrimination against equally productive workers, then an incentive would exist for employers to fire all the men and use only the equally productive, but lower paid, women workers. Market behavior shows that such opportunities have not been pursued and hence that discrimination on such a wide scale is also unlikely to exist.

Scripture speaks

But what does the Bible say about all this? Is it silent on the issue of "gender equity"? Or does it condemn the above arguments as the kind of "worldly or pagan devices designed to make women feel inferior for being female"⁸ that progressive Christians have been trained to expect from secular conservatives and those Christians undiscerning enough to associate with them?

Quite the opposite. As reviewed above, the mainstream feminist argument, now accepted by America's leading institutions, says that equal respect for the worth of women means equal pay for equal work, which in turn means equal median earnings for men and women. The Bible, however, clearly refutes both sides of this argument. It states quite clearly that under proper conditions the aver-



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age labor of certain classes—the old, women, children—is worth less money than that of adult men. But it likewise shows that social worth or divine approval is not determined by these differences.

In Leviticus 27, God gives rules for a household head who vows to dedicate a person under him to God. Dedication of a gift involves its complete separation from common uses and, for living creatures, its destruction. Since God abominates human sacrifice, He requires redemption of that vow, evidently according to the actual and prospective labor that the vow-maker would lose if the person so dedicated were destroyed. God proclaims the proper values in vv. 3-8, according to age and sex:

	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Infant (1 month-5 years)	5 shekels	3 shekels
Child (5-20 years)	20 shekels	10 shekels
Adult (20-60 years)	50 shekels	30 shekels
Elderly (60 years or more)	15 shekels	10 shekels

As we can see, the ratios for the redemption of females range from 50% to 67% of that of men, and the ratio for adults, undoubtedly the majority of cases applied under this law, is 60%.

The issue here is not equal respect or social worth. Elders are redeemed at a lower rate than the young, despite God's categorical command for the young to reverence the aged (Lev. 19:32; Prov. 20:29; 1 Tim. 5:1). Thus the Bible, contrary to the *Christian Science Monitor*, does not agree that social worth is measured by earnings. The Biblical passage in question distinguishes between labor value and social worth. While valuing a person's labor in practical terms, it uses a different scale to measure a person's worth and legitimate prestige. Nor do the varying labor values described in Leviticus 27 negate the equal worth of souls before God. This God makes clear by demanding a half-shekel to redeem the souls of each adult, regardless of wealth (Ex. 30:11-16). In this way God taught the Israelites that each person is equally worthy before Him. The sole issue in the redemption of vows, as Lev. 27:8 makes clear, is the value of the dedicated person's labor to the vow-maker.

Applying biblical truth

How can we apply this passage today? Should women always be paid 60% of what a men makes? Such a conclusion would read too much into the passage. The specific ratios of labor value given in Leviticus 27 depend on the economy involved. The valuation probably involved field labor, from which women would be often disabled by pregnancy and nursing, and in which men's greater strength would be vital. It is quite possible that in a mechanized economy, women's unskilled labor productivity is much closer to that of men. On the other hand, in a highly skilled economy, lengthy education and rapid change in

techniques may increase the penalty for intermittent withdrawals from full-time study and/or the paid labor force. No automatic rule can be derived for societies today.

Even with these cautions in mind, the conclusion is still clear: unequal average earnings between men and women are not necessarily illegitimate according to Scripture. Given the expected differences in productivity outside the home, societies in which the average woman earns 60¢ on the average man's dollar are not by that fact alone violating God's will. Pay scales and human worth are not the same. One can equally respect classes of people while still valuing their labor unequally either as individuals or on average. Thus, the fundamental equation (that equal respect for men and women means equal pay for equal work which in turn means equal median earnings for men and women) in mainstream policy on "gender equity" among government policy-makers, universities, the media, and many businesses runs up against the basic assumptions of Leviticus 27.

The passage's relevance today is thus both negative and positive. Negatively, it shows us that no claims about injustice can be drawn solely from figures comparing average earnings of men and women. It means that

we should not rush to condemn countries, institutions, or employers simply for paying women differently, on average, from men. Positively, given the household roles that married women take on, it creates a presumption that men overall will have higher productivity outside the home than women, a difference we ought to find reflected in wages. The ratio for adults given in Leviticus 27 (30 to 50, or 60%) is found in many societies.

When the Chinese commune system in the 1950s set out to value the average productivity of field labor, a full day's work of a mature man was valued at ten points while a day's work of women and older people received six to eight points.¹⁰ The ratio of the sexes' labor-value in basic agricultural labor is nearly identical to that in Leviticus. The ratio is also close to the almost three-fifths ratio that held true for many decades up to 1979 in the United States,¹¹ or the 55.8% ratio between women's and men's wages in Japan recorded in 1977.¹²

Where are we headed?

Whence, then, the recent rise in women's earnings in the U.S. and other Western countries, that move us away from the ratios in Leviticus 27? It is likely related to the steady decline in family and household size,¹³ reflecting a decrease in the proportion of women pursuing a home-centered life. This decrease is itself explainable by changing values, increasing divorce, and stagnation of male wages. The "gender gap" has narrowed more by declining men's earnings than by rising women's earnings. From 1979 to 1995, the median annual earnings of men dropped 11.5% while those of women rose only half that percentage. At the same



time, expansion of the welfare safety-net made it easier for wives to bail out (or be pushed out) of unsatisfactory marriages and set up new households. These changes in turn make a home-centered life-choice less attractive for girls, who have responded by entering traditionally male fields that are less forgiving of intermittent involvement in paid labor. It may also be influenced by ideologically-motivated adjustments in earnings of men and women, particularly in less market-sensitive areas such as government, media, academia, and some sectors of large corporations.¹⁴

So where does this leave "equal pay for equal work" as a general principle? Certainly nothing in Scripture prevents employers from paying men and women equally for the same job. Whether general principles of fairness require such strict equality is a separate question, one I am not here addressing. In any case, this simple rule will find smaller and smaller area for application in the modern labor market, where earnings are increasingly based not on broad job descriptions but upon ever more sophisticated systems of bonuses and merit-pay.

But one must distinguish such individual application from the statistical comparison of men's and women's median earnings, whether on a national scale, or within a corporation or other large organization. Such comparisons inevitably encourage policies that hurt families where the wife specializes in household labor and builds up her husband's earnings.

Respectable feminists, not just the "radicals", have been urging since the 1920's that in a just society, women's median earnings must equal men's.

The leaders in American government, media, academia, and much of industry have now accepted this long-standing feminist principle. To them, the advantage a married man secures as his wife's homemaking enables him to work more productively is ultimately a kind of unfair discrimination. To secure "equal pay for equal work" they must therefore deny married men the increase in earnings that their increased productivity would otherwise earn them and which they rely on to finance their wives' lesser involvement in paid labor. If the resulting drop in their husbands' income forces more married women to enter the paid labor force, then so be it: "equal pay for equal work" will come that much closer.

Conclusion: no agreement

To return to Sowell's distinctions mentioned at the beginning of this article, equal payment for employees, male or female, whose market value to the employer is equal is a very different thing from the idea that women, on average, ought to earn as much as men. As much as one might wish it were not so, "equal pay for equal work" as a legal principle, however, means the second principle, not the first. Anyone concerned with the long term viability of homemaking as a practical option for ordinary families cannot afford to agree with egalitarians on *this* version of "equal pay for equal work."

Endnotes

1. "Women's Pay Falls Further Behind Men's," *The Dallas Morning News*, September 15, 1997, Business Pages, p. 1D. Cf. Barbara Vobejda, "Household Incomes Rise Again," *Washington Post*, September 30, 1997, Section A, p. 1.

2. "Equal Pay for Equal Work," *Christian Science Monitor*, Sept. 18, 1997, Editorials, p. 20.

3. See e.g., D.A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), p. 112 (fig. 7); George Alan Rekers, "Psychological Foundations for Raising Masculine Boys and Feminine Girls," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1991), p. 307 (table 1).

4. Thomas Sowell, *Civil Rights: Rhetoric or Reality?* (New York: William Morrow, 1984) is a must-read for anyone interested in the topic of civil rights legislation. Pages 91-108 examine the issue of how the assumptions of civil rights rhetoric do not match the reality of how women usually approach employment. David J. Ayers, "The Inevitability of Failure: The Assumptions and Implementations of Modern Feminism," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, pp. 323-25 offers a similar, but briefer, analysis.

5. These and additional examples in Sowell, *Civil Rights*, pp. 92-93.

6. Sowell, *Civil Rights*, pp. 92-95. George Rekers, with no Biblical or other sound basis I can see, includes steering boys toward high commitment, high earning jobs, and girls toward low commitment, low earning jobs as "morally wrong" and based on "arbitrary and harmful stereotypes" (see "Psychological Foundations," pp. 307 (table 1), 310). Yet if Sowell's argument stands, such tracking is quite rational for any parents who hope that their son can give his wife the option of being a homemaker and hope that their daughter might be a homemaker for her husband and children.

7. David Wessel, "Reaching Back: Scanning the Future, Economic Historian Plumbs Distant Past," *Wall Street Journal*, Feb. 13, 1996, Section A, p. 1. It should be noted that the 1972 class is as yet about the only class old enough to have completed childbearing, and so be a valid comparison with previous classes, and still young enough to have lived under the legal and social influence of feminism.

8. Sowell, *Civil Rights*, pp. 112-14.

9. From the declaration "Men, Women, and Biblical Equality," as cited in John Piper and Wayne Grudem, "Charity, Clarity, and Hope: The Controversy and the Cause of Christ," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, p. 413.

10. Edward Friedman, Paul G. Pickowicz, and Mark Selden, *Chinese Village, Socialist State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), p. 162. Of course, no general approbation of the Chinese commune system is implied.

11. Sowell, *Civil Rights*, pp. 92; "Women's Pay Falls Further Behind Men's," p. 1D. The figure is for those working full-time only.

12. Dorinne K. Kondo, *Crafting Selves: Power, Gender, and Discourse of Identity in a Japanese Workplace* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1990), p. 277. The author, although writing as a feminist, treats the significance of part-time work for women in Japan from the point of both the employers (pp. 274-77, 285-87) and part-time women workers themselves (pp. 287-93), in ways consistent with the analysis presented here.

13. Thomas Sowell, *The Vision of the Anointed: Self-Congratulation as a Basis for Public Policy* (New York: Basic Books, 1995), p. 50.

14. These factors are brought out in Steven Stark, "Gap Politics," *Atlantic Monthly*, July 1996, vol. 276, no. 1, p. 71-80, especially pp. 76, 78.



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Fallacies and distortions

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In this article, my usual procedure will be to identify the hermeneutical fallacy, illustrate it by giving concrete examples, and then make a few comments pointing toward a better approach.

Underestimating the power of presuppositions

In the case of the interpretation of biblical gender texts, every writer has preconceived notions of how male-female relationships are properly conducted. An illusory notion of hermeneutical objectivity will render genuine dialogue with both the text and other interpreters and interpretive communities much more difficult.

Of course, the existence of presuppositions does not mean that all presuppositions are equally valid or that an interpreter's prior convictions in approaching the text cannot become more and more consistent with biblical teaching.³ Nevertheless, it is helpful to be aware of the way in which one's experience, interpretive and denominational traditions, cultural and social backgrounds, vocation, gender, education, and other factors influence one's interpretation of Scripture.

An example of presuppositions that remain largely unacknowledged is the recent article, "Why God is Not Mother," by Elizabeth Achtemeier. In an essay that purportedly critiques the radical feminist movement, she states at the outset what she considers to be the general evangelical consensus:

The Scriptures *clearly proclaim* that both female and male are made in the image of God (Gen. 1:27), that husband and wife are to join flesh in a marital union of *mutual helpfulness* (Gen. 2:18), that the ancient enmity between the sexes and *the subservience of women are a result of human sin* (Gen. 3), that *such enmity and subservience have been overcome* by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:28), and that all women and men are called equally to discipleship in the service of their risen Lord. The Scriptures further show that our Lord *consistently treated women as equals* and *that the New Testament churches could have women as their leaders*.⁴

However, except for the statements that both female and male are made in the image of God and that women and men are equally called to discipleship, all of the above assertions, far from representing an evangelical consensus, are strongly disputed. What, according to Achtemeier, the Scriptures "clearly proclaim" are in fact Achtemeier's own interpretive conclusions.

Generally, the practice of seeking to substantiate a theological point by way of appeal to "hard" lexical, morphological or syntactical data when the available evidence itself seems far from conclusive may reveal a selective appraisal of the data which may be a result of an interpreter's conscious or unrecognized presuppositions.⁵

Lack of balance in hermeneutical methodology

In principle, most students of the NT gender passages

would probably agree that the process of interpreting a biblical passage should include the following components: an identification of the book's genre, a reconstruction of the historical and cultural background of a document, lexical and syntactical studies, and a survey of the passage's literary context and the flow of the argument. However, interpreters do not always live up to their best hermeneutical intentions. As the examples below will attempt to demonstrate, a lack of balance in hermeneutical methodology (i.e., the giving of inadequate weight to one element of the hermeneutical process at the expense of other components) accounts for varying degrees of distortion in interpreters' exegetical results.

With regard to balance in hermeneutical methodology, the important questions are: (1) What is the *relative weight* given to the various elements of the interpretive process by an interpreter? (2) Which of these factors is *judged decisive* by a given author? And (3) what *criteria* are used to arrive at one's judgment among alternative interpretive options?

For example, an interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:8-15, conducted properly, should incorporate the use of all of the hermeneutical procedures listed above in proper balance. What is the genre of the Pastorals? Granted that it is an occasional writing, does that necessarily mean that the letter cannot contain any injunctions of permanent validity? What is the most probable historical-cultural background for 1 Timothy 2:8-15? What significant words or important syntactical constructions need to be studied? And what is the passage's function in its immediate and larger contexts? Ideally, the results of these various analyses are properly related in order to arrive at a balanced interpretation of the passage.

However, one's overall interpretation will only be as strong as its weakest link. An improper emphasis on one element in the interpretive process or a wrong judgment in one area of study will weaken, if not invalidate, one's entire interpretation.

Thus a given writer may give preeminence to lexical study. George W. Knight, finding no instances of *authenthein* ("to have or exercise authority") with a negative connotation in extrabiblical literature, argues against the possibility that the term can take on a negative connotation in any imaginable context.⁶ However, while the lack of extant references to that effect may suggest a certain (some might say high) plausibility of Knight's thesis, it would give further confirmation to Knight's case if extensive contextual and syntactical studies could be carefully balanced with his lexical considerations.

Word studies of *authenthein* in extrabiblical literature (1 Tim. 2:12 is the only instance where the word is used in the NT) are able to supply a range of possible meanings. As one considers the term's meaning in its specific context in 1 Timothy 2:12, one should seek to determine the *probable* meaning of *authenthein* with the help of contextual and syntactical studies.

Contextually, it is apparent that 1 Timothy 2:11-12 is framed by the phrase "in quietness" or "in silence" (*hesychia*), while "teaching" (*didaskhein*) and "exercising authori-

***What,
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conclusions.***

ANDREAS KÖSTENBERGER

ty" (*authentein*) in verse 12 correspond to "learning" (*manthaneto*) and "in full submission" (*pasē hypotagē*) in verse 11. This juxtaposition already suggests that *authentein* means "to have or exercise authority" rather than "to usurp authority," as has been suggested by some.⁷ Recent lexical analyses have confirmed this interpretation.⁸

Detailed comparisons of the NT and extrabiblical Greek literature conducted by the present writer have shown that *didaskēin* and *authentein* are linked in 1 Timothy 2:12 by the coordinating conjunction *oude* ("nor") in a way that requires them to share either a positive or negative force. Thus 1 Timothy 2:12 could either be rendered as "I do not permit a woman to teach nor to exercise authority over a man" (both terms share a positive force) or "I do not permit a woman to teach *error* nor to *usurp* a man's authority" (both terms share a negative force).

Moreover, since *didaskēin* in the Pastorals always has a positive force (cf. 1 Tim. 4:11; 6:2; and 2 Tim. 2:2), *authentein*, too, should be expected to have a positive force in 1 Timothy 2:12, so that the rendering "I do not permit a woman to teach nor to *exercise authority* over a man" is required. Other instances of *didaskēin* in the Pastorals indicate that if a negative connotation or content is intended, the word *heterodidaskalein* ("to teach heretical doctrine") or other contextual qualifiers are used (cf. 1 Tim. 1:3-4; 6:3; Tit. 1:9-14).

Underrating the Importance of the Use of the OT in the NT

There is general agreement regarding what the relevant passages on gender issues in the NT are. The references usually listed are 1 Corinthians 11:2-16; 14:33b-36; Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 5:21-33; Colossians 3:18-19; 1 Timothy 2:8-15; and 1 Peter 3:1-7.⁹ To this may be added a number of instances in the Gospels where Jesus relates to or teaches regarding women. It is also commonly recognized that Genesis 1-3 is a foundational passage for the gender passages of the NT. It seems, however, that more could be done in studying the exact way in which Genesis 1-3 is used in the respective NT gender passages.

Evangelical hermeneutics affirms the significance of authorial intention in determining meaning. If one seeks to understand the Pauline gender passages with regard to authorial intent, one must not take lightly the fact that Paul, in virtually every instance, refers to some portion of Genesis 1-3. This, as noted above, has not gone unnoticed. However, fundamental hermeneutical questions remain to be asked and answered.

First, regarding authorial intention: What does this consistent reference to some aspect of Genesis 1-3 reveal about authorial intention? That is to say, why did Paul refer or allude to Genesis? Did he do so simply to establish a connection with antecedent Scripture? Did he resort to "proof-texting" to bolster his arguments? Did he use Genesis merely as illustrative material? Did he believe in the authority of the OT Scriptures and use them to establish equally authoritative NT principles? Or did he have any other purposes in mind? How did he craft his arguments?

Second, regarding reader response and the dynamics of the communicative context: How did Paul want his references to Genesis to be received by the recipients of their correspondence? How did he desire his audience to respond? What was his readers' perception of Scriptural authority? What were these readers' perceptions of apostolic authority, especially in regard to Paul's interpretation and use of the OT? How were those writings in fact received and responded to? What impact did Paul's use of the OT have, especially compared with the impact his teachings on gender issues would have had without reference to the OT?

Of course, this last question is a hypothetical one. Still, it is a legitimate question to ask. One should face the fact that the OT, particularly the opening chapters of Genesis, is commonly referred to when Paul deals with gender issues. This procedure should be understood in relation to the possibility that Paul might have used other points of reference or grounds of appeal, such as a direct reference to his readers' contemporary context, community standards, their own personal views, or other forms of argumentation. While these alternative procedures are not completely absent (cf. 1 Cor. 11:2,16), one must give proper weight to the fact that Paul commonly referred to the fundamental passages in Genesis 1-3 as his ultimate reference point in his respective contemporary contexts.

Third, regarding the text itself: What does the text say explicitly, especially in connection with OT references? Does Paul himself give an OT principle as the reason for his argument in a certain contemporary context, as he does in 1 Timothy 2:13 and 14? What is the relationship between references to the OT and to contemporary practice or community standards? Are those reference points of equal weight and authority and thus to be placed side by side, or is one more important than the other? Does the contemporary context ever override OT principles? Or is the OT principle the fundamental ground of appeal, with contemporary practice as a corroborating aspect? How the questions posed above are answered will largely determine the final outcome of an interpreter's historical exegesis as well as her contemporary application.

There seem to be instances where Paul makes the whole force of his argument rest on principles derived from the OT. In 1 Timothy 2:8-15, he draws significance from both the historical sequence of the creation of man and woman (v. 13; cf. also 1 Cor. 11:8) and from the way in which the historical fall of man occurred, i.e. by a reversal of the created order (v. 14).¹⁰ Finally, by way of synecdoche, Paul assures his readers that the woman will be saved "by the bearing of children," i.e. by adhering to her God-ordained role.¹¹

The interpretive conclusion and implication Paul draws from the narrative accounts in Genesis 2 and 3 is that both creation order and fall have in fact abiding significance for male-female relationships. For the man, to have been created first means that he has first responsibility for the stewardship entrusted to him by God. The role reversal at the fall is a further argument, according to Paul, that the final responsibility and authority legitimately rest with the man.

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Thus, Paul, in 1 Timothy 2:8-15, draws from the OT narratives abiding principles for male-female relationships and applies them to his contemporary context. It seems that Paul's appeal to the OT as well as his own apostolic office were, in his mind, definitive, at least in the context at hand.

The question of authorial intent has great significance for the proper interpretation of the passages in the NT that cite the Old. Paul, Peter, and their fellow-apostles perceived the OT, as well as the evolving NT writings, as authoritative.¹² Thus, when those writers quoted the OT in their arguments, they did so because they considered it to be authoritative. Consequently, the contemporary interpreter should submit to the apostolic interpretation of the OT where such is available.

Improper Use of Background Data

While certain writers appear to devote too little attention to background matters, others allow their own reconstruction of the ancient cultural milieu to control almost entirely their exegesis of a given gender passage.

An example of the latter extreme is the work by Richard Clark and Catherine Clark Kroeger on 1 Timothy 2:12.¹³ As Yarbrough rightly contends, there is virtually no basis for the existence of the gnostic heresy that the Kroegers allege forms the background to 1 Timothy 2:12.¹⁴ Throughout their book, the Kroegers are so predominantly concerned with the ancient cultural milieu supposedly underlying 1 Timothy 2:12 that there is little room in their treatment for contextual exegesis.

Moreover, not only do the Kroegers use late sources to establish the background of a NT writing, there also remains widespread disagreement regarding the interpretation of the available evidence.

For example, Steven Baugh has recently argued that "there is not the slightest evidence that there was a feminist movement at Ephesus."¹⁵ He contends that the worship of goddesses alone does not constitute sufficient evidence for the presence of feminism in a given society.¹⁶ These findings sharply contradict the Kroegers' assertions. In any case, a general reconstruction of the Ephesian milieu in the first century must not be used indiscriminately in one's reconstruction of the circumstances prevailing in the Ephesian church that occasioned the writing of 1 Timothy.

As noted above, Paul explicitly adduces two reasons from the OT creation account to substantiate his injunction regarding women's teaching of men (cf. 1 Tim. 2:13-

14). The Kroegers, however, hardly discuss these OT references, while they give ample attention to their own reconstruction of this passage's contemporary background. This neglect to consider adequately a text's explicit argumentation in favor of a preoccupation with questions of cultural background lacks balance.

It is certainly appropriate to seek to illumine a text with relevant background information. But to all but ignore explicit textual material and to allow the text to be superseded by background information fails to meet the standard of a hermeneutical methodology that properly employs *all* the tools at its disposal and does so with proper balance.

An Arbitrary Distinction between "Paradigm Passages" and "Passages with Limited Application"

A hermeneutical fallacy that is quite common in the discussion of gender passages in the NT is the arbitrary distinction between passages conveying a "general principle" and those of "limited application." Specifically, Galatians 3:28 is often viewed as establishing Paul's general parameters and thus providing the paradigm into which "passages of limited application" such as 1 Timothy 2:8-15 or 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and 14:33b-36 have to be fitted.

As Osborne writes, "Feminists are quick to argue that Galatians 3:28 is the

theological and hermeneutical key to the issue."¹⁷ On the other hand, those who do not share the view that Galatians 3:28 is the paradigm for the interpretation of all the gender passages in the NT are at times said to "de-emphasize the importance of the verse for understanding male and female relations in this age."¹⁸

Indeed, as Klyne Snodgrass charges, "For them, it is not the primary passage for discussing the relation of male and female. In fact, it is not even a key text. Focus is usually placed instead on 1 Corinthians 11 and 14 and 1 Timothy 2."¹⁹ Snodgrass concludes, "I view 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36 and 1 Timothy 2:11-15 as statements necessitated by specific problems in Corinth and Ephesus, respectively, and as shaped by an ancient culture. These texts do not become less important than Galatians 3:28, but they are less direct in their application."²⁰

However, the question arises whether or not Galatians 3:28, too, could be seen as "necessitated by specific problems" in the Galatian church. Moreover, it appears that Snodgrass uses the term "necessitated" in an unduly limited

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sense, i.e., as meaning “limited to the instance which occasioned a teaching.” It is also unclear what Snodgrass means when he calls the texts in 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy “less direct in their application.” Snodgrass also fails to provide convincing evidence that would allow one to limit the application of 1 Timothy 2:12 to the Ephesian context.

But Snodgrass’s statements seem restrained compared to unequivocal statements such as the following comment by W. Ward Gasque: “*Galatians 3:28 is the necessary theological starting place for any discussion on the role of women in the church...* Other texts must not be used to undermine this fundamental theological affirmation.”²¹

Gasque also refers to F. F. Bruce who comments, “Paul states the basic principle here [Gal. 3:28]; if restrictions on it are found elsewhere in the Pauline corpus, as in 1 Cor. 14:34f... or 1 Tim. 2:11f., they are to be understood in relation to Gal. 3:28, and not vice versa.”²² This decision regarding “paradigm passages” tends to predetermine one’s exegetical conclusions. As Gasque summarizes, “By taking Galatians 3:28 as the starting place for Paul’s view on women, it becomes extremely difficult, if not impossible, to come to the traditionalist conclusion.”²³

Again, modern presuppositions regarding gender issues may raise their head. When Snodgrass remarks, “Being in Christ did not change a Jew into a Gentile, rather, it changed the way that Jews and Gentiles relate

to each other,” and again, “Being in Christ does not change a woman into a man any more than it changes Gentiles into Jews, but it changes the way that men and women relate to each other just as it changed the way Jews and Gentiles relate,” does he represent Paul accurately or are his statements flavored by his contemporary concerns?²⁴ Was it really Paul’s point in Galatians 3:28 to address the issue of how Christ “changes the way that men and women relate to each other”? A reading of the passage in its context of chapters 3 and 4 makes this interpretation rather dubious. As the ensuing discussion details, Paul’s concerns are salvation-historical rather than relating to social, racial, or gender issues as such.

A hermeneutical procedure that assigns certain passages into “paradigmatic” categories and labels others as passages with “limited application” is highly suspect. The superimposition of a topical grid onto a cluster of “gender passages” is probably one of the major culprits for the development of such arbitrary distinctions.

When approaching Galatians 3:28, the interpreter who

puts aside his interests in gender issues, at least temporarily, will discover that the verse is linked with Galatians 3:16. There Paul argues that Genesis 12:7 pointed not to Abraham’s *many* offsprings, but “to one [*eph henos*] which is Christ.” Thus the statement in Galatians 3:28b, “For you are all one in Christ Jesus,” refers back to the divine promise made to Abraham of which all believers are indiscriminately heirs. This is made clear by verse 29 which draws this exact conclusion: “And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.”

The other important contextual reference point of Galatians 3:28 is Galatians 3:26. The statements in verses 26 and 28 are parallel, as can easily be seen: “For you are

all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus” and “For you are all one in Christ Jesus”. The two parallel elements are “sons of God” in v. 26 and “one” in v. 28. This further underscores the conclusion reached with regard to the relationship of Galatians 3:28 with 3:16 and 29 above. “You are all one in Christ Jesus” means essentially, “You are all *sons of God* in Christ Jesus.”

In the context of the divine promise to Abraham, Paul’s point is that in the one Son of the promise, Jesus Christ, all believers are indiscriminately heirs of God’s promise to Abraham. There is no discrimination in that promise between Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female, as Paul proceeds to develop in chapter four of

Galatians.

Thus an interpretation that starts with the assumption that Galatians 3:28 relates directly to contemporary gender issues will have difficulty entering into Paul’s argument in the context of the passage. Contrary to the assertion that Galatians 3:28 contains “an unequivocal statement of absolute equality in Christ in the church” where “Paul excludes all discrimination against Gentiles, slaves or women,”²⁵ Galatians 3:28 in fact contains the salvation-historical demonstration that the divine promise to Abraham includes Jews as well as Gentiles, slaves as well as free, and men as well as women. That is Paul’s point in Galatians 3:28 in the context of chapters 3 and 4, and, indeed, of the whole epistle.

Leveling the Distinction between Historical Exegesis and Modern Contextualization

The importance of maintaining a distinction between historical exegesis and modern contextualization has already become apparent in the discussion up to this point. The

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power of presuppositions, however, tends to inject at least some elements of the modern interpreter's contemporary horizon into the interpretive process. Openness to correction by the ancient horizon of the text is required in this "hermeneutical circle" (or, hopefully, "spiral") in order for this tendency to be counteracted.

In practice, as has been seen in the examples given above, the line between the ancient and the contemporary horizons is often blurred. Topical concerns with modern "gender issues" often supersede in effect biblical-theological considerations, resulting in superficial systematizations.

For these reasons it is important not to level the distinction between historical exegesis and modern contextualization. Of course, once the interpreter has determined the authorial intention in the ancient context and reconstructed the historical message, his task still remains unfinished. While it is essential to distinguish clearly between historical exegesis and contemporary application, both are required for the process of interpretation to be complete. R. T. France calls for "the priority in biblical interpretation of what has come to be called 'the first horizon,' i.e., of understanding biblical language within its own context before we start exploring its relevance to our own concerns, and of keeping the essential biblical context in view as a control on the way we apply biblical language to current issues."²⁶

If France's call were heeded, perhaps a greater consensus could be reached at least on the level of historical exegesis, i.e., what the text *meant* to its original recipients. It would then be easier to draw appropriate applications for the diverse contemporary contexts in which various interpreters find themselves.

Unfortunately, however, modern hermeneutics has witnessed a radical shift toward the subjective element in interpretation. A pluralism that affirms the legitimacy of "feminist hermeneutics," "liberation hermeneutics," "African-American hermeneutics," and, it may be supposed, "white Anglo-American hermeneutics," contains within itself the seeds of a subjectivism that denies the priority of what France calls the "first horizon." In this framework, it is the reader's response, not the author's intent, that decisively shapes the interpretation of the text.²⁷

Conclusion

The following hermeneutical fallacies were critiqued: (1) underestimating the power of presuppositions; (2) lack of balance in hermeneutical methodology; (3) underrating the importance of the use of the OT in the NT; (4) improper use of background information; (5) an arbitrary distinction between "paradigm passages" and "passages with limited application"; and (6) leveling the distinction between historical exegesis and modern contextualization. As the various examples have shown, each of these fallacies distorts an interpreter's understanding of the NT's gender passages. Perhaps by raising these hermeneutical issues to a conscious level this essay can make a contribution toward the avoidance of these fallacies and toward a greater degree of methodological consensus in the study of NT gender passages.

Endnotes

1. Grant Osborne, "Hermeneutics and Women in the Church," *JETS* 20 (1977):337.
2. Robert Johnston, "Biblical Authority and Interpretation," in *Women, Authority and the Bible*, ed. Alvera Mickelsen (Downers Grove: IVP, 1986), 30-41.
3. Grant Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1991).
4. Elizabeth Achtemeier, "Why God is Not Mother," *Christianity Today* 37/9 (Aug. 16, 1993), 17. Emphasis added.
5. Cf. James Barr, *Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford: University Press, 1961).
6. George W. Knight, *The Role Relationship of Men and Women* (rev. ed., Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1985), 18, n.1.
7. Cf. Philip Barton Payne, "Libertarian Women in Ephesus: A Response to Douglas J. Moo's Article, '1 Timothy 2:11-15: Meaning and Significance,'" *Trinity Journal* 2 NS (1981): 169-97, John Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today* (Old Tappan, NJ: Revell, 1990), 269, 277-80, and the KJV and the NEB.
8. Cf. H. Scott Baldwin, "A Difficult Word: *authentō* in 1 Timothy 2:12," in *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9-15*, eds. Andreas J. Köstenberger, Thomas R. Schreiner, and H. Scott Baldwin (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 65-80.
9. See Osborne, "Hermeneutics and Women," 337; Piper and Grudem, *Recovering*; Mickelsen, *Women*.
10. Moo notes that the introductory *gar* ("for") is rarely simply explanatory or illustrative and that such a usage would make little sense in this context. It normally gives the reason or logical grounds for a command. See Moo, "The Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:11-15: A Rejoinder," *Trinity Journal* 2 NS (1981):202-4.
11. Cf. Thomas R. Schreiner, "An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9-15: A Dialogue with Scholarship," in *Women in the Church*, 105-54.
12. Cf. 2 Tim. 3:16 and 2 Pet. 3:15b-16. Furthermore, Peter, Paul, and John also thought of their own writings as authoritative (cf. John 21:24; 1 Cor. 4:1; 2 Cor. 10:10-11 with 11:2-3; and the openings of the Pauline and Petrine correspondences).
13. Richard Clark and Catherine Clark Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2:11-15 in Light of Ancient Evidence* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992).
14. Robert W. Yarbrough, "New Light on Paul and Women?" *Christianity Today* 37/11 (Oct. 4, 1993) 68.
15. Steven M. Baugh, "Feminism at Ephesus: 1 Timothy 2:12 in Historical Context," *Outlook* 42/5 (May 1992) 10.
16. *Ibid.*, 9.
17. Osborne, "Hermeneutics and Women," 348.
18. Klyne R. Snodgrass, "Galatians 3:28: Conundrum or Solution?" in Mickelsen, *Women*, 164-65.
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Ibid.*, 180.
21. W. Ward Gasque, "Response," in Mickelsen, *Women*, 189.
22. *Ibid.*, 189-90. Cf. F.F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 190.
23. Gasque, "Response," 190.
24. Snodgrass, "Galatians 3:28," 176-77.
25. Gasque, "Response," 189.
26. R.T. France, "The Church and the Kingdom of God: Some Hermeneutical Issues," in *Biblical Interpretation and the Church: The Problem of Contextualization*, ed. D. A. Carson (Nashville: Nelson, 1984), 42.
27. Cf. the two appendices in Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral*, 366-415.

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Shepherd's pie

ISSUES OF CRITICAL INTEREST TO PASTORS: WHO CARES ABOUT ADAM?

BY TIM BAYLY

THE APOSTLE PAUL PROHIBITS THE EXERCISE OF authority over men by women when he says, "I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, for Adam was created first, then Eve" (1 Tim. 2:12-13, NAS95).

With this simple statement Paul explicitly affirms what is implicit throughout God's Word, that the order of creation establishes patriarchy as God's pattern for leadership in human relationships. Addressing the matter of propriety in prayer, the Apostle Paul again emphasizes this order:

For man does not originate from woman,
but woman from man; for indeed man
was not created for the woman's sake, but
woman for the man's sake.

(1 Cor. 11:8-9, NAS95).

Imagine a new believer, thoroughly confused by the sexual anarchy of today's culture, discovering the truth inherent in passages such as 1 Corinthians 11:3-16, 14:34-35, Ephesians 5:22-33, 1 Timothy 2:9-15, and 1 Peter 3:1-7. What a deep sense of relief to discover that the order of creation establishes timeless principles for the relationships between men and women.

But while the facts of Eve's creation are instructive for establishing proper roles for men and women, Genesis goes on to reveal another important biographical note about Adam and Eve. Like the facts surrounding God's creation of Eve, the significance of this biographical detail is revealed more fully by the New Testament.

The first hint of this element comes after the Fall when God, walking in the Garden in the cool of the day, inquires of Adam, "Where are you?" When Adam responds by explaining that he and Eve found themselves naked and hid, it is notable that God directs His follow-up question again to Adam, asking him, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" (Genesis 3:11, NAS95).¹

It was Adam, not Eve, who was required to explain the tragic alienation from God they both had suffered, and this despite Eve having been the one deceived,² the first one to sin, and the one who enticed her husband to follow her into that sin. This is neither a small nor unimportant aspect of the Genesis account: it was Adam whom God first held responsible for the Fall despite Adam being the second sinner in the Garden. Further, it is because of the sin of Adam—not Eve—that the race of Adam remains under the curse of judgement and death down to this present day.

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

(Romans 5:12-14, NAS95).

We neglect Adam's federal headship in preaching and teaching because individualistic autonomy is written deep in the hearts of modern man.

Some years back my father noted that, despite efforts to neuter the language of our Faith, he had yet to hear anyone propose that the Church become a 'he' or Satan become a 'she.' Similarly, it seems ironic that feminists do not object to the essential inequality between the sexes revealed by this portion of the Biblical account of the Fall. Shouldn't Eve be recognized as the leader in the Garden? Shouldn't Eve have been penalized more severely since it was she who took the lead in the sin of the Garden? Aren't we being patronizing when we attribute the cosmic penalties of the Fall to Adam's account?

Perhaps feminists fail to argue the issue because this particular point happens to be one where they rather like the clear meaning of God's Word. There's no question but that the Bible is clear enough on this issue... as the *New England Primer* succinctly sums it up:

In Adam's fall
We sinned all.

God's Word makes clear that because God made Eve for Adam and placed her under his authority, it was Adam whom God called to account for the Fall. Adam was the patriarch of his home and his race. This is not to say that Eve escaped personal accountability; in Genesis 3 we read that God also placed Eve under a curse—the punishment that even today brings suffering to all women in childbirth. So too the serpent and his descendants suffer under God's judgment. Yet it is through Adam alone that death comes to all men; it is because of Adam's sin that all creation groans awaiting its release

from the corruption of sin (Rom. 8:22,23); and it is in Adam that we all die:

For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

(1 Cor. 15:21-22, NAS95).

One might think Adam's fatherhood over us all is neglected in the Church today because it reinforces patriarchy. I think it more likely that we neglect Adam's federal headship in preaching and teaching because individualistic autonomy is written deep in the hearts of modern man.

Consider, for instance, how long it has been since this kind of theological understanding has appeared in services of infant baptism (or dedication): "O merciful God, grant that the old Adam in this Child may be so buried, that the new man may be raised up in him."³ Federal headship is a doctrine modern man finds hard to swallow. As a result, the significance of Father Adam to his human progeny is slipping away within the Church, just as in the world, leaving the imputation of Adam's sin to all mankind just one more antique notion rooted in the culture of the Biblical writers and needing revision by today's dynamic equivocators.

For centuries Americans have been enamored of the legend of the autonomous loner. It's a cultural ideal we've propagated worldwide.

Consider loner movie stars such as Bruce Willis, Clint Eastwood, John Wayne, or Humphrey Bogart; look back on what you remember of character development in the novels of Ernest Hemingway, not to mention Hemingway's personal life; think about *Mother Earth News* and the idyll of natural self-reliance it and similar cultural organs promoted throughout the Seventies. In each case individualistic autonomy serves as a fairly good interpretive grid for American culture. And it goes without saying that the ideal of the autonomous loner and the doctrine of federal headship are worlds apart.

Yet avoiding the doctrine of Adam's federal headship over all mankind brings harm in three ways. First, we hide one of the principal supports for the patriarchal ordering of the race of Adam which God has written on the hearts of all men. Second, as the federal headship of Adam becomes an obscure doctrine rarely mentioned, the corporate nature of God's ordering of human society which God's Word reveals also is obscured. Third, as the Church, out of a mistaken sense of what is and is not fair, backs away from the imputation of Adam's sin to all men, it must also inevitably back away from the similar imputation of the righteousness of Jesus Christ to His elect.

Feminism is not taking aim simply at the practice of assigning leadership roles by sex; it also is attacking the corporate solidarity of marriage and family life which, historically, has led to so much real suffering on the part of wives and children. Consider, for instance, the misery endured by Abigail while she was married to Nabal; the suffering of Jephthah's daughter;⁴ or the shame endured on August 17th by President Clinton's wife, Hillary, and daughter, Chelsea, when the head of their home went on international television to confess he had committed adultery in the Oval Office. Why should the destinies of wives and children be tied to such men? In fact, in such a context who really would have any trouble understanding Chelsea Clinton going back to Stanford and joining the local chapter of the National Organization of Women?

Feminism, then, is bound up with a revolt against these twin pillars of the Biblical account of creation: federal headship and the corporate nature of human society. Both egalitarianism and the autonomous individualism at the heart of feminism are at war with the Biblical story of Adam. But though feminists have not fully recognized it, any attempt to alter the story of Adam involves a parallel destruction of the salvation brought by our

Both egalitarianism
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blessed Savior. Today those called to preach and teach God's Word must resurrect all the doctrines connected with our father Adam; not just the doctrine of essential patriarchy, but even more importantly, the doctrine of federal headship. Pascal wrote, "Certainly nothing jolts us more rudely than this doctrine, and yet, but for this mystery, the most incomprehensible of all, we remain incomprehensible to ourselves."⁵

God has named the human race "adam." This name reinforces what the account of the creation of Adam and Eve reveals; that the first woman was made after and for the first man and that for all time this structure is to be mirrored in the lives of God's people by their living together under patriarchy rather than matriarchy or egalitarian utopianism. Further, this name also makes clear that every woman or man ever to live has been born under the curse of a God-decreed solidarity with the First Adam, our federal head, and that only those who come under the Head of the Second Adam can be saved. John Murray wrote,

The principle of solidarity is embedded in the Scripture and is exemplified in numerous ways. It is not necessary to enumerate the instances in which the principle comes to expression. It is a patent fact that in God's government of men there are institutions of the family, of the state, and of the church in which solidaric or corporate relationships obtain and are operative. This is simply to say that God's relations to men and the relations of men to one another are not exclusively individualistic; God deals with men in terms of these corporate relationships and men must reckon with their corporate relations and responsibilities.⁶

We may very well wish to deny our solidarity with the First Adam but it is fruitless and futile; in him we all died having been one with him in his rebellion in the Garden.

Yet God from the riches of His mercy also calls us to solidarity with the Second Adam through Whom we may have imputed to us, immediately upon faith, a perfect righteousness which is effective "far as the curse is found."

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Endnotes

1. U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1998), part 1, *From Adam to Noah*, pp. 155-56. Cf. Nahum M. Sarna, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989), p. 26, Raymond C. Ortlund's "Male-Female Equality and Male Headship: Genesis 1-3," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, John Piper and Wayne Grudem, eds. (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1991), pp. 95-112.

2. 2 Corinthians 11:3; 1 Timothy 2:14.

3. Anglican *Prayer Book* (1611 edition). Note: this is a prayer of desire, not a declaration of faith.

4. Judges 11.

5. "For it is beyond doubt that there is nothing which more shocks our reason than to say that the sin of the first man has rendered guilty those who, being so removed from this source, seem incapable of participation in it. This transmission does not only seem to us impossible, it seems also very unjust. For what is more contrary to the rules of our miserable justice than to damn eternally an infant incapable of will, for a sin wherein he seems to have so little a share that it was committed six thousand years before he was in existence? Certainly nothing offends us more rudely than this doctrine; and yet without this mystery, the most incomprehensible of all, we remain incomprehensible to ourselves." (Blaise Pascal, *Pensees*; vii. 434, W.F. Trotter, trans.) With thanks to S. Lewis Johnson in *Bibliotheca Sacra*. October-December, 1975, pp. 316-27.

6. John Murray, *The Imputation of Adam's Sin* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1959), pp. 5, 22.

Reflections on fatherhood

BLANKENHORN'S *FATHERLESS AMERICA*: EXCELLENT ANALYSIS, YET LACKS BIBLICALLY BASED SOLUTIONS

BY DAVID WEGENER

FATHERHOOD IN AMERICA IS IN TROUBLE. DAVID Blankenhorn, in his book, *Fatherless America*, has dissected the crisis, pointing to several critical problems. More and more children are now being brought up in homes where the father is absent. Many doubt the traditional roles of fathers. Some are even asking if fathers are really necessary.

Blankenhorn has developed a typology to describe our situation. The *deadbeat dad* doesn't pay his child support. He is a bad guy, a criminal who belongs in jail. The key issue here is not father absence, but money absence. His fatherhood is measured in dollars.

The *visiting father* is a shadow dad. He has left the home but he still stops by. He is a visitor: part father and part stranger. He pays his child support. He causes no trouble. He loves his kids. He wants to be a good father, but he's not around. He has been, in a sense, de-fathered.

The fatherhood of the *sperm father* is completely biological. He is a one-act dad, who leaves no footprints and casts no shadow. He never shows up. He is the perfect father for those who think "that men in families are either unnecessary or part of the problem."¹

The *stepfather* and the *nearby guy* are both different and similar. The stepfather is married to the mother. Thus, his commitment to her and her children goes a bit deeper than that of the nearby guy, who might be her boyfriend, a Little League coach or a Sunday school teacher. Yet both the stepfather and the nearby guy are substitute fathers. Biology plays no part here. Paternity is proximity. They fill the fatherhood vacuum created by deadbeat dads, visiting fathers and sperm fathers.²

These problems have led some to ask whether or not fathers are really necessary. They make so many mistakes; maybe their families would be better off without them. Clearly, we cannot go back to the model of the *old father*. He was a mean dictator with fangs, a controller. He yelled. He wielded authority. We can do without him. If fathers are to be retained at all, they must embrace the model of the *new father*. He "is nurturing. He expresses his emotions. He is a healer, a companion, a colleague. He is a deeply involved parent. He changes diapers."³

He may or may not be the primary breadwinner in the family, but that doesn't matter. He has moved beyond this and other arbitrary role distinctions based on gender. He is a really good guy, to the extent that he is still a guy. Actually, he's a lot like mom. We like him a lot. Call him the gender-neutral father.⁴

While Blankenhorn has done an excellent job of cataloguing the problems with fatherhood in America, unfortunately, when he comes to solutions, he is not helpful. Having embraced the cultural relativism of the day, he is left with opinions. Men in Denver think these are the traits of a good father. Those in Cleveland think this.⁵ Surely this is unacceptable. It does not meet the challenges of the day. We desperately need the sure Word of God, which cannot be relativized, or we will be left with focus groups. How does Holy Scripture define fatherhood? What are the duties of fathers according to the Bible? What follows is a brief survey of central Biblical teachings on fatherhood.

Fathers must look to God as their model

God is the archetypal Father. Paul prefaces his prayer for the Ephesian believers by saying, "For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family (*patria*) in heaven and on earth derives its name" (Eph. 3:14-15). *Patria* here can be rendered "family" or "lineage" or "fatherhood." God is the Father of all fatherhood. The very idea of fatherhood is found in the divine nature. Every human father is an imperfect reflection of our perfect heavenly Father.⁶ Hebrews 12:7-10 reinforces this idea. Parental discipline is modeled after the way God disciplines His adopted children. If you want to know what it means to be a good father, it is essential that you look at the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. How does He relate with His only begotten Son? How does He deal with His adopted children?

Fathers must take delight in their children

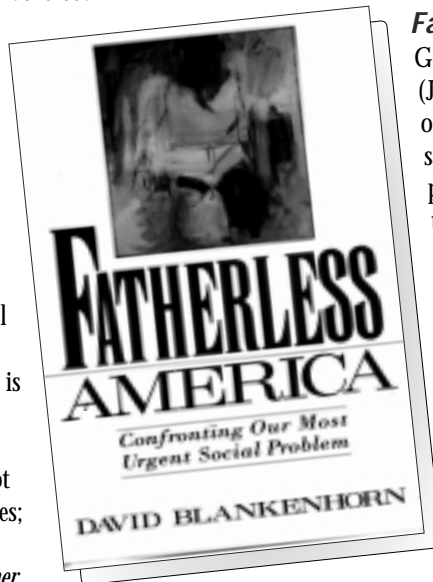
God the Father has loved His Son with an eternal love (Jn. 17:24). At the baptism of Jesus and on the Mount of Transfiguration, God thundered forth His love by saying, "this is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased" (Matt. 3:17, 17:5; see also 12:18). Those who trust in Jesus are God's adopted children, the objects of His saving love (Rom. 5:8, Gal. 4:4-7, 1 Jn. 3:1; 4:9-10). If we want to follow the example of our heavenly father, we must express our love for our children. We can do this verbally when we tell them we're proud of them, that they are pleasing to us, that we have confidence in them. No one can overestimate the power of a father's approval. We can do this by our actions when we choose to spend time with our children, doing things they enjoy (1 Jn. 3:18). We can also do this when we are considerate of our children, by not provoking them to anger.⁷

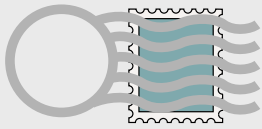
Finally, fathers express their love for their children by providing for their needs (1 Tim. 5:8). This does not mean a guarantee to pay for their college education. The context of 1 Timothy emphasizes providing for the basic needs (food, clothing and shelter) of one's extended family (1 Tim. 6:7-10).

Fathers must discipline and instruct their children

Implicit in the Biblical command for fathers to discipline and instruct their children (Eph. 6:4), is the fact that fathers have authority over their children. God the Father is the author of life. All people are His creation and He has the final and ultimate authority over us all. Yet He has delegated His authority to fathers. We are to regard our offspring as gifts from the Lord (Ps. 127:3), put under our authority while they are young.

Discipline is corrective. It seeks to bring about a change in the one being disciplined. It has accomplished its purpose when the change has been made. Again, God the Father has set the pattern for fatherly discipline (Heb. 12:5-11). The goal of discipline is to restore full fellowship between a father and his child. Though the kind of discipline that is administered will vary according to the age of the child, certain over-arching principles apply. The discipline must not be done in anger (Jas. 1:20, Gal. 6:1). It should be painful, but must not inflict damage (Heb. 12:11). Give instruction while you are administering the discipline. Tell the child





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what the Bible says about why he was disciplined. When the discipline is finished, there should be a full restoration of fellowship between the father and his child. The subject that brought on the discipline is now closed.⁸

Fathers must not only discipline their children; they must also instruct them. It is our great privilege to lead them in prayer and the study of God's word (Deut. 6:4-9). We must point them to Christ and introduce them to our Savior. We need to help them develop Christian virtues such as, honesty, dependability, hard work, kindness, purity, politeness, thankfulness, patience, humility, self-control and self-denial. This instruction should be given in a number of ways. Perhaps the most powerful means of teaching is taken up in the next point.

Fathers must set an example for their children

Children imitate their fathers. Christians are called to imitate our heavenly Father (Eph. 5:1). And imitation goes on every day in our homes as a natural fact of life. Recently, I got a pretty bad sunburn from a day spent at the pool. That evening, my three year old son came into my room and lay down next to me and said, "Dad, I wish I had sunburn just like you." He wants to be like me in every way.

Children will learn from their father how to relate to God. Is it important to develop a relationship with Him? Should He be approached only occasionally, in a major crisis, or flippantly, as if He were a buddy, or reverently, as if He were the holy God that He is? The father will be the model.

How should a husband relate to his wife? Harshly, taking out his frustrations from work on her? Or tenderly leading her, as Christ leads the church? Do you want to teach your children to honor you as their father? Well, how are you showing honor and respect for your own father?

Children will learn by the example we set. It will do little good to try to teach the Christian virtues mentioned above unless these virtues are evident and increasing in our own lives.

Fathers must be men

This point cries out for emphasis in a day when more and more Americans believe that fathers are the major part of the problem in families and can therefore be banished from the home with impunity. Just as men and women are different, so a father will relate to his children differently from their mother. First, just as God is the One who first loved us, so fathers must be the initiators in their relationships with their children (1 Jn. 4:19). Many fathers are paralyzed by passivity. In countless ways, a father must seek out his children and be the initiator, rather than the responder, in their relationship.

Second, a father's love is sacrificial (Eph. 5:25-27). He is willing to lay down his life for his family. In a way, he does this every day as he earns a living to provide for their needs. Masculine love is strong and is demonstrated by actions. Third, just as our heavenly Father tests our faith so that we grow spiritually, so fathers should set out challenges for their children so that they grow and mature (Deut. 8:2,16). This does not mean that he puts temptations in their path (Jas. 1:13-14). And it certainly does not

mean that he does not accept and love them. On the contrary, it is precisely because he loves them that he allows their faith and character to be tested and strengthened as they mature toward adulthood.⁹

Finally, fathers must train their sons to be masculine and their daughters to be feminine. They must inculcate bravery and initiating, sacrificial love in their sons by teaching, example and practice. Fathers must train their daughters to be nurturers and to respond to the initiating love of a strong and worthy man. They can do this by encouragement and direction, and by their own relationship with their daughter.¹⁰

Many historians presuppose that the family is not a natural unit, but one which is socially constructed.¹¹ Similarly, sociologists assume that the meaning of fatherhood is essentially a cultural invention. The way a man should father his children is basically shaped by the society in which he lives and this will vary from culture to culture.¹²

In this brief survey, we have seen that Scripture gives many transcultural norms that tell us what fatherhood is and how men should father their children.

May God give us men who rely on His grace and step forward to respond to their high calling as fathers.

Endnotes

1. David Blankenhorn, *Fatherless America: Confronting Our Most Urgent Social Problem* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995), p. 172.
2. Summarized from *ibid.*, pp. 124-98.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 96.
4. Summarized from *ibid.*, pp. 65-123.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 201-21.
6. See F.F. Bruce, "Name", in *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), vol. 2:655; J. Armitage Robinson, *Commentary on Ephesians* (reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1979), p. 84, and Athanasius, "Four Discourses against the Arians," in *Select Treatises of S. Athanasius in Controversy with the Arians*, trans. John Henry Newman, Library of the Fathers, vol. 19 (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1844), 1:23-24, pp. 214-15.
7. Fathers provoke their children to anger when we make unreasonable demands on them; when we show favoritism to one child over another, as Jacob did with Joseph (Genesis 37 ff.); when we subject them to sarcasm and ridicule; when we fail to apologize to them when we are wrong; and when we are wrongfully absent from the home.
8. See Douglas Wilson, *Standing on the Promises: A Handbook of Biblical Childrearing* (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 1997).
9. See Weldon M. Hardenbrook, *Missing from Action: Vanishing Manhood in America* (Nashville: Nelson, 1987), pp. 150-62.
10. Elisabeth Elliot, "The Essence of Femininity," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton: Crossway, 1991), pp. 394-99.
11. See, e.g., Merry E. Wiesner, "Family, Household and Community," in *Handbook of European History, 1400-1600: Late Middle Ages, Renaissance and Reformation*, eds. Thomas A. Brady, Heiko A. Oberman, James D. Tracy (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), vol. 1, p. 51.
12. Blankenhorn, p. 3.

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- ③ Robert W. Yarbrough, "I Suffer Not a Woman: A Review Essay," reprinted from *Presbyterian* 18/1 (1992), pp. 25-33.
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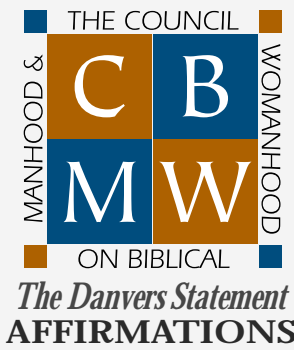
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Based on our understanding of Biblical teachings, we affirm the following:

1. Both Adam and Eve were created in God's image, equal before God as persons and distinct in their manhood and womanhood.
2. Distinctions in masculine and feminine roles are ordained by God as part of the created order, and should find an echo in every human heart.
3. Adam's headship in marriage was established by God before the Fall, and was not a result of sin.
4. The Fall introduced distortions into the relationships between men and women.
 - In the home, the husband's loving, humble headship tends to be replaced by domination or passivity; the wife's intelligent, willing submission tends to be replaced by usurpation or servility.
 - In the church, sin inclines men toward a worldly love of power or an abdication of spiritual responsibility, and inclines women to resist limitations on their roles or to neglect the use of their gifts in appropriate ministries.
5. The Old Testament, as well as the New Testament, manifests the equally high value and dignity which God attached to the roles of both men and women. Both Old and New Testaments also affirm the principle of male headship in the family and in the covenant community.
6. Redemption in Christ aims at removing the distortions introduced by the curse.
 - In the family, husbands should forsake harsh or selfish leadership and grow in love and care for their wives; wives should forsake resistance to their husbands' authority and grow in willing, joyful submission to their husbands' leadership.
 - In the church, redemption in Christ gives men and women an equal share in the blessings of salvation; nevertheless, some governing and teaching roles within the church are restricted to men.
7. In all of life Christ is the supreme authority and guide for men and women, so that no earthly submission—domestic, religious or civil—ever implies a mandate to follow a human authority into sin.
8. In both men and women a heartfelt sense of call to ministry should never be used to set aside Biblical criteria for particular ministries. Rather, Biblical teaching should remain the authority for testing our subjective discernment of God's will.
9. With half the world's population outside the reach of indigenous evangelism; with countless other lost people in those societies that have heard the gospel; with the stresses and miseries of sickness, malnutrition, homelessness, illiteracy, ignorance, aging, addiction, crime, incarceration, neuroses, and loneliness, no man or woman who feels a passion from God to make His grace known in word and deed need ever live without a fulfilling ministry for the glory of Christ and the good of this fallen world.
10. We are convinced that a denial or neglect of these principles will lead to increasingly destructive consequences in our families, our churches, and the culture at large.

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Shame! I cry shame! Oxford has surrendered to barbarians and infidels! Now every umpire has their own strike zone. Tears fill my eyes, and for today I can write no more.

James J. Kilpatrick, commenting on the new *Oxford American Desk Dictionary*, which now condones the "abominable practice" of linking a plural referent pronoun to a singular antecedent in order to avoid the "perceived invidious sexism" in the generic "his"

There is no way in an all-consuming profession like journalism that a woman with children can devote as much time and energy as a man can. If I had left the *Times* to have children and then come back to work a four-day week the way some women reporters on my staff now do, or if I had taken long vacations and leaves to be with my family or left the office at 6 o'clock instead of 8:00 or 9:00—I wouldn't be the metro editor.

Joyce Purnick, childless metro editor of the *New York Times*, delivering the commencement address at Barnard College, Columbia University, May, 1998

If widespread bias did exist, millions of entrepreneurs and tens of millions of investors would join together in a mad rush to hire women. After all, this would allow them to gain a competitive advantage and take profits away from existing companies that supposedly are engaged in a grand conspiracy.

Daniel J. Mitchell, debunking the myth of the feminist pay gap in *The Washington Times*, June 29, 1998

It is rarely male-imposed discrimination that causes the careers of women to differ from men's but the choices women themselves make.

Mona Charen, in *The Washington Times*, June 8, 1998

More revealing than the Southern Baptists' new statement of belief about the family is how widely misunderstood it has been. It's not exactly news that we live in a biblically illiterate society, but one suspects there's something going on here besides ignorance. Maybe it's willful ignorance.

Paul Greenberg, syndicated columnist, commenting on the media twisting of the amendment to the Baptist Faith and Message. *The Washington Times*, June 29, 1998

We operated under the reasonable assumption that if we applied ourselves, we'd get a fine education and that the university had a stake in making that happen. As for our "self-esteem," I dare say we would have been insulted at any hint that the university ought to alter its rigorous academic standards to accommodate a "woman's perspective." While it's surely a positive development that there are now women teaching in every department at Princeton, back in 1973 it wasn't assumed that a young woman had to have role models of her own gender if she was going to succeed in life.

Melanie Kirkpatrick, in *The Wall Street Journal*, June 5, 1998

This is the first generation of American kids who face not just the loss of fathers but the brutal knowledge that other things are far more important to their fathers than they are. And sometimes, apparently, the equally sad reality that their successful, choice-filled mothers had more important items on their agenda than giving their child a real, live dad.

Maggie Gallagher in *The Wall Street Journal*, August 7, 1998



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