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JBMW Responds to *Discovering Biblical Equality* (IVP, 2004)

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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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Table of Contents

JBMW Responds to *Discovering Biblical Equality* (IVP, 2004)

Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood
JBMW 10/1 (Spring 2005) 4-6

Editorial

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In 1991 a cadre of complementarian scholars published what has become known in popular circles as "the big blue book" or "*RBMW*." It is in no way an overstatement to say that *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, edited by John Piper and Wayne Grudem, is one of the most significant evangelical books on gender that has been published in the past two or three decades. Indeed, in 1993 *RBMW* won *Christianity Today's* book of the year.

RBMW includes the officially published copy of the widely affirmed Danvers Statement around which complementarians have united since 1987. Though not all complementarians affirm every detail of every chapter of the book, nevertheless, there has been a strong consensus that it represents us well. Still in print today, this text is well received by students whose instructors argue for a traditional view of gender roles—in our estimation, it remains the uncontested, single volume work of its kind. Though its contributors come from a variety of theological backgrounds, *RBMW* is united in its robust and winsome vision of biblical manhood and womanhood. It is at once clear, charitable, and convincing.

Nearly a decade and a half later, egalitarians have now offered their written response to *RBMW*. The work is titled *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity Without Hierarchy* (*DBE*), edited by Ronald W. Pierce and Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, with contributing editor Gordon D. Fee (Downers

Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004). It is said to be "the first comprehensive scholarly collection of essays from an egalitarian perspective to have been published in North America in the past thirty years."[1] The book is not identified formally as a "rejoinder," and several of the chapters in *DBE* do not even interact with their counterparts in *RBMW*. Yet it is clearly a response to *RBMW*— its title, cover, and the order of the table of contents each mirroring *RBMW*. As coeditor Ronald Pierce says, "I have dreamed of a volume like *DBE* for decades…. I wanted a text to set beside John Piper and Wayne Grudem's 1991 comprehensive work … so that my students could read a strong defense of both views from a wide array of recognized scholars and make up their own minds."[2]

It is fitting, then, for *JBMW* to offer a timely response to *DBE*—a rejoinder to the rejoinder, as it were. There are at least three reasons why this edition of *JBMW* will be especially useful for years to come. First, its format allows for easy access to complementarian critiques of the most important chapters of *DBE*. Though we have not covered every chapter, the chapters treated are representative of the entire book. Second, this edition has lasting value because it contains the work of several stalwart complementarians. We take this show of unity by complementarians to be very encouraging and hope that it reflects the strength of the traditional view of gender roles among evangelicals. Third, each contributor represents our view well. These articles are loaded with keen exegetical and theological insights. It has truly been an honor for our editorial staff to work with each and every contributor on this project.

We need to make an important statement about the subtitle of *DBE*: "Complementarity Without Hierarchy." As complementarians we are not prepared to give the language of "complementarian"—a term intentionally coined by those who framed the Danvers Statement—over to egalitarians. *DBE* is not the first work in which egalitarians have attempted to broaden the scope of the term "complementarian" in order to include their own view (e.g., see Kevin Giles's attempt to distinguish between "egalitarian-complementarian" and "hierarchical-complementarian" in *The Trinity and Subordinationism* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002], 156ff.). Egalitarians, however, have yet to demonstrate why it is that "complementarity without hierarchy" is a legitimate way to describe their view.

In fact, as Bruce Ware points out in his review of the "Introduction," even the editors of *DBE* agree that there is "no middle ground." In our estimation, what egalitarians are trying to say has very little to do with "complementarity" and everything to do with "gender equality." By "equality" they mean that there is no unique role for male leadership in the home and the church. Male headship, however, is the foundation of the genuinely "complementarian" view. Indeed, there is no middle ground. Once one departs from the beauty of God's good design for role differences between the sexes, egalitarianism makes all the sense in the world.

It is understandable that both "egalitarians" and "complementarians" may want to qualify these labels. After all, who on either side is comfortable with saying that one word perfectly summarizes their view? The solution, however, is not to link both views to the particular term "complementarian" which has been accepted as representing one of the views for some time. This does not bring clarity to the discussion, only more confusion.

Further, in what sense does "egalitarian" retain its distinctive meaning when attached to "complementarian"? Egalitarians are free to use whatever language they wish. In the end, however, they are not "complementarians" since more than a decade of evangelical literature on the subject identifies complementarians as those who affirm role distinctions based on masculinity and femininity according to God's good design in the created order.

A few administrative matters need to be mentioned regarding the format of this issue of the Journal. First, every review article follows the exact title of the chapter in *DBE*. This is in order to simplify access to a particular article in database searches. Second, all parenthetical page references in this issue, unless otherwise indicated, refer to the page number in *DBE,* for example, (242). Third, not all of the articles follow the same format. We hope this will be an asset and not a liability, allowing for some variety from the contributors.

On behalf of The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, we want to thank Bruce Ware for his commendable and faithful work as editor of *JBMW* over the last four years. Thankfully, he has agreed to serve as a Senior Consulting Editor writing for the Journal in the future. His expertise, and perhaps more importantly, his gracious and godly example will be missed. In his place, I will serve as editor hoping to represent the Journal and CBMW well.

Finally, on a sobering note, we would like to offer our deepest condolences to two families in their recent losses. First, to the family and friends of the late Stanley J. Grenz at the event of his unexpected, untimely death, our prayer is like that of Justin Taylor who at the beginning of his review article has asked that the God of all comfort would minister to them as they mourn the loss of a son, a brother, a father, a grandfather, and a friend. And second, to the family and friends of the late Edmund P. Clowney, particularly council members Dr. & Mrs. Peter Jones (son-in-law and daughter, Rebecca) at the loss of their father, our prayer is that they will not grieve as those who have no hope, but rather, that they will look forward with certainty to the future resurrection of a glorious body—"[it] is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power" (1 Cor 15:42-44). It is well for us to number our days as we remember that our earthly lives are like a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. ■

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[1] Ronald W. Pierce, "Academic Alert: IVP's Book Bulletin for Professors," 14, no. 1 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005), 3.

[2] Ibid., 6.

SPRING 2005
JBMW 10/1 (Spring 2005) 7-11

"Introduction" by Rebecca Merrill Groothuis and Ronald W. Pierce

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In the Introduction to their edited volume, *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity Without Hierarchy*, Ronald Pierce and Rebecca Groothuis identify some of the convictions and commitments that undergird the overall position of their book, including this important claim:

> Biblical egalitarianism (as opposed to any brand of secular or pagan feminism) is biblically based and kingdom focused. It does not rest its arguments on secular political movements or a theologically liberal denial of the Scripture's full and objective truth and authority for all time. Moreover, biblical egalitarians apply the basic historical-grammatical method of interpretation and the best principles of theologizing to their task. They make no appeal to "women's consciousness" as normative; neither do they feel free to dispense with or underplay any aspect of sacred Scripture, since it is all equally God-breathed and profitable for all of life (2 Tim 3:15-17) (14).

Upon reading the commitment to full biblical truthfulness and authority expressed by these words, biblical complementarians (as the movement has come to be known over the past two decades, and as defined and defended in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* [1]) can only rightly respond with a hearty "Amen." Without any hesitation or qualification, complementarians likewise express their zealous and heart-felt commitment to the full inspiration, inerrancy, and divine authority of the whole of the Scriptures. So, it is clear from the outset of this book that the debate is over the actual content of the teaching of Scripture itself. "Agreed!" we say with excitement to our egalitarian brothers and sisters, "this debate with you is over, and should be over, just what Scripture teaches about the nature and roles of men and women."

Given this common commitment

to the authority of Scripture, we would hope that both sides, then, would say, "May the best man [*sic*?] win." That is, may the side that shows most clearly and convincingly just what Scripture teaches be vindicated; may the side that defends and displays most closely the truthfulness of Scripture itself be shown to be correct; may the side which most fully honors the truth and wisdom of Scripture's own teaching triumph in this debate; and may that position which accords most closely with Scripture itself prevail in our lives, our homes, and our churches. Because our common commitment is to Scripture's authority and not to our own views, *per se*, those on both sides should pray and long for the day when one view—the view most fully expressive of Scripture's truthful teaching—is embraced fully and broadly among Christians and Christian communities.

Some might think at this point, "but is it necessary to pit one view against the other? That is, might there not be some *via media*, some 'middle position,' which incorporates the best of both views?" Again, it is refreshing to read that Pierce and Groothuis dismiss this "possibility" just as much as complementarians do. They write,

> Though we speak strongly in favor of unity, points of agreement and dialogue, it must be noted at the start that *we see no middle ground on this question*. The notion of complementarity is helpful and must be pursued, but two essential questions remain. Are all avenues of ministry and leadership open to women as well as men, or are women restricted from certain roles and subordinated to male authority on the basis of gender alone? Likewise, do wives share equally with husbands in leadership and decision making in marriage, or does the husband have a unique responsibility and privilege to make final decisions, based on his gender alone? The answers to these questions will continue to distinguish clearly between the male leadership and gender equality positions (17).

Yes, indeed: There is no middle ground. And we complementarians agree. Since the egalitarian and complementarian positions are mutually exclusive in their central claims, as indicated by the two questions just cited, and since both of two mutually exclusive positions cannot both be correct, then it follows, as Pierce and Groothuis have asserted, that there is no middle ground. Either one position is fundamentally correct and the other is fundamentally wrong, or both positions are fundamentally wrong; but it cannot be the case that both positions are fundamentally correct. Therefore, no "middle position" that seeks to bring the "best of both" together is possible.[2] The nature of the debate, then, is clear: What is the one position of Scripture's teaching that most closely reflects God's own understanding, as presented in divinely inspired and authoritative Scripture, of the nature and roles of men and women?

Having established that the debate between complementarians and egalitarians is most centrally about what Scripture teaches, and having agreed also that there is no middle position possible, I now wish to suggest the following: Because the complementarian view, in one form or another, has been the church's long-

standing position and clear majority view throughout its entire history, and because the Bible's own statements, when taken *prima facie* and interpreted in the most natural ways of understanding their meanings, support the complementarian position, the burden of proof to the contrary rests squarely on the egalitarians. That is, both church history and natural interpretive meanings of biblical texts relating to roles of men and women would give the stronger starting position, as it were, to the complementarian view. Readers of *Discovering Biblical Equality*, then, should look carefully to see whether such a compelling case is offered that its view of "biblical equality" of male-female roles must replace the normative position that has prevailed previously. Certainly this is possible, to be sure. But unless we find such a compelling case, we simply should not desert Scripture's apparent meaning as understood throughout the history of the church.

As one reads *Discovering Biblical Equality*, one should keep in mind, particularly, the claim of the editors that biblical egalitarians simply do not "feel free to dispense with or underplay any aspect of sacred Scripture, since it is all equally God-breathed and profitable for all of life (2 Tim 3:15-17)" (14). Since they claim to uphold the full inspiration and authority of Scripture, this claim is important. And so, we should consider how well this claim is worked out in dealing with relevant passages from Scripture that pertain to the questions before us. Do these egalitarian writers uphold their stated commitment not to dispense with or underplay any aspect of sacred Scripture? Should this not be a question thoughtful readers would have in mind as they consider the argumentation throughout *Discovering Biblical Equality*? And if it is the case that some pertinent scriptural teaching is underplayed or dispensed with, does this not call into question whether this egalitarian proposal can possibly carry the weight necessary to supplant the church's historic complementarian view?

Consider with me one example where the thoughtful reader of *Discovering Biblical Equality* might wonder whether Scripture's teaching has been accounted for adequately. As one reads Paul's and Peter's admonitions that are directed specifically to husbands and wives, one notes that there is a particular imperative given to wives in each of such cases, regardless of the larger context. In each case, wives are told one thing, the same thing, in all four of these New Testament passages: They are told to "submit to" or "be subject to" or be "submissive to" their husbands. Here they are for the reader to see:[3]

> Wives, *submit to your own husbands*, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also *wives should submit in everything to their husbands* (Eph 5:22-24).
>
> *Wives, submit to your husbands*, as is fitting in the Lord (Col 3:18).
>
> Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working

> at home, kind, and *submissive to their own husbands*, that the word of God may not be reviled (Titus 2:3-5).
>
> Likewise, wives, *be subject to your own husbands*, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives—when they see your respectful and pure conduct. Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair, the wearing of gold, or the putting on of clothing—but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by *submitting to their husbands*, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening (1 Pet 3:1-6).

It would seem a simple and yet a highly significant observation to make, from these texts, that every single direct imperative and admonition to wives requires of them the same responsibility: Besides other things that are said to them, they are commanded in every case to submit to their husbands. The force of this point in the current debate is strong indeed, and it certainly is relevant to the question of whether the egalitarian position treats every aspect of Scripture fully and does not diminish or disregard any of it. The fact that four different New Testament letters contain this one common command to wives each time they are addressed specifically, and that both Paul and Peter share in common this same message and emphasis, and that the command is made to wives in different churches and different cultural settings, would incline one to conclude that this must be among the most important aspects of a wife's relationship to her husband. To miss this is to miss something highly significant about being a wife, as God intends it. And certainly, as Paul develops the point in Ephesians 5, the significance of the wife's submission can be understood more fully because God intends her submission to her husband to be a picture of the church's submission to Christ.

But can one rightly say that *Discovering Biblical Equality* fails to "dispense with or underplay" this aspect of sacred Scripture? So obvious yet forceful a point as this surely would not be overlooked or its significance unaccounted for in a book of this size, would it? I leave it to the reader to ask this question and many more like it: Is the clear meaning and force of Scripture explained and accounted for by the authors of this volume? And, do they make a case that would challenge the church's historic complementarian position? Because this debate is about what Scripture teaches, we pray that the position which most faithfully, clearly, compellingly, and accurately explains and defends that inspired teaching will be shown to be right. For the sake of the church, and for the glory of God, may the best man win! ■

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[1] John Piper and Wayne Grudem, eds., *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991), esp. xiii-xv.

[2] This is the fundamental flaw of Sarah Sumner's book, *Men and Women in the Church: Building a Consensus on Christian Leadership* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 2003). Sumner portrays her own position as constructing a consensus for and *via media* between these rival positions, but it is clear that her position is centrally and fundamentally egalitarian and only superficially complementarian. For another complementarian who likewise sees Sumner's proposal as thinly-veiled egalitarianism, see Dorothy Patterson, "Sarah Sumner's *Men and Women in the Church*: A Review Article," *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* 8, no.1 (Spring 2003): 39-50. Even Ron Pierce himself is puzzled just how to identify Sarah Sumner's position. In his chapter three that surveys "Contemporary Evangelicals for Gender Equality," he comments, "Sarah Sumner's *Men and Women in the Church* (2003) is a difficult work to place in the present survey. . . . [S]he attempts to avoid taking sides on the issue while seeking to encourage dialogue and build a consensus among evangelicals. While her goal is admirable, the reader is left somewhat in the dark as to the substance of and basis for her conclusions" (74).

[3] All citations are from the English Standard Version (all italics added).

Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood
JBMW 10/1 (Spring 2005) 12-16

"Equality with and without Innocence: Genesis 1-3" (Ch 4) by Richard S. Hess

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The fundamental biblical teaching on manhood and womanhood finds its fountainhead (like so many other key Christian doctrines) in the first three chapters of the Bible. Furthermore, the apostle Paul gives us the definitive, inspired, new covenant expositions and applications of this passage to the issue of male-female role relationships in the church in 1 Timothy 2-3, and in marriage and family in Ephesians 5. Naturally, then, Genesis 1-3 has been a key text in the ongoing debate between evangelical egalitarians and complementarians. In *Discovering Biblical Equality*, chapter four, "Equality with and without Innocence," Richard Hess, Old Testament Professor and husband of a Presbyterian Church (USA) minister, has the unenviable task of attempting to make a positive case for evangelical egalitarianism and to reply to the moving and pastoral exposition of this great passage by Ray Ortlund, Jr., found in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*.[1]

Hess begins well when he acknowledges that "Genesis 1-3 may contain more doctrinal teaching concerning humanity as male and female, as well as the state of the fallen world, than any other single text in the Bible" (79). But when he reaches his conclusion, there is precious little left to be learned from these chapters about biblical manhood and womanhood. He seems more interested in asserting what Genesis 1-3 does not say, than in making significant positive affirmations for our lives together as man and woman. This suggests that Genesis 1-3 is unfriendly ground for egalitarians, one on which they must simply try to hold their own, rather than make a positive case.

To be welcomed and applauded is Hess's affirmation that "Genesis 1-3 is a matter of God's revealed will for his people so that they might live in communion with him" (79). However, his attempt to discount the significance of Moses' use of *'adam* as his term for mankind is problematic for a robust embrace of the plenary verbal inspiration of Scripture.

Hess argues that since the "generic *'adam* was part of the West Semitic lexicon before Genesis 1-3 was revealed and written in the form in which it occurs . . . it is somewhat inaccurate to suggest that there was a conscious divine decision to use a masculine term to describe the human race" (80). Nonetheless, since the Bible makes it clear that every word of Scripture is given by inspiration (2 Tim 3:16) and that no prophetic word was ever given, nor any prophecy "ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (2 Pet 1:21), and since Paul tells the Thessalonians that he constantly thanked God "because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted *it* not *as* the word of men, but *for* what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe" (1 Thess 2:13), and since Jesus himself made biblical arguments that rested on the tense of just one word of Scripture, the Christian is going to take care to consider the significance of every single word of Scripture, out of reverence for God's word and out of devotion to our Lord. Thus, we are never wise simply to assume that the special terminology of Scripture is simply reflective of cultural linguistic norms, and without any further theological significance.

Hess also wants to aver that the relationality of humanity as male and female, though reflective of the nature of God, is not itself part of the image of God. He says that the text "does not explicitly identify this as part of the image of God that all people possess" (81). But this kind of reductionist exegesis cannot comport with Paul's exposition in Ephesians 5. This whole section of Hess's piece, though interesting, is hardly persuasive, and certainly fails to sustain the case that the image of God in man is to be restricted merely to the concept of dominion. His observations are suggestive,[2] but his deductions are arbitrary[3] and simply asserted—not proven, or even adequately argued.

Indeed, the demonstration of argument throughout the article is surprisingly sparse and can be summarized in seven points. (1) Hebrew has only two genders and thus there are no theological implications of the Hebrew use of the masculine in reference to mankind in general in Genesis 1-3, and therefore also no implications for male-female distinctions or distinct role relationships (79-80). (2) The doctrine of the image of God in man has nothing to say about male-female role relationships, only about dominion (80-82). (3) Genesis 1:26-28 does not have anything to say about male-female role relationship distinctions. It only affirms the equality of male and female (82; though this latter fact is asserted without any argumentation). (4) The creation order of male first, then female, does not indicate headship (83-86; despite the apostle Paul's explicit insistence to the contrary—more on that later). (5) The term "helper" in Genesis 2 in reference to the woman does not indicate role distinctions or male headship (86-87). (6) Adam's naming of the animals does not indicate his dominion over them, and so his naming of Eve does not indicate headship (87). (7) Male headship is a result of the Fall, but is not the ideal for husband-wife relations (89-90, 94-95).

Several points deserve special mention in this series of contentions. First, Hess is to be applauded for not pitting Genesis 1 and 2 against one another, as was the manner of the critics of old and some feminist scholars of late. Hess is on record denying this contradiction, and this is a cause for appreciation for

all those with a high view of Scripture (82).

Second, Hess's denial that the order of creation (male, then female) reveals anything about complementarity or headship does so only by ignoring any significance of Paul's exposition of Genesis 1-2 in 1 Timothy 2. Grant for a moment that Paul is only making an *ad hoc* argument there to the Ephesian church, speaking to a specific situation of abuse and without any implication for other cultural or ecclesial situations (a view to which I would strenuously object); even so, it is obvious that Paul is making this argument regarding the restriction of women from certain functions in the church (whatever its nature or extent) based on a deduction he makes from the order, the sequence of the creation of man and woman in Genesis 1-2. Paul may be (and has been) mocked for such an argument, but there is no use debating his meaning. It is crystal clear. Let me state the argument again in a minimalist way for the sake of illustration: According to Paul, certain women are to refrain and indeed to be restricted from certain activities in the Ephesian church because of the fact that God created Adam first, then Eve.[4] We may not like Paul's view of the meaning and significance of the creation order of male then female in Genesis 1-2, or his application of it. We may not accept that view and application, but that it is indeed Paul's view and application of Genesis 1-2 is incontrovertible. And because Christians understand that the New Testament is in many ways God's divinely inspired hermeneutical manual for the Old Testament, when a New Testament passage tells you what an Old Testament passage means, for an orthodox Christian that interpretation becomes a matter of dogma.

Third—and in connection with Hess's same contention that the creation order has no significance for headship and complementarianism—instead of engaging the unfriendly turf of a substantive wrestling with the implications of 1 Timothy 2, which he dismisses with the wave of a hand in one-half of a one-sentence paragraph, Hess spends two fruitless pages on primogeniture. It is a classic strategy of diversion. But even though he puts his eggs in that basket in attempting to deflect the force of the significance of male-female creation order as a telling argument against his own position, the very biblical stories he cites to defend his analysis of the question of primogeniture support the complementarian application of the arguments of Tom Schreiner, which Hess is trying to refute. For example, Hess says that there is no evidence of primogeniture in the patriarchal stories, since second and third sons sometimes end up with the blessings. But this completely misses the patently obvious point of the biblical narrative. In the stories of Ishmael and Isaac, Esau and Jacob, Joseph and his brothers, and Ephraim and Manasseh, the whole plot turns on a reversal of the expected, natural order of blessing because of God's gracious, sovereign, overruling choice. You are meant to expect one brother to be blessed because of primogeniture, and to be surprised and educated by his non-receipt of it, and his young sibling's corresponding reception of it. So, without some sort of primogeniture assumed, those passages, so charged with irony, twists, and turns are flattened out and one of their main points is utterly lost.

Fourth, Hess's insistence that "the text nowhere states that the man exercised authority over the animals by naming them" (87) is notably obtuse. How explicit does Moses have to be before this point is conceded? In Gen 1:26, God

explicitly gives man rule or dominion or stewardship authority over all animals. Scant verses later, in the parallel account in Gen 2:19-20, we come across Adam's naming of the animals. God makes them, then Adam names them—action of the Lord followed by the privilege-action of his steward and vice-regent. The significance of names and naming in ancient near-eastern cultures is well-known.[5] Indeed, even in our culture today, feminists, who wish to throw off the "oppression" of patriarchy in marriage, sometimes either do not take their husband's name, or simply add his to their own. The point is obvious—a woman who does this does not want to intimate some kind of "subordination" to her husband through the loss of her name and the corresponding replacement of it with her husband's. This is an indication of the ongoing way even our modern secular Anglo-American culture[6] perceives the significance of names for male-female role relationships in marriage, and is illustrative of the same principle beautifully and positively seen in Adam's naming of Eve (Gen 2:21-23). Note there again the identical pattern of the Lord making and Adam naming. Of course, it is this latter inference that Hess is attempting to avoid by his denial of Adam's authoritative stewardship being manifested in naming the animals. Naming is an act of leadership—a point so obvious as to require no argumentation whatsoever.

It will undoubtedly be disappointing to pre-committed egalitarian readers of *Discovering Biblical Equality* to discover an exposition of a text like Genesis 1-3 that is unable to generate any positive, constructive, exegetical or theological argumentation for the egalitarian position—especially considering the author's own admission that this is perhaps the most fertile text in the Bible regarding mankind as male and female.[7] Furthermore, the article's counter arguments to the classical, historic, Christian exposition of this text's teaching on manhood and womanhood amount to a series of undemonstrated assertions, accompanied by interesting but tangential observations with no direct, obvious (and certainly not conclusive) bearing on the debate. All the main complementarian points, adeptly set forth by Ray Ortlund in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, and by many other complemetarians elsewhere, remain untouched by this rejoinder. The fault does not lie with Hess's abilities, but with the inherent weakness of the position he is espousing. ■

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[1] Raymond C. Ortlund, Jr., "Male-Female Equality and Male Headship: Genesis 1-3," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991): 95-112.

[2] For instance, Hess says, "What then is the meaning of the terms *image (tselem)* and *likeness (demuth),* used here to describe the image of God? It is best illustrated in the practice of ancient Near Eastern kings of erecting or carving out images in order to represent their power and rulership over far-reaching areas of their empires. These represented the dominion of the ruler when the sovereign was not present in the region (see Dan 3:1)" (81). Now, as useful as that observation is as an illustration of the term/idea of image of God, it is a static illustration (the image is a thing), whereas those who understand the biblical concept of the image of God understand that it is dynamic (the image entails both constituent character and action).

[3] For instance, Hess asserts, "The only divine statement regarding the creation of *'adam* that can apply to the image of God is the command to have dominion over the whole earth" (81). Hess gives precious little basis for such a sweeping averment, given the tens of thousands of passages of discussion on this one topic in orthodox Christian theology for the last two millennia.

[4] Actually, the facts indicate a much broader argument by Paul. That Paul's proscription of Christian women teaching authoritatively in the church is normative and universal, and not merely a limited, *ad hoc* response to a specific case of abuse, is seen by the following: (1) He is speaking generically in 1 Tim 2:8-15 about what he wants men as a class, and women as a class to do; (2) he speaks in 1 Tim 2:11-12 of "a woman" using the singular in order to refer to women as a class, and without specifying "certain" women who

were out of accord with his teaching and practice; and (3) he emphasizes in 1 Tim 3:14-15 that his teaching is normative for all the churches: "I am writing these things to you . . . so that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God." This is precisely what Paul does in 1 Cor 14:34-38. I present the minimalist argument above to show that the egalitarian author does not escape the horns of the dilemma regarding Paul's appeal to the creation order, simply by arguing that Paul's instruction about women teaching and holding authority was culture bound or situational. Even if it were, Paul is basing his argument on something intrinsic to the creation order. It should also be noted that Paul's proscription is not merely official, but functional. That is, he does not say that women cannot have the *title* or *office* but they can exercise the *function* of an elder. He says instead that women cannot exercise the function of an elder, because of the creation order.

[5] "Giving a name to anyone or anything was tantamount to owning or controlling it (Gen. 1:5, 8, 10, 2:19-20; II Sam. 12:28)" (Ronald Youngblood, "Names in Bible Times, Significance of," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter Elwell [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984], 750). Thus, in the case of Adam naming the woman (as he had named the animals and as God himself had named the light, the heavens, the earth, and the seas), the task for the complementarian preacher is simultaneously to articulate the witness of the text to loving male spiritual headship in marriage and the church, and also to prevent abuse of the implications and application of this manifestation of male headship. However, it is vain to deny that Adam's naming of Eve is a manifestation of male headship in the pristine creation order.

[6] I am well aware of the fact that numerous contemporary cultures handle naming and marriage quite differently than Anglo-Americans. Very close to home, for instance, is the Hispanic culture that has a very different practice, but not on feminist grounds. My point here is simply illustrative of the fact that even contemporary cultures grasp the point that naming and "power" are connected. I hasten to note that one of the beauties of the Christian complementarian view is that the husband's "power," his spiritual authority and leadership responsibility, must always be exercised in the best interests of his wife and family. Thus self-denial and tangible love constantly attend and constrain all husbandly authority in marriage.

[7] Indeed, throughout the article Hess simply assumes "equality" is a legitimate descriptive and explanatory category for male and female in Genesis 1-3, without once making a case for it, or even defining "equality."

SPRING 2005
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"Praying and Prophesying in the Assemblies: I Corinthians 11:2-16" (Ch 8) by Gordon D. Fee

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Introduction

Gordon Fee has written an outstanding commentary on 1 Corinthians, and hence he is a natural choice for this article on 1 Cor 11:2-16 in *Discovering Biblical Equality*. He divides his article into an introduction, an analysis of the presenting issue in Corinth, an overview of Paul's response, the matter of women praying and prophesying, the meaning of the term "head," and the meaning of 1 Cor 11:10. In this review I will follow Fee's outline in responding to him.[1]

Fee emphasizes the difficulty of the text in the introduction and in his analysis of the presenting issue, and argues that Paul's response to it is "generally relaxed" (142) and that Paul is not scolding the Corinthians. No one disputes that the text is complicated, and there are some dimensions of the text that will always elude certainty (such as the reference to angels in v. 10). Nevertheless, the burden of the text may still be discerned by readers today, even if we cannot solve every question. Furthermore, Fee overstates the relaxed nature of Paul's response, for the language of shame and honor in the text would have spoken powerfully to the culture of Paul's day and would underscore the seriousness of his admonitions. Moreover, as we shall see, Fee underemphasizes the importance of v. 3 in the Pauline argument. On the other hand, Fee rightly suggests that the problem in the text probably relates mainly to the women, rather than to both men and women (contrary to Collins and Thiselton), and that the verses seem to relate to men and women in general rather than being limited to husbands and wives. Furthermore, he also correctly maintains that determining whether the cultural practice was some kind of head covering or related to the hairstyle of women is not crucial either for unpacking the meaning of the text or for discerning its contemporary application.

Fee's Overview of the Text

In Fee's overview of the passage, he argues that a woman who prays and

prophesies without proper adornment brings shame on both herself and on man as the head. He claims that the argument in v. 3 does "not control the whole passage" and is abandoned as Paul continues his argument (146). He quickly sketches in the argument of the rest of the passage, and concludes that the text centers on issues of honor and shame. One of the main weaknesses of Fee's article surfaces here, for he devotes so much attention on the meaning of "head" and the disputed 1 Cor 11:10 that little space is left for an explanation of the text as a whole. Fee's essay does not provide a clear and lucid explanation of the flow of the argument in the text. Nor is he particularly clear as to the main point of the text and its relevance for today. I think a reader who came to Fee's essay desiring an overview of the passage would finish the article feeling frustrated, for he concentrates on a few issues and does not explicate as clearly the function and meaning of the entire unit. Fee's main point seems to be that the text supports distinctions between the sexes during the present evil, but in my judgment he strays from what the text teaches in particular as to how these distinctions are to be preserved.

Nor is he convincing in minimizing the force of 1 Cor 11:3 in the text as a whole, for the argument of the passage functions as follows. The main point of the verses is found in vv. 4-6, v. 10a, and vv. 13-15, viz., Paul wants the women to adorn themselves in a proper way. Paul gives reasons for the admonition in v. 3, vv. 7-9, v. 10b, and v. 16. Verses 11-12 qualify the argument, so that the readers will not draw the false conclusions that women are inferior to men or that men can dispense with women. Even though women have a different role from men, they are equal to men in dignity, essence, and value. What is crucial to see here (contrary to Fee) is that the reason given in v. 3 and the reasons posited in vv. 7-9 are complementary, so that it is not as if Paul abandons the argument from headship as he continues his explanation. Indeed, vv. 7-9 clarify that the role difference between men and women is *fundamental* to Paul's entire argument, for it hails from the created order where the Lord clarified that women were created from men and for the sake of men. Fee's very sketchy exegesis of vv. 8-9 blurs this point, so that the reader of his essay fails to see that Paul locates the role differences between men and women in the created order. The argument from creation is a transcultural argument, for it appeals to God's intended pattern for human beings before the fall into sin. The importance of an argument from creation is confirmed when we realize that Paul's argument against homosexuality also appeals to creation (Rom 1:26-27), as does Jesus' argument against divorce (Matt 19:3-12 par.).

Prayer and Prophecy

Fee proceeds to discuss women praying and prophesying. He rightly claims that women should be able to pray and prophesy in the assembly, but his discussion is abstracted from the argument and not linked with the remainder of the text in a meaningful way. He imports 1 Corinthians 12-14 into the argument here, so that he wrongly focuses on speaking in tongues in discussing prayer. Furthermore, he indiscriminately lumps together prophesying and teaching, claiming that prayer and prophecy represent every form of ministry, so that we can conclude from this text that women are permitted to teach men as well. Fee fails to convince here, for Paul regularly distinguishes between the gifts (Rom 12:6-7; 1 Cor 12:28-29; Eph 4:11), and

enjoins elsewhere that women are not to teach or exercise authority over men (1 Tim 2:11-12). Prophecy is not the same gift as teaching, for the latter represents the transmission of tradition or Scripture which involves preparation before delivery. Prophecy, on the other hand, is the transmission of spontaneous revelations from God (1 Cor 14:29-33). This is confirmed by the prophetic ministry of Agabus who received spontaneous revelations from God about the famine in Jerusalem and Paul's imprisonment (Acts 11:27-28; 21:10-11). His prophecies were not prepared messages, but revelations that came from the Lord that he conveyed to God's people.

Moreover, when women prayed or prophesied in the church, they were to do so with a demeanor that was submissive to male leadership. Such a reading explains why Paul draws attention to male headship over women before tackling the issue of adornment. What Paul emphasizes in 1 Corinthians is that women should pray and prophesy with proper adornment, for such adornment signified in Paul's cultural setting that the women prayed and prophesied in a way that was submissive to male leadership in the church. I have argued elsewhere that the transcendent principle in the passage is not how women adorn themselves, for the message sent by external adornment varies from culture to culture. The principle is that women are to pray and prophesy in such a way that they do not subvert male authority in the church. Fee says that the text is not about church order, and clearly it is not a detailed manual on such, but it does relate to how women are to conduct themselves in the gathered assembly, so in that sense church order is in view.

Headship

Fee also includes a long section on "head" (*kephalē*), which is clearly a crucial term in the passage. He argues that the term means "source" rather than "authority over" in 1 Cor 11:3. His discussion here is quite unsatisfying and unpersuasive. He does not interact at all with the numerous articles by Wayne Grudem on this term or the careful study of Joseph Fitzmyer.[2] He is correct, in my opinion, in suggesting that the term may mean "source" in Eph 4:15 and Col 2:19,[3] but he underestimates the many texts in which the term means "authority over," and fails to see that this is the most common metaphorical meaning of the term. He does acknowledge that "head" refers to authority in Eph 1:22 and Col 2:10, but claims that such is not decisive for texts in which Christ is said to be the head of the church, since in both Ephesians and Colossians the emphasis is on Christ's headship over evil powers. Fee rightly remarks that Christ's headship is "*for the sake of* the church" (154, his italics). But he fails to see that the text also teaches Christ's authority *over the church,* for Paul emphasizes here that Christ is the "head over *all things"* (Eph 1:22), and this surely includes the church. Moreover, Christ is specifically said to be "the head of the church" in Eph 5:23, and as we shall see below the meaning in that context is clearly "authority over." In addition, the context of Col 1:18 also demonstrates that Jesus' headship over the church emphasizes his sovereign rule over the church, for the key themes in Col 1:15-20 are Christ's supremacy and lordship over both creation and the church.

Fee insists that when the husband is called the head of the wife in Eph 5:23 this means that the husband is the source for the wife's material sustenance. But

nothing is said about material support elsewhere in this text, and the focus is on Christ's spiritual provision for his people, so it seems like a leap to see a reference to material support provided by the husband here. Even more important, Fee fails to examine the context in which the term "head" is used in Ephesians 5. Note the argument in Eph 5:22-24, "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands" (ESV). Wives are to *submit* to husbands *because* they are the head. So too, the church submits to Jesus Christ because he is her head. The emphasis on submission here plainly indicates that Paul is stressing both the husbands' authority over their wives and Christ's authority over the church. Context must determine how words are used, and the collocation of the words "submit" and "head" indicates that "head" refers to authority here, both when Paul speaks of the husband and of Christ. Fee abandons the context, which is the most crucial consideration in defining the meaning of a word, and simply inserts his preferred notion "source" in this instance.

Furthermore, even if the word "head" always means "source" (which is clearly not the case), the notion of authority is still implied in Pauline literature. If wives are to submit to husbands because husbands are their source, then husbands as the source also exercise authority over wives since they are to submit to their source! Such a notion is hardly surprising in the biblical world where primogeniture was commonly observed. Similarly, fathers and mothers are the source of their children, and by virtue of such serve as the authority over their children. It is quite surprising that egalitarians fail to see that simply saying that the word means "source" does not verify their case regarding male and female roles. Fee also makes the mistake of saying that the notion that God is the head of Christ is "heterodox." He betrays here a remarkably weak understanding of church history since orthodox theologians from the time of the early fathers, the Reformers, and even up to our own day have argued for differences between the economic and immanent Trinity, without suggesting for a moment that Christ had lesser dignity, worth, or value than the Father.[4] It is regrettable that this basic factual error is repeated so often by egalitarians, so that they suggest that those who disagree with them are heterodox. If they were more conversant with church history and systematic theology, such a mistake could be avoided.

1 Corinthians 11:10

The last part of Fee's article consists of a discussion of the notoriously difficult 1 Cor 11:10. Fee argues that Paul's wording actually reflects in part the view of the women in Corinth who believed in their own angelic status, so that they were convinced that they were beyond the gender distinctions of the present evil age. Paul then qualifies their views with his commentary in vv. 11-12. The women, according to Fee, had fallen prey to over-realized eschatology, and thought they lived in the age to come because they spoke in angelic tongues (1 Cor 13:1). Fee's explanation is certainly ingenious, but it stumbles right out of the blocks, for there is no evidence that Paul's wording in v. 10 should be construed as citation or paraphrase of the Corinthian women. What we have here are clearly Paul's own words regarding what the women should do. He commands them

to have a sign of authority on their head because of the angels. Even though many scholars argue that the expression cannot have a passive meaning, such a meaning is clearly the most natural in context. It explains well the qualification that immediately follows in vv. 11-12, for such a qualification which emphasizes the equality between men and women would be strange if Paul were already asserting such in v. 10. To say that Paul requires the women to have a sign of authority on their head also fits with the passage as a whole where Paul commands the women to be adorned properly. It seems that some of the earliest interpreters of the text shared the same view, for they substituted the term "veil" (*kalumma*) instead of "authority." Though this reading is clearly secondary, it demonstrates that the earliest interpreters understood Paul in a way that accords with what is argued here. The reference to the angels is difficult and not decisive in any case for the main point of the passage. It seems that the view that Paul directs the women to have authority on their heads because angels serve as the guardians of Christian worship is still the most likely.

Conclusion

Gordon Fee is one of the outstanding NT scholars among evangelicals of this generation. Nevertheless, his exegesis of 1 Cor 11:2 -16 does not prove to be convincing. His explanation of the text does not provide a clear and satisfying explanation of the flow of the argument of the entire passage. He blurs the meaning of prophecy so that it becomes indistinguishable from teaching, but these are two different spiritual gifts. He argues that the word "head" means "source," but fails to account for the evidence supporting authority. Finally, he suggests an interpretation of 1 Cor 11:10 that is quite supportive of the meaning "authority over" and strays from the natural reading of the verse. A more natural reading of the passage is that Paul desires the women to adorn themselves properly because their adornment in the cultural world of the first century signaled whether they were submissive to male leadership in the gathered assembly. What applies to the church today is not the exact cultural practice commanded (whether Paul speaks of a veil, shawl, or hairstyle). It is the principle that women should conduct themselves in public worship with a demeanor that affirms and supports male leadership in the church. Women are encouraged to pray and prophesy in the assembly, and I understand the nearest equivalence to prophesy today to be the reading of Scripture. And yet they are not to engage in these activities in such a way that they arrogate male leadership. Women honor men and avoid shame if they conduct themselves as women in the gathered assembly, and that means that they behave in such a way that the role distinctions rooted in the created order are preserved. ■

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[1] For a more detailed explanation of my own understanding of these verses, see Thomas R. Schreiner, "Head Coverings, Prophecies and the Trinity: 1 Corinthians 11:2-16," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism,* ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991), 124-39, 485-90.

[2] See Wayne Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism & Biblical Truth: An Analysis of More Than 100 Disputed Questions* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2004), 544-99; Joseph Fitzmyer, "Another Look at *Kephalē* in 1 Corinthians 11:3," *New Testament Studies* 35 (1989): 503-11.

[3] Fee is convinced that the term means "source" in these texts. I am suggesting, on the other hand, that the term *may* have this meaning in these texts.

[4] For helpful studies on this matter, see Robert Letham, "The Man-Woman Debate: Theological Comment," *Westminster Theological Journal* 52 (1990): 65-78; Steven D. Kovach and Peter R. Schemm, Jr., "A Defense of the Doctrine of the Eternal Subordination of the Son," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 42 (1999): 461-76.

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"Learning in the Assemblies: I Corinthians 14:34-35" (Ch 9) by Craig S. Keener

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Craig Keener, in "Learning in the Assemblies: 1 Corinthians 14:34-35," attempts to explain the meaning of Paul's instruction for women to "remain silent" from an egalitarian perspective. Keener admits that the passage is difficult and that it has been read "from various angles" by scholars (171).

He is convinced that "most likely the passage addresses disruptive questions in an environment where silence was expected of new learners—which most women were." The prohibition "also addresses a broader social context in which women were expected not to speak much with men to whom they were not related, as a matter or propriety." By issuing such restrictions for pedagogical and cultural reasons, "Paul thus upholds church order and avoids appearances of social impropriety; he also supports learning before speaking." Keener concludes: "None of these principles prohibit women in very different cultural settings from speaking God's word" (171).

I will argue here that Keener is correct to recognize the relationship between church order and Paul's statements in 1 Cor 14:34-35. Likewise, Keener is correct that Paul surely does not advocate the complete silence of women in the assembly. I will also argue, however, that Keener misunderstands both why Paul offers this prohibition and how one should understand the significance of the prohibition in relation to various cultural settings. That is, Keener is mistaken both about the apostle's reasoning and his intention.

Keener's reading of 1 Cor 14:34-35 suffers logical, hermeneutical, and theological problems. After discussing flaws at these three levels, I will suggest a better way of understanding Paul's reasoning and intention.

The Logical Problem

Keener begins his essay by noting that "very few churches today take I Corinthians 14:34-35 to mean all that it could possibly mean" (161). By this he means that a "face-value reading" of the

text implies "silence as a sign of women's subordination" (161). Having dismissed such a possible reading out of hand, he concludes, "Thus almost everyone has a problem with pressing this text literally, and interpreters must explain the divergence between what it states and what they believe it means" (161). At this point Keener has already concluded that (1) the text states that women must be silent due to some principle of subordination, and (2) the text must obviously mean something other than what it actually says.

I will not pursue the question of whether this is even the proper way of stating the interpretive problem. I think that it is not, and I think Keener understands this, even if he does not articulate it clearly. More troubling are two logical problems that underlie Keener's argument.

Keener's belief that the text must mean something other than "what it states" appears to rest on an argument, articulated on p. 163 of the essay, which can be stated in the following form:

> (1) Judging prophecy is a task assigned to all who prophesy (1 Cor 14:29).
> (2) Women can prophesy (1 Cor 11:5).
> (3) Therefore, women can judge prophets.

Premise one, however, is faulty as it assumes that in 14:29 "the others" must refer to all prophets without limitation. Yet, vv. 34-35 may actually indicate that "the others" should be understood, in context, as "male prophets." But this is the very position against which Keener is arguing, one which he claims "has gained a wide hearing": "that Paul simply prohibits women from judging prophecy . . ."[1] So, Keener, assuming this position to be unpersuasive, assumes his conclusion (that Paul cannot mean that women are prohibited from judging the prophets) in his premise (judging prophecy is a task assigned to all who prophesy). This leap of logic is troubling.

The second logical problem appears in the same paragraph as the first (163). Keener here arrives at two conclusions: (1) It is difficult to prohibit anyone from Bible teaching or pastoral ministry without also prohibiting them from prophecy or prayer; and (2) 1 Cor 14:34-35 is a difficult passage to interpret. He arrives at these conclusions in the following manner:

> (1) Nothing in vv. 34-35 specifies "judging prophets."
> (2) The text does not suggest that "judging prophets" demonstrates a higher degree of authority than prophesying itself.
> (3) Many nonegalitarians support the "prohibition of judging prophets" interpretation of vv. 34-35.
> (4) Therefore, we see "how difficult it is to target Bible teaching or pastoral ministry without eliminating prophecy or prayer."
> (5) And, furthermore, this "ultimately suggests that this is a difficult text for all modern interpreters, including non-egalitarians."

Premises 1 and 2, again, assume a conclusion that has not been demonstrated by Keener. Premise 3 also has not been demonstrated by Keener, but even if it were, its bearing on this argument is lost on me. Still, for the sake of argument, I am willing to grant Keener's assertions

in these premises. But if I do, I do not see how either of his conclusions follows from these premises. The second conclusion, that the text is difficult, may or may not be true. If Keener means to say we should not place too much weight on a difficult passage, that may be fair enough as a general theological principle. It is the first conclusion, though, that is most problematic. I fail to understand how exactly this conclusion obtains from the three premises provided by Keener. This is a *non sequitur*.

The central difficulty with Keener's approach is that, very simply, he assumes that 1 Cor 14:34-35 says one thing but means another, and that the text surely cannot mean what complementarians[2] argue it means. Having drawn this conclusion Keener sets out to explain exactly what kind of speech is prohibited by Paul, and to note the connection between this kind of speech and "shame."[3] While the logical problems with Keener's argument are apparent, there remain further problems in his essay.

The Hermeneutical Problem

Keener's essay also suffers from a hermeneutical problem—a problem, I should note, that is not unique to the complementarian/egalitarian debate. The problem involves confusion about the role of extratextual sources in relation to contextual and canonical considerations in biblical interpretation. The problem is that Keener unduly emphasizes extratextual sources over biblical sources such that he overlooks crucial contextual and canonical clues that lead to a proper understanding of 1 Cor 14:34-35.

Extratextual Considerations

Keener states, "The first task of the reader of Scripture is the exegetical one" (164). To this end Keener considers the context of 1 Cor 14:34-35 to some extent, including citations of texts (e.g., two citations from Romans) that in his opinion bear on the text in 1 Corinthians 14. Still, primary weight is given by Keener to the way in which "questions" function in Jewish and ancient Mediterranean culture (165-170). That is, the bulk of his article focuses on texts external to the Scriptures in order to interpret 1 Cor 14:34-35. In the end it is Keener's conclusion, on the basis of these extratextual sources, that women's public speech sometimes occasioned shame and, therefore, this is most likely the point that Paul makes in 1 Cor 14:35.

Since this is a cultural issue particular to Corinth, or to a culture of days gone by, one should not assume that the prohibition of speech in the assembly by women applies in a different cultural context today. As a result, the interpretive key for Keener is found outside the text of Scripture.

Contextual Considerations

Keener does not properly consider the context of 1 Cor 14:34-35. By this I mean that (1) He does not give enough attention to the entirety of the 1 Corinthians letter; and (2) he does not give enough attention to the entirety of Paul's writings. Keener's interpretation does include some consideration of the context of 1 Corinthians and other Pauline epistles. This occurs, however, after he establishes the interpretive control related to the cause of "shame" in the cultural context. Keener does not attempt to identify the cause of "shame" from the text of 1 Corinthians or in the broader context of Paul's writings, or even in a more canonical sense. Rather he locates his understanding of the concept "shame" in various ancient documents (165ff.). Even when he (correctly) turns to the text of

1 Corinthians to identify "an additional problem," he draws his understanding of that problem from extratextual sources (e.g., Plutarch) (168).

He commits a similar error with respect to the identification of "law" in v. 34. He suggests that "law" must refer to the Jewish practice of training boys in the Torah, something not afforded to girls. For Keener this is further evidence that the problem in Corinth proceeds from the shame associated with unlearned ladies asking questions in the public assembly.[4]

My point here is simple: In his quest to understand the context of the Scriptures, Keener spends less time considering the biblical context and more time appealing to extratextual sources. And when he does consider contextual issues, his logically suspect assumptions lead him to draw mistaken conclusions about the significance of contextual matters.[5] In so doing, Keener misses important textual clues that could make this "difficult text" understandable.

Canonical Considerations

Similar to the neglect of proper contextual considerations, Keener neglects proper canonical considerations in his essay. I believe that were Keener to pay better attention to the canon of Scripture he might discover help for the supposed interpretive conundrum he identifies in 1 Cor 14:34-35.

For example, Keener dismisses the notion that 1 Cor 14:34-35 might be connected to the prohibitions of 1 Tim 2:11-12 because "the Corinthians could not simply flip in their Bible to 1 Timothy (which had not been written yet) to see what Paul meant . . ." (163). True enough that the Corinthians did not likely possess a copy of 1 Timothy. But were they ignorant of the teachings of Genesis upon which Paul bases the prohibitions in 1 Tim 2:11-12? Were they unfamiliar with such a reading of the Torah?

Later in the article, Keener, referring to Plutarch's understanding of a wife's ability to learn, states, "Happily, Paul's concern for women's private tutoring does not cite such grounds" (171). Yes, happily. But Keener does not actually identify the basis of Paul's concern for the women or the church in Corinth. Because he does not adequately make canonical considerations, Keener misses the connection between the reference to the Torah in 1 Cor 14:34 and the prohibitions of 1 Tim 2:11-12, which clearly are rooted in the Law.[6] When Keener does make a canonical consideration, he notes that interpreters who see the connection with the Pentateuch are not agreed upon where in the Law to make that connection. He thinks that Gen 3:16 might be an option, which is a reference "to the verdict at the Fall." He will not consider, again due to his presuppositions, that there could be an appeal to a creation order that predates the Fall.

Conclusion of Hermeneutical Problem

Keener is aware that he is susceptible to criticism because of the manner in which he allows extratextual considerations to function in relation to contextual and canonical considerations: "Some readers today reject any interpretation of a passage that requires us to take that particular situation into account" (164). He then suggests that "such readers are never consistent," since they do not "provide offerings for the Jerusalem church every Sunday" or "require head coverings or holy kisses . . ." (164). His concern, rightly, is a logical one: "We cannot simply cite the present passage and claim that it ap-

plies to all situations without begging the question" (164).

Again, though, Keener makes incorrect assumptions. First, he assumes that anyone who criticizes such extratextual dependence necessarily believes that everything in the Bible must apply to all situations. But there is no logical or biblical warrant to assume this. Second, he wrongly assumes that one's understanding of "context" comes primarily from outside the text rather than within the textual context. His view, to me, seems inconsistent with an historical evangelical doctrine of Scripture.[7]

The Theological Problem

I wish to identify the central theological problem in Keener's proposal, located in his misunderstanding about the nature of male/female relationships and the bearing such relationships have on order in the Christian assembly. Further, I believe clarification about this issue should help to provide a response to Keener's view of the "two things" that "are absolutely central to a proper understanding of this passage" (164).

Keener's main theological problem is his failure to grasp properly the nature of submission and the husband/wife relationship in general. He has not adequately considered that there may be, rooted in the creation order described in Genesis 1-2, an anthropological order that grounds the kinds of prohibition found in 1 Cor 14:34-35 (and 1 Tim 2:11-12, for that matter). As a result, when Keener identifies the "two things" that "are absolutely central to a proper understanding of this passage" (164-165), he does not consider the historical, orthodox understanding of male/female role relationships and the order that obtains in the church and home from observing these biblical teachings as a possible answer to the questions he sees raised in 1 Cor 14:34-35.

Instead, Keener suggests that Paul's appeal to the law allows rather than mandates the silencing of women at Corinth (170). In this instance, on Keener's reading, God did not challenge this aspect of the "Greco-Roman patriarchalism of Paul's day" (170). In Keener's view we should not continue such prohibitions as the one found in 1 Cor 14:34-35 "any more than we would maintain slavery today (e.g., Eph 6:5-9)" (170). Such a comparison (between complementarianism and slavery) betrays, again, Keener's failure to see a critical point, one "absolutely central," I would suggest, "to a proper understanding of this passage." That is, Paul's prohibition in 1 Cor 14:34-35 is rooted in "the Law," not in "Greco-Roman patriachalism."[8] Likewise, Paul's prohibition in 1 Tim 2:11-12 is rooted in the Law, as Paul appeals to the anthropological creation order indicated in the opening chapters of Genesis.[9] Slavery, however, is not rooted in the creation order.[10] While the appearance of both the relationships between husband and wives and between slaves and masters are similarly occasions for Christians to demonstrate the biblical principle of godly submission, the basis for these relationships is dissimilar. The analogy Keener draws with slavery may be a useful rhetorical device, but it is not a compelling biblical or theological argument.

Further, because Keener does not recognize the reality of anthropological order in male/female relationships, he does not fully appreciate the manner in which Paul's prohibition in 1 Cor 14:34-35 promotes order in the church that is consistent with order in creation and that appropriately reflects the nature of the God who created and sustains

this orderly world.[11] The reason that it is "shameful" for the women to speak in this context is because if the female prophets judge the male prophets, they will bring confusion about the creation order of relationships in the congregation.

Keener is careful to explain the way in which his reading of 1 Cor 14:34-35 takes account of the prohibition of asking with the purpose of learning. Yet "to learn" (*mathein*) in v. 35 does not necessarily indicate ignorance on the part of these women. That is, learning is not always a sign that the one learning is ignorant (e.g., Acts 23:27; Gal 3:2; *Didache* 11-12). It may be that the "learning" done by prophets when judging other prophets is a form of examination by which the prophets learn more precisely what a particular prophet is saying so as either to affirm or reject a prophecy. If this is the case, then Paul is likely instructing female prophets to raise questions about prophecies by males in the assembly with their husbands, who in turn can raise the questions in the assembly, or with male prophets, so as not to violate order in the congregation.

Conclusion

Paul's intention in 1 Cor 14:34-35 is to offer a prohibition (women prophets should not judge male prophets), based on a properly contextual and canonical reading of Scripture, in order to preserve order in God's church so that the hortatory and kerygmatic[12] functions of the church will be properly realized. Unlike Keener, I take 1 Cor 14:34-35 to mean what it says.

Paul's reasoning is that there is a creation order than governs male/female relationships in the home and congregation. That order functions as a general theological principle, seen in his instructions about husband/wife relationships (for example, 1 Corinthians 11; Ephesians 5). Moreover, that order functions as a particular ecclesiological principle, seen in Paul's instructions to Timothy (1 Timothy), where Paul reminds Timothy of the "gospel order" (1 Tim 1:4) associated with the "stewardship (*oikonomia*) of God that is by faith," as well as in the call for "order" in 1 Corinthians 14. Contrary to Keener, I see no logical reason why Paul cannot permit women to pray and prophecy and then prohibit them from judging male prophets or teaching men in the congregation. It is apparent that the former activities do not violate the principle of "order" while the latter activities do. Scripture allows the former and forbids the latter.

Keener assures us that 1 Cor 14:34-35 is difficult to interpret. But perhaps these verses are not as difficult as he suggests. Understanding the prohibition in 1 Cor 14:34-35 as a means to maintain ecclesiological order that reflects the creation order and the nature of God himself makes contextual, canonical, and theological sense. If one does not reject out of hand the historically orthodox position on male/female relationships in the home and church,[13] understanding the meaning of 1 Cor 14:34-35 may not be so difficult after all. ■

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[1] He notes, e.g., complementarian scholars D. A. Carson and James B. Hurley, as well as egalitarian scholar Walter Liefeld, as proponents of this view.

[2] Keener's term is "nonegalitarians," an attempt to employ the term "complementarian" for use by egalitarians, as seen in the subtitle of the book.

[3] He refers here to the connection between the women's speech and shame in 1 Cor 14:35.

[4] Such arguments do raise an interesting question. If one grants that central to Paul's concern about the maintenance of ecclesial order is the prohibition of the "unlearned" from asking questions, it is curious that, in a day when there were distinctions in the quality of education even among males, Paul would single out women to silence. Why would he not simply tell

the "unlearned" to remain silent? I grant that this too would be an incidence of employing extratextual evidence, but it occurs to me that if one relies upon extratextual evidence in the way Keener does, this is a legitimate question.

[5] On p. 168 Keener does consider the significance of other Pauline texts that refer to women's roles. He references Rom 16:1-2; 1 Cor 11:5; and Phil 4:2-3. Keener's view is that Paul takes different approaches to the question of women's roles "for strategic reasons." Because of his faulty presuppositions about women's roles and his reliance on extrabiblical sources, he does not consider that there may actually be a larger pattern of scriptural teaching that, understood contextually in the Pauline corpus, actually limits the activity of women in the assembly as a matter of fundamental biblical principle. Thus, while he appears to make contextual considerations, he in fact does not, since he allows the biblical texts to be controlled by sources outside the canon of Scripture.

[6] For example, the first explanation offered by Paul for the prohibition from teaching and exercising authority over men is that "Adam was formed first, then Eve." Whatever one may think of Paul's exegesis or reasoning, it is apparent that this is an appeal to Genesis 1-2.

[7] I fully recognize, as I have already stated, that this problem is not unique to Keener or egalitarians. This is, I believe, a critical hermeneutical mistake present in much evangelical hermeneutics. My chief concern on this point is to keep our hermeneutics consistent with our doctrine of Scripture, particularly pertaining to the doctrines of inspiration, sufficiency, and clarity.

[8] I would not object, however, to the use of "biblical patriarchalism" to refer to this position.

[9] For explanations of the function of the Law in the ordering of male/female relationships in 1 Timothy 2, see George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 142-43; Douglas Moo, "What Does it Mean Not to Teach or Have Authority Over Men? 1 Timothy 2:11-15" in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991), 188-91; Thomas R. Schreiner, "An Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9-15: A Dialogue with Scholarship" in *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9-15,* ed., Andreas J. Köstenberger, Thomas R. Schreiner, and H. Scott Baldwin (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 134-40. On the use of "law" in 1 Cor 14:34 and its relation to creation order see Anthony Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 1153-55.

[10] It is notable that the instruction to wives and husbands in Eph 5:22ff. is given with reference to Genesis 2:24 (see Eph 5:31), and the instruction to children in Eph 6:1-3 is given with reference to Exod 20:12. But the instructions to masters and slaves do not have such a basis in the Law. It is true that this raises a question about the nature of the command to fathers in 6:4, but with reference to Keener's comparison between the prohibitions in 1 Cor 14:34-35 and slavery, the point remains that the former is rooted explicitly in the Law and the latter is not.

[11] One should note the way in which the judgments of prophets and the orderly conduct of worship in the assembly are rooted in theology proper. Paul gives these instructions and insists on their observance because "God is not a God of confusion, but of peace" (1 Cor 14:33). The silence of women prophets with reference to the judging of other prophets, which surely included males, is given by Paul to maintain order and peace in the congregation, which is reflective of the nature of the God worshiped and served by the Corinthian congregation. That conducting worship "decently and in order" includes the prohibition of women judging male prophets is, then, not at all surprising.

[12] The hortatory function involves edification of the body of Christ, and the kerygmatic function involves communication of the gospel, including communication to the "outsiders" and "unfaithful" (1 Cor 14:16, 23) that Paul assumes will be present in the Corinthian assembly.

[13] By this I mean the typical complementarian position that recognizes male headship in the home and church with a complementary role played by wives toward husbands, and women toward men in the congregation.

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"Male and Female in the New Creation: Galatians 3:26-29" (Ch 10) by Gordon D. Fee

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The thesis of Gordon Fee's discussion of Gal 3:26-29 which focuses on verse 28—"there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus"—may be briefly summarized as follows: (1) This text represents the new order among God's people in the new creation "in Christ" and as such disallows the significance of structures and roles in relation to the pairs mentioned; (2) thus "to give continuing *significance* to a male-authority viewpoint for men and women, whether at home or in the church, is to reject the new creation in favor of the norms of a fallen world" (185).

As an introduction to the actual discussion of this text, Fee spends considerable space attempting to show that the central issue of the book of Galatians is not the traditional question of "whether people are justified by faith or by works" (173), but rather the issue of "who constitute the people of God in the new creation" (174). In other words, the "driving issue is not first of all soteriology but ecclesiology" (174). After all, Fee says, "those involved in the struggle in Galatia are already 'saved'" (176).

Fee asserts that the real issue of Galatians is "Gentile inclusion in the people of God" (174). Can they "get in on the promise to Abraham...without also taking on Jewish identity" (174)? The discussion of justification by faith and freedom from the law in Gal 3:1-4:7 "focuses on the place of the Gentiles in God's new economy" (175). Similarly, the allegory of the bondwoman and freewoman and their children in 4:21-31, contrasting bondage under law and freedom in Christ through the Sprit (4:21-31), "has to do with Gentile inclusion" (176, n. 10).

In this reviewer's opinion, this question of the nature of the Galatian problem is not central to the topic of the chapter, which is the meaning and significance of 3:28 for gender relations in Christ. But a few comments in response to Fee's evidence for seeing it more an ecclesiological issue rather

than soteriological may be noted. As for the argument that those involved in the struggle are already saved, it is true that the apostle's opening address assumes his readers to be professing believers (Gal 1:3-4). But his theological opponents are not so much these believers in general, but rather a group of Jewish believers who in Paul's mind were attempting to lead the church away from the truth of the gospel—adversaries whom he is willing to consign to eternal damnation which certainly raises questions about their salvation (Gal 1:9).

To lump together Paul's confrontation with Peter at Antioch for "siding with those who belonged to the circumcision group"—an incident which the apostle cites against his Galatian opponents (Gal 2:11ff)—with the Corinthian problem of unchristian behavior at the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11:17-34), conflicts between those of "weak" and "strong" faith in relation to matters of eating (1 Cor 8:1-13), and the issue of eating meat sacrificed to idols (1 Cor 10:1-22) as all demonstrating an ecclesiological focus in Galatians is to fail to distinguish the underlying issue in each case. While all ecclesiological conflict exposes some offense against the fullness of our salvation (e.g., our unity in Christ), not all directly attack the very nature of salvation in the sufficiency of Christ. Peter's action was of the latter sort, raising questions about the very ground of justification—was it "by works of the law" or "through faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal 2:16)?

To be sure the immediate issue among the Galatians was whether Gentile believers must adhere to certain Jewish practices that had traditionally identified the Jews as God's covenant people. But for the apostle, this question was directly related to the deeper question of the gospel—how does a sinner become rightly related to God? Thus we find numerous references in the letter to "gospel" (five times in 1:6-11 alone where the Galatian issue is set forth), "justification," "faith," "grace," and "works of the law." It was an ecclesiological problem, but like the confrontation with Peter in Antioch, it was most importantly a question of the nature of the gospel or soteriology.

The author's emphasis on the nature of the Galatian problem as ecclesiological is difficult to understand in a discussion focusing on the apostle's statement, "there is neither . . . male nor female," unless it is to set these words more in the context of *practical church functioning* rather than the soteriological focus of *the equality of man and woman in relation to God.* But Fee seems to diminish this goal when he notes that his use of "ecclesiology" refers to the "people of God as such, not church order and function" (174, n. 5). He also rightly includes the soteriological dimension in the issue when he says, "What is at stake is ecclesiology: who constitute the *people of God* under the new covenant of Christ and the Spirit, and *on what grounds* are they constituted?" When he answers the second question by saying, "on the grounds of their common trust in Christ and reception of the Spirit" (176), he clearly involves soteriology.

He also correctly recognizes the soteriological element in his comment on the central text (3:28), "And in the end, if it appears that too much is being made of ecclesiology beyond the obvious soteriological dimension of our text, one must remember that for Paul these cannot be separated. To be saved meant to become a member of Christ's body/family/household" (185). If the ecclesiology at this point does not involve church order and function, and the question, "Who is a member of Christ's people?"

is answered, "Those saved," then it is difficult to see why the issue of salvation is not equally, if not more, central in Paul's letter to the Galatians. The manner in which Fee brings ecclesiology and soteriology together in his understanding of the problem leaves this reviewer wondering whether his discussion of this issue sheds any real light on the meaning of Gal 3:28.

Along with the issue of an ecclesiological focus, which is often in the background through the remainder of the chapter, Fee's discussion includes a number of other arguments which seem significant in his arriving at an egalitarian conclusion.

(1) Gal 3:28 represents the new economy of the new creation which is to be lived out now in the believing community. It negates the "value-based distinctions" with regard to ethnicity, status, and gender which were used in the old age for the constitution of value, status, and significance (178-179).

(2) The pairs in the verse represent sociological categories involving structures and roles that belong to the old age. Thus, these structures and roles including that which relates to man and woman are "not divinely ordained" (181). Although believers must still live in old age sociological contexts, the significance of these sociological categories are abolished and therefore irrelevant (179-180). "[I]n the community of faith the old rules cannot be maintained; to do so would be to give them significance that in fact they no longer have" (183). "[E]ven though our text does not explicitly mention roles and structures, its new creation theological setting calls these into question in a most profound way....[T]o give continuing *significance* to a male-authority viewpoint for men and women, whether at home or in the church, is to reject the new creation in favor of the norms of a fallen world" (185). Fee recognizes that the male-female pair is not completely parallel to the ethnic pair, Jew-Gentile, and the social standing pair, slave-freeman, in that the gender distinction "belongs to the created order." Thus, he says, the "diverse yet essential ways of being human" involved in being male and female remain, only the old age "societal structure and roles" are negated (177, n. 11).

(3) There is "a degree of ambivalence toward the cultural structures and norms" in the teaching of Paul (181). So as not to evoke cultural shame for these lesser things that are passing away (there is already an unavoidable shame in following Christ), the apostle does not outlaw the practicing of the roles and structures of the world for believers except when they are given religious significance (181-182). Nevertheless, in relation to man-woman relationship in marriage, Paul's instructions to the husband "run roughshod over the cultural norms" (181) and "radicalizes this [structural] norm in a countercultural way" which puts the significance attached to it "into jeopardy" (183).

(4) Paul's teaching concerning an ordered relationship between man and woman is parallel to his teaching regarding slavery (183-184). He does not abolish the system of slavery in his letter to Philemon, but his urging to receive his slave back as "better than a slave, as a *dear brother,"* does dismantle the significance given to slavery and indirectly "heads toward the dismantling of the system itself" (183). Similarly, the husband and wife are "first of all brother and sister in Christ" thus denying the significance of the "male authority" structure. Since both slavery and "male-authority" are found in the two household codes of Ephesians and Colossians, one is logi-

cally compelled to "justify slavery as a God-ordained structure for the present age" if he advocates the continuation of male authority" (184, n. 25).

(5) The coming of the Spirit with his gifts abolishes the significance of cultural structures and roles in the church. Therefore the apostle "was not overly concerned about roles and structures as such" (184). Men and women are brothers and sisters in God's family where ministry is related to Spirit gifting—not to gender (184). In the house churches where the leader of the household was a woman (e.g., Lydia, Nympha), "we may rightly assume" that she also gave "some measure of leadership to her house church," contrary "to her (unprovable) subservient 'role' in the church" (184).

The question is whether these points which represent the substance of the argument for an egalitarian interpretation of the statement, "There is . . . neither male nor female," truly represent the apostle's meaning.

One must certainly agree that Gal 3:28 relates to the new creation "in Christ." It is also true that any distinctions in these pairs that were then and are now used to constitute different value, status, and significance of persons are negated by the apostle's teaching. A major question arises, however, when we consider what it is in the pairs named that actually signifies a difference in the value, status, and significance of the persons involved. Are such differences related to the *personhood* of individuals really inherent in the structures and roles of the pairs so that the negation of these differences entails the abolishment of the structures and roles themselves—a primary premise that Fee assumes in support of his egalitarian conclusion?

A biblical examination of the distinctions involved in the structures and roles of each pair suggests that they do not *in themselves* constitute diverse values of the persons involved. The Jew-Gentile distinction was established by God himself as part of the outworking of his historical plan of salvation. While it did give some advantages to the Jews, its purpose was manifestly not to constitute Jews as persons of higher personal value than Gentiles. Scripture testifies that God is no respecter of persons and shows no favoritism even with regard to Israel and the Gentiles (Isa 43:10; Rom 2:11). Rather the purpose of setting Israel apart as God's covenant people was functional—that they might serve the nations as a channel of God's blessing. Thus, if the original God-instituted distinction did not constitute value differentiation between persons, the negation of this distinction with the coming of the new covenant cannot be said to abolish a structure that entailed value differential between persons.

The slave-freeman structure no doubt signified different personal value and significance in the culture of the surrounding world, even as it does today where practiced. But, interestingly, again the apostle does not view this as inherent in the structure. His teachings related to slaves refute any idea of a devaluation of the slave's person and significance. Slaves and their masters (if believers) are equally servants of the same Lord and will be equally held accountable by him without partiality (cf. Eph 6:5-9; Col 3:22-4:1). The idea of humans being property like impersonal forms of creation was never part of God's plan. Moreover, the scriptural picture of human nature as well as other specific teachings such as Paul's encouragement to be free if possible (1 Cor 7:21) argued against this practice and led to its general abolishment.

But while Paul's rejection of the

distinction between the slave and freeman in Gal 3:28 is part of the Bible's picture of human personhood and therefore may be argued to be part of Scripture's teaching against the structure of slavery itself, the abolishing of distinctions that constitute the value and significance of persons does not necessitate the abolishment of the structure of slavery. For as we have seen the structure of slavery does not of itself constitute differences between the slave and free person as far as their personal value and significance in Christ. The fact that most interpreters see the New Testament's instructions concerning believing slaves and masters as applicable to the order of employee-employer today would also indicate that Paul's denial of distinction in the slave-freeman pair does not entail the abolishment or any order between the person involved.

It is even more difficult biblically to support the idea that any ordered structure or diversity of roles in the male-female pair constitutes different value and significance of the persons. In the first place, the same apostle teaches such an ordered structure on numerous occasions using a form of the Greek verb *hypotassō* ("to order under") four times in relation to the structure of the man-woman in the home (Eph 5:22 [implied from v. 21], 24; Col 3:8; Titus 2:5), and twice in their relation in the church (1 Cor 14:34; 1 Tim 2:11). In addition he twice refers to the headship of man (Eph 5:23; 1 Cor 11:3). Peter also adds to this teaching with his use of *hypotassō* (1 Pet 3:1, 5) and other concepts that point to this same structure (1 Pet 3:2, 6). In none of these is there any hint that these teachings are anything less than apostolic instructions for believers and therefore can hardly be viewed as constituting different personal values. In fact, when explanation is given for the reality of the man-woman order, the apostle always grounds it in the account of the original creation of man and woman in Genesis 2—man is created first (1 Cor 11:8; 2 Tim 2:12-13) and woman is created for the sake of man (1 Cor 11:9).

The claim that this apostolic teaching is simply an accommodation to the patriarchy of the surrounding culture, as most egalitarians argue, is refuted in that the apostle finds an analogy of the husband-wife order in the order of Christ and the church—a permanent theological reality. Moreover when he adds to his instructions for wives to be subject to their husbands the phrase "as is fitting *in the Lord,"* he clearly appears to apply this order to new covenant existence (Col 3:18). It is inconceivable that the apostle would associate an order between man and woman with these theological realities if such a structure necessarily entailed distinctions of personal value and significance.

Further, it is impossible to understand how the apostle could juxtapose teachings that abolish orders because they (allegedly) constitute diverse values of people with instructions for living in such orders. Colossians 3 provides a case in point. Although the male-female pair is not included in this passage, most would agree that the teaching of Gal 3:28 is repeated in Col 3:11 (the particular pairs mentioned here being related to the context of the Colossian readers): "there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all." Just seven verses later, we find the apostle telling wives, "be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord." Aside from these teachings being in close proximity, they both seem to represent realities of the same sphere—"in the Lord." First Corinthians 12:13, which is again

essentially the teaching of our Galatian text, and the references to a man-woman order in 1 Cor 14:34 and 11:1-16, while not as proximate as the Colossian texts, is another example that suggests that the apostle does not see these teachings in conflict.

Finally, Paul's instruction to the believers in Corinth concerning those who are circumcised or uncircumcised and slaves or free persons (1 Cor 7:17-24), which along with 1 Cor 12:13; Col 3:10; and Gal 3:28 Fee calls "similar moments," clearly rejects the idea that these structures inherently entail different personal value and significance. The apostle's words to those in these various situations is expressed in his words, "each one should retain the place in life that the Lord assigned to him and to which God has called him" (v. 17). As we noted previously, Paul does encourage the slave to choose freedom if that is possible. But that is not an issue of personal worth or significance, for his general principle to the slave is "don't let it trouble you" whether you are a slave or not. For a Christian slave is the "Lord's freedman" and "Christ's slave" (vv. 21-22). The final significance of the apostle's key imperatives in the passage, namely, to remain in the situation in which God called them (vv. 17, 20) is summarized well by Fee himself in his commentary on 1 Corinthians. One's situation in terms of these structures, Fee writes, is "irrelevant to one's relationship to God." God's call (or salvation in Christ) "sanctifies that situation as a place where one can truly live out God's call in the present age."[1] If such is the import of Paul's teaching here and it is applicable to the pairs in Gal 3:28 including male-female, then obviously these structures do not inherently constitute diverse personal values. For if they did, surely the apostle would not say that they do not matter.

If the structures do not of themselves entail diverse personal values, then there is no ground for seeing in the apostle's teaching, as Fee does, "a degree of ambivalence toward the cultural structures and norms." In fact, except for the order between man and woman which Paul teaches as God's creation structures, he does not actually prescribe the other "cultural structures and norms" themselves. There is no instance, for example, where he teaches the institution of slavery. His teaching rather concerns attitudes and actions for those in that institution, which, as we have suggested are still applicable to our employee-employer structure. With regard to the man-woman order the apostle portrays a radically different picture than that of the cultural patriarchy of the world around him as even Fee correctly acknowledges (cf. point 3 of his argument above). Thus, if the prevalent cultural structures themselves are not part of the apostle's teaching, it is difficult to see any real ambivalence.

If the social structures themselves are not the focus of the denial of distinctions within the pairs of Gal 3:28 (as appears to this reviewer to be a foundational assertion in Fee's chapter), what is really negated in relation to these pairs? To be sure, the momentous advance in salvation history with the coming of Christ brought what might be called a structural change whereby the old covenant that separated and thus distinguished the Jew as God's covenant people from the Gentiles is now replaced by a new covenant that unites both equally as God's people. But it is impossible to explain the removal of the distinctions in the slave-freeman and male-female pairs by this same structural change. Nor, as we have discussed above, can the removal of distinctions between

these pairs be explained on the basis of the social structures themselves.

Fee rightly points to something more than the change brought about with the inauguration of the new covenant when he asks, "Why does Paul add the second and third pair at all in an argument that otherwise has to do only with Jew and Gentile?" (173). Rather than seeing the answer with Fee in terms of denying any significance to the functional social structures of these additional pairs (for which there is no hint in the context), the solution is found in the apostle's stated explanation. There is no distinction, he says, "for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (3:28). The lack of difference within each pair is due to their oneness. This is clearly not a oneness in everything. Slaves and free persons are still different in many ways; so also man and woman. The oneness in Christ that has abolished the differences is a oneness in their common relation to God and his salvation which they all have through being in Christ.

That this is the meaning of the oneness is evident in the immediate context of v. 28 (emphasis added throughout):

> v. 26 – you are *all sons of God* through faith in Christ
> v. 27 – *all* of you who *were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ*
> v. 28 – you are *all one in Christ Jesus*
> v. 29 – if *you belong to Christ*, then *you are Abraham's seed, and heirs* according to promise

The individuals in the pairs of verse 28 are one because they are all "in Christ" through faith. As a result they share the same relationship with God and thus constitute a unity as one spiritual family. The emphasis of the oneness or the similarities of the pairs is totally on what might be called spiritual or religious realities. In saying that the differences within the pairs are overcome by the truth that they are one in Christ, equally members of God's family, and equally sharing in the full inheritance of his salvation, these differences are identified as those that precluded this oneness. The differences negated are thus those that kept those within the pairs from all being one and equal participants in all of the salvation realities mentioned in the context. In short, they were spiritual and religious differences that refer to their relationship with God. Nothing at all is said in verse 28 or its context about the differences within the functional structures themselves—either concerning a new oneness or equality related to them, or about their abolishment.

Paul's use of "male and female" rather than "man and woman" in Gal 3:28—more than simply clarifying that the reference is to more than husband and wife, as Fee suggests (173)—gives further evidence that the focus of the oneness and equality of persons is in relation to God and not on functional differences. When discussing the functional order between man and woman or husband and wife, the apostles always used the Greek terms *anēr* (translated "man" or "husband" depending on the context) and *gunē* ("woman" or "wife"). These same words are used for "man" and "woman" in the Greek translation of the creation account in Genesis 2 which details the creation of woman in relation to man. But in the creation account of Genesis 1, which includes the position of mankind in relation to God as his image and in relation to the rest of creation as ruler, the language is "male" and "female"

(in the Greek translation, *arsen* and *theus*). Like the Greek words, the Hebrew terms for "male" and "female" in Genesis 1 are also distinct from those used for "man" and "woman" in Genesis 2.

The apostle's choice of the "male and female" in Galatians 3, therefore, shows that he is thinking of the creation story of Genesis 1 where the equality of both sexes as human persons in relation to God and the rest of creation is emphasized. He is not referring to the created relationship between man and woman of Genesis 2 which he cites in other texts in support of the man-woman order.

While the differences that were abolished in order to bring a new oneness among the pairs were religious or spiritual and not functional or structural, the fact that Paul can speak of the negation of something related to these pairs reveals that these structures were somehow involved in these religious distinctions. One must agree, therefore, with Fee in seeing Gal 3:28 as negating the "value-based distinctions" that were connected to ethnicity, status, and gender in the contemporary culture. The source of these distinctions negated in Christ, however, was not the structures themselves. Rather it was sin which took occasion of these human differences to make them the source of differences in value and significance as human persons. In short, sinful attitudes of those within the structures led them to utilize their position in the structures as the source of their personal value and significance.

Even the divinely instituted difference between Jew and Gentile became, through sin, the ground for personal value and status, and something of this is still present in the Galatian controversy. Paul sought the Galatians commendably in order to betroth them to Christ (cf. 2 Cor 11:2), but he sees his opponents as motivated to seek adherents for themselves that they might have something to boast about and put themselves in a superior position (Gal 4:17; 6:12-14). The same superior-inferior personal value was present in the cultural attitudes associated with the pairs, slave-free and male-female. Most importantly this sinful differentiation of person values involved personal distinctions in relation to God, or what may be termed religious distinctions. This is evident in the Jewish temple of that time, where there was a Court of Women and a separate Court of Israel (for men) with the Court of Women at a greater distance from the presence of God in the Holy of Holies. Gentiles could not enter either court. Slaves were likewise considered on a lower level personally and religiously in that world.

The answer to Fee's question as to why Paul included the pairs of slave-free and male-female along with Jew-Gentile is, therefore, that in addition to the change in the Jew-Gentile relationship that came with the inauguration of the new covenant, there was something common to all of the pairs that contradicted the oneness and equality of each person in relation to God—namely, the sinful use of these structures to constitute different personal values. Although the abolishing of the difference between Jew and Gentile with the coming of Christ is clearly taught, there is nothing in the entire letter or the immediate context that indicates that the negation of distinctions related to the other social structures involved in the pairs. Furthermore, as we have seen above, the testimony of Scripture is that these structures did not inherently entail distinctions of personal value and significance so that it was necessary to abolish them in order to attain the reality of oneness in Christ and thus

equal personal value and significance.

Finally, Fee's general claim that the new creation and the coming of the Spirit leaves all roles and structures without meaning in themselves (184) ignores Paul's clear references to leadership in the church including qualifications for "offices" (e.g., Acts 20:28; 1 Thess 5:12; 1 Tim 5:17; 1 Tim 3:1-13). To suggest that the patron of the household in which the church met would be leader of that church is to ignore the same Pauline teaching. The numerous references to an "order" between man and woman that we saw above would also suggest that Paul did not see this order as having no significance. To say that the eschatological significance of roles and structures has been abolished is also to ignore the already/not yet of eschatological realities. The presence and diversity of Spirit-given gifts within the church, which one could argue at least in the case of the gifts of leadership represent some order, may be gone with the eschatological perfection, but they still have present significance.

In conclusion, we would suggest that the broad thesis argued in this chapter is both quite right and quite wrong. It is surely right in understanding that the apostle's teaching in Gal 3:28 negates any "value-based distinction"—any distinction that constitutes one person of more value and significance than another as a human being. But it is a serious misinterpretation of this verse to see the structures and roles represented in the pairs as *inherently* constituting such different values of the persons within them, and, therefore, being abolished by this apostolic teaching. The overall teaching of Scripture demonstrates that the structures and roles in the pairs do not themselves make one a superior person and another an inferior person. It is rather the sinful ego-centered attitudes of the people in the structures that lead to this conclusion.

Scripture reveals that some structures and roles are, in fact, God-ordained for the good of human life (e.g., the original Jew-Gentile distinction, human government). This is especially true of the man-woman order which the same apostle Paul teaches as grounded in the original creation. Differences between people, including functions and roles, frequently become the basis for different personal values because of sin. But the diversity created by God has positive intent. Diversity of spiritual gifts that include different functions and roles, for example, are not only necessary for the life of the body, but it is these very differences that unify the body (1 Cor 12:20). Similar created differences between man and woman, including functions and roles, are designed for true complementarity. While sin uses them to create divisive value-distinctions even among believers, God intends them to draw man and woman together in the recognition of the value, significance, and necessity of the other for human wholeness. The solution to sin's divisiveness is not the abolishing of the order, but seeking to live in accord with God's instructions for our attitudes and actions within it. ■

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[1] Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 321.

Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood
JBMW 10/1 (Spring 2005) 38-42

"Mutual Love and Submission in Marriage: Colossians 3:18-19 and Ephesians 5:21-33" (Ch 11) by I. Howard Marshall

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I. Howard Marshall states his objection to following these texts as they are written in this modern world by his title in which "mutual" governs not only "love" but also, and more importantly, the word "submission." He argues that this "adjustment [of the given text] to changed circumstances is required, as can be seen by a consideration of the material about children and slaves." This is such a major turning point of his article that he warns against "a concealed hermeneutical trap for readers of this instruction. Since much of it can be seen as still appropriate in the modern world, it is tempting to assume that whatever Paul says here should be applied without significant modification to our situation" (187). For Marshall only the "submission" which Paul asks of the wives cannot be followed as stated, and that everything else in these passages is applicable (cf. the first two full paragraphs on 204).

His first appeal is to Paul's teaching on "children and parents" (Col 3:20-21). After saying that "[t]he instructions to parents and children appear to be commonsensical and Christian," he brings three charges against Paul that nullify this assumption long held by readers of the text. The first is that children are addressed as needing to obey their parents "to a more advanced age than would be natural for us" (188). He gives as his substantiation for this assertion the phrase "in the ancient world" and refers in footnote 5 for detail to A. T. Lincoln's Ephesians commentary.[1] In the beginning of that footnote Marshall cites P. T. O'Brien's Colossians commentary (and refers also to his Ephesians commentary) where he "states that Paul is probably addressing young children rather than those who are already grown up" but asserts that "he offers no evidence for this assumption" (188). But O'Brien does offer evidence when he cites Eph 6:4, which states that these children are to be brought "up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."[2] These words imply that the children are under age and are being brought up by their parents. Furthermore, the

apostle has used the word "obey" rather than the word "honor" which is found in his quotation of the fifth commandment of the decalogue (Eph 6:2). Why has he done so? The answer would seem to lie in the fact that he has used a word more appropriate to children under age ("obey"), while the commandment has used a word more appropriate for children of every age ("honor"). Likewise the admonition, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger" (Eph 6:3), is the foil of the "bringing up" command and finds its application most appropriately in the interaction the father has with his young children, as do especially the words of Col 3:21, "Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged." Paul is not writing what the ancient world believed or taught, but what Christians ought to do and be, and therefore the standard of that ancient world is not necessarily his.

Second, Marshall argues that "the father as patriarch had a much greater authority over sons and daughters than is the case today" (188). Whether this is true or not, or only true of the ancient world (for again Marshall gives no documentation), it presents a problem. Is this statement which Marshall has given as his understanding of what Paul meant once correct and now incorrect, or is it always wrong? And if neither is correct, what then does that make of Paul's teaching when he gave it? Was he teaching the will of God, or echoing the will of the ancient world? Is the text actually erroneous when it came from Paul's hand, or is it so only if read to be giving more authority than it actually did?

Third, he gives one final argument against Paul's statement: "Most significant, there is no mention here of love between parents and children" (188). Does Marshall really believe that this nullifies Paul's instruction for them both? Must Paul, or any other writer, say everything whenever he writes? Does not Paul write in Titus 2:4 about young women being taught "to love their husbands and children?" Does he think that Paul does not believe this?

Marshall turns next to "slaves and masters" (Col 3:22-4:1) to substantiate his case against living by the statements of Paul with reference to wives and husbands. But here we find a subtle switch in his argument. Whereas Paul's instruction about children and parents is grounded in his appeal to the moral law given in the Old Testament, his words of instruction about slaves and masters is not grounded in any external and abiding statement from God on this question of the existence of slavery. One could say that this instruction is not given for an age when slavery does not exist and therefore it in no way affects the other two categories (i.e., wives/husbands, children/parents). Furthermore, we need to be thankful that Paul gave to Christian slaves words of hope and instruction in their dire situation, rather than remain completely silent, or urge them to rebel. But even more significantly, we need to note that the apostle in his letter to Philemon (vv. 15-21) and in his words in 1 Cor 7:21c, "[b]ut if you [as a slave] can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity,"[3] has already stated God's truth that a slave does not have to be a slave. The words of Col 3:22-4:1 can indeed be used in the modern world, but when used they must be used without any of the overtones of the slavery situation because that social entity, as we have pointed out, has no normative authority from God. Marshall is quite correct that "[a] modern system of industrial relationships must draw its principles and practice from a wider consideration of scriptural teach-

ing than simply these two (and other related) passages" (189). But any change that may be noted about this passage does not thereby give any authority to change Paul's instructions about wives and husbands—which the apostle says are ordered and ordained by God by means of his actions at the creation (cf. 1 Cor 11:8; 14:33-34; 1 Tim 2:11-14) and which are based upon our relationship as a model of the relationship between the church and Christ (Eph 5:22-24) and which "is fitting in the Lord" (Col 3:18).

Marshall appeals also to "subjects and rulers," and says that it "presupposes . . . the existence of an imposed monarchical or aristocratic system of one kind or another" (189), and draws the conclusion that "the key elements in Romans 13 and elsewhere may be expressed differently in the different conditions that now exist, and that political thinking can go beyond the parameters that appear to exist there" (190). But does not this kind of conclusion fail to recognize that all the biblical teachings are expressed in the concrete settings of the times—cf. especially the Ten Commandments which our Lord and the apostle Paul indicate are still our commandments to be followed explicitly today, even if we need to recognize that the ox and ass represent that which is entailed in them? Thus, as indicated by the Lord and Paul, the Ten Commandments are a norm and standard for us Christians just as much as they were for the Israelites coming out of Egypt. We certainly cannot go beyond the parameters in them.

Furthermore, the statement in Romans 13 is not as concrete as it might be, but rather is stated in an ideological way that asserts God's providential care and control which is readily transferable to us. It says "and those that exist [the governing authorities] have been instituted by God" (v. 1). Is this not true today? (compare Marshall's implied "no").[4] Is what the apostle asks of us Christians any less true? (Realizing that both then and now the words of the Peter and the apostles, must also be taken into account, "We must obey God rather than men" [Acts 5:28]).[5] And therefore this appeal to rulers does not give liberty to undo the explicit words of Paul addressed to wives (or husbands) in Colossians and Ephesians. It is not acceptable to say that changes of our day mean that we may make changes to what is written in the Scriptures (cf. 190, "with changes in structures and relationships, there naturally come changes in the kinds of behavior required of Christians in them").

The items Marshall deals with in the Ephesians passage on "mutual submission" and "headship" have been addressed by those with whom he interacts in the footnotes (i.e., particularly Grudem and O'Brien). The space alloted for this article does not give us the option to go through the material on these issues again. But it would be a mistake not to call the reader's attention to the excellent and nuanced article by Grudem.[6] He responds to the "mutual submission" argument of egalitarians that insisists that throughout the Ephesians passage Paul is calling on husbands and wives mutually to submit to one another, even though the text does not speak of the husband submitting to his wife but does speak of the wife submitting to the leadership of her head, her husband.

What we need to say in conclusion is that Marshall assumes that the patriarchal structure of the first century is that which Paul is communicating, but then at times he realizes that Paul is not governed by this view but by a Christian view that asks for love from a husband (that, one may add, will take away the ef-

fect of the curse on his relation to his wife [cf. Gen 3:16, "he shall rule over you"], and, one may also add, make room for the submission from the wife that will not try to overthrow that God-given oversight [cf. p. 200]). Would that this truth would control his exegesis and not his assumption of the other perspective.

This assumption can be seen in several places in his exegesis and application of the very words and phrases of Paul. Take his treatment of the call to submission given to the wife. "The reader is left with no guidance as to what the Christian wife today [but also then!] should actually do" (192). "Here we note the quite remarkable stress on wives being submissive 'in everything' to their husbands which is found in the parallel passage in Ephesians. . . . This would suggest that no area of a wife's life [then, as well as now] is outside the jurisdiction of her husband" (193). To what is Marshall objecting? Is it to the very words of Paul? It seems to be so, as we see him arguing from Peter's words about their joint heirship of grace (1 Pet 3:7), and then saying that the wife's submission "in everything" is impossible for the husband to expect. Listen to his own words: "It is impossible to see how taking joint heirship seriously can allow a husband to expect one-sided submission 'in everything' from his wife" (203). Why did Paul not see that and therefore not write these words in his text? This view seems to be corroborated by the introductory words to Marshall's "Conclusion": "Paul wrote as he did about marriage because in his world he did not know any other form than the patriarchal. . . . The danger is to think that this validates the setup for all time" (204).

The greater danger is to assume that our twenty-first century approach gives us answers more relevant and truer than Paul's and thereby to jettison anything in Paul that does not fit with our own thinking. Marshall asserts, "Thus taking the authority of Scripture seriously may require us to introduce some fresh commands that go beyond the letter of Scripture as such" (201, n. 48). We need to remember that just as Paul stated that the Scriptures (the Old Testament) were "written for our instruction" (Rom 15:4), and therefore Peter could appeal to Sarah as a model for the wives of the first century A.D. ("you are her children," 1 Pet 3:6), so this truth can be said also about the New Testament. Therefore, we today may appeal to the apostles Peter and Paul for our instruction regarding husbands and wives. It is not by adding some fresh, or new, commands that go beyond the letter of Scripture, but by asking for the grace of God to enable us to live by the commands that he himself has given us that we will take seriously the authority of Scripture. ■

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[1] See A.T. Lincoln, *Ephesians* (WBC; Dallas: Word, 1990), 398-403.

[2] P. T. O'Brien, *Colossians* (WBC; Waco, TX: Word, 1982), 224; cf. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians* (PNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 440-41.

[3] I concur with the ESV and other translations that this is the correct way to understand the Greek of this portion of the verse. Cf. Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 315-18; David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 307-14.

[4] Notice that Marshall takes the verb "be" or "exist" to apply only to the situation then, and not also now: "The biblical assumption that the 'powers that be' are ordained by God has not prevented Christians from defending democracy, including universal suffrage" (201). But is not democracy in a particular country now the "powers that be" in that place and thus has it not "been instituted by God" in that land? Or is Paul's theological truth locked up and lost in the time period in which he wrote and with reference only to that form of government then existing?

[5] Marshall himself states that "the typical conservative evangelical method . . . is to derive 'timeless' principles" from a "cultural . . . setting", and says that "this approach must remain an essential part of

our hermeneutics" (200).

[6] The article is much too long to even be summarized in this article, but its perusal will be quite beneficial to those that have read Marshall's arguments on this subject. The article by Wayne Grudem is found in his work, *Evangelical Feminism & Biblical Truth* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2004), 188-200.

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"Teaching and Usurping Authority: I Timothy 2:11-15" (Ch 12) by Linda L. Belleville

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As many other aspects of the passage, the syntax of 1 Tim 2:12 has been the subject of serious scholarly discussion in recent years.[1] It has increasingly become clear that before one can proceed to apply this crucial passage on women's roles in the church, one must first determine what it means. In this quest for the original, authorially-intended meaning of 1 Tim 2:12, the proper understanding of the passage's syntax has had a very important place, especially since consensus on the meaning of the rare word *authentein* has proved elusive.

Most would agree that the essay on the syntax of 1 Tim 2:12 in the first edition of *Women in the Church* has advanced the debate and provided the framework for subsequent discussion. With its identification of two basic patterns of the usage of *oude* in both biblical and extrabiblical literature, and its proposal that 1 Tim 2:12 ought correspondingly to be rendered, "I do not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man," the study put the interpretation of 1 Tim 2:12 on firmer ground.

It is in this context that Linda Belleville's chapter in *Discovering Biblical Equality* on the syntax of 1 Tim 2:12, as well as her earlier contributions on the subject, must be understood. The essential subtext of Belleville's construal of the syntax of 1 Tim 2:12 is her critique of the findings of the above-mentioned essay in *Women in the Church*. Apparently, Belleville felt that in order to sustain her egalitarian reading of 1 Tim 2:12, she must overturn the findings of this study. As a result, she has lodged several points of critique that will be subjected to closer scrutiny in the pages below.

Yet since Belleville has not been the only one to contribute to the debate concerning the syntax of 1 Tim 2:12 since the appearance of the original article in *Women in the Church*, it will be helpful not to stop at Belleville but to set the discussion in an even larger context. This will involve a survey of, and interaction with, the contributions made by other egalitarian and non-egalitarian writers, including

scholars such as I. Howard Marshall, Craig Keener, William Webb, Kevin Giles, Craig Blomberg, and others.

This larger survey will make clear that the approval of the findings of the essay on the syntax of 1 Tim 2:12 in the first edition of *Women in the Church* has not been limited to those favoring a complementarian approach to gender roles but extends also to virtually all egalitarian and feminist writers who interacted with this essay. Not that this by itself establishes a complementarian reading of 1 Tim 2:12 as valid, but it certainly puts the interpretation of this passage on a surer footing.

This larger survey also reveals that Belleville's critique is out of step with other egalitarian writers. This does not by itself mean that her arguments are invalid (though this is what they are, as the critique below will seek to show). It does mean, however, that Belleville's arguments have failed to convince even most of those who agree with her on the overall approach to the passage, which does lend further weight to the interpretive conclusions reached by the original study of the syntax of 1 Tim 2:12 in *Women in the Church*.

In the following essay we will first look at Belleville's work and then proceed to survey and critique the contributions of others.

Belleville's Earlier Essays

In her book *Women Leaders in the Church*, her essay in *Two Views on Women in Ministry*, and her contribution to *Discovering Biblical Equality*, Linda Belleville has set forth her construal of the syntax of 1 Tim 2:12[2] In *Women Leaders in the Church*, Belleville essentially restates the earlier argument of Philip B. Payne that the two expressions *didaskein* and *authentein* in 1 Tim 2:12 connote "a single coherent idea in Greek."[3] Blending instances of the noun *authentēs* and the verb *authentein*, Belleville maintains that this term has a negative connotation in 1 Tim 2:12.

Belleville also claims that the order of the two infinitives, *didaskein* first, and then *authentein*, favors her interpretation: "If Paul had the exercise of authority in mind, he would have put it first, followed by *teaching* as a specific example."[4] The upshot of Belleville's discussion is that the two infinitives in 1 Tim 2:12 are to be construed as a *hendiadys*, that is, forbidding women "to teach a man *in a dominating way*" rather than enjoining them not to teach or exercise authority over men even in a way that would otherwise be appropriate.[5]

Belleville reiterates her views in her essay in *Two Views on Women in Ministry*. She alleges that the study of the syntax of 1 Tim 2:12 in the book *Women in the Church* "ignore[s] both the literary form and the nature of Greek correlatives."[6] According to Belleville, (1) infinitives are not verbs;[7] (2) 1 Tim 2:12 has to do with ideas, not grammar;[8] and (3) "neither/nor" in 1 Tim 2:12 constitutes a "poetic device."[9] Belleville also contends that (4) the two infinitives modify "a woman"[10] and that (5) the question answered by these infinitives is "What?"[11]

Yet Belleville misconstrues the grammar and syntax of 1 Tim 2:12 in several ways, and her objection to the study of the syntax of 1 Tim 2:12 in *Women in the Church* entirely misses the mark. The forty-eight syntactical parallels to 1 Tim 2:12 in extrabiblical literature (as well as the one exact parallel in the NT, Acts 21:21) identified in this study all feature the construction "negated finite verb + infinitive + *oude* + infinitive" and in every instance yield the pattern positive/positive or negative/negative.

This yields the conclusion that 1 Tim 2:12 is to be rendered either: "I do not permit a woman to teach [error] or to usurp a man's authority" or: "I do not permit a woman to teach or to have (or exercise) authority over a man," the latter being preferred owing to the positive connotation of *didaskein* elsewhere in the Pastorals. Hence the question of whether infinitives are verbs or nouns is moot in the present case, since regardless of how infinitives are classified, the study of the syntax of 1 Tim 2:12 in *Women in the Church* focused on exact syntactical parallels, comparing infinitives with infinitives.[12] Thus Belleville's major point of contention fails to convince.

To respond to the specific criticisms lodged by Belleville one at a time, (1) her argument that infinitives are not verbs is hardly borne out by a look at the standard grammars. Wallace's extensive treatment is representative. Under the overall rubric of "verb," he treats infinitives as verbal nouns that exemplify some of the characteristics of the verb and some of the noun.[13] Hence Belleville's proposal that infinitives are nouns, not verbs, is unduly dichotomistic and fails to do justice to the verbal characteristics commonly understood to reside in infinitives.

Her proposals (2) that 1 Tim 2:12 has to do with ideas, not grammar, and (3) that *oude* in 1 Tim 2:12 constitutes a "poetic device" are also unfounded in that clearly grammar is involved in the present passage, and the genre is that of epistle, not poetry.

As to Belleville's contention (4) that the two infinitives modify "a woman" and (5) that the question answered is "What?" it must be noted that, to the contrary, the infinitives modify the main verb in verse 12, *epitrepō* ("I permit"), and the question answered is, "To *do* what?" the answer being "to teach or exercise authority." Hence the two infinitives are found to convey the *verbal* notion of actions to be performed or not performed. This is borne out once again by the standard Greek grammar by Daniel Wallace, which lists 1 Tim 2:12 under "complementary," one of the six subcategories of the adverbial use of infinitives.[14]

Belleville's Essay in *Discovering Biblical Equality*

In the 2004 essay collection *Discovering Biblical Equality*, Linda Belleville's "Teaching and Usurping Authority: 1 Timothy 2:11-15" ups the ante by claiming that I consider "a hierarchical interpretation of this passage [1 Tim 2:12] . . . a litmus test for the label *evangelical* and even a necessity for the salvation of unbelievers" (205).[15] Belleville claims I say (attributing a statement solely to me in a section that is signed by all three editors) "that a hierarchical view of men and women is necessary for 'a world estranged from God' to 'believe that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself'" (205, n. 1).

In context, however, the statement cited by Belleville does not refer to the interpretation of 1 Tim 2:12 but to "one's view of male and female gender identities and roles in the church" in general as of "the apprehension and application of his [God's] good gift of manhood and womanhood."[16] A renewal of this understanding of what it means to have been created male and female in God's image in the beginning is presented as vital for our own deeper fulfillment and for our witness in the world.

Doubtless Belleville and other egalitarians would see their vision of gender equality as vital for people's deeper fulfillment and witness in the world; it is unclear why the editors of the first edition of this volume are denied the same hope

and conviction. In any case, contrary to Belleville's assertion, neither I nor the other contributors to this volume believe that what Belleville calls a "hierarchical" view of men and women is necessary for a person to claim the label "evangelical" nor that such a view is "a necessity for the salvation of unbelievers."

In her discussion of the grammar of the present verse, Belleville states at the outset that "Andreas Köstenberger claims that it is the correlative that *forces translators in this direction*" (217, emphasis added). It is unclear, however, what in the original essay suggests to Belleville a claim that the correlative "forces translators" in a certain direction. I did not claim that a certain understanding of the Greek coordinating conjunction motivated translators in the past, but rather that a certain understanding of the Greek conjunction in 1 Tim 2:12 most properly conforms to the way in which Greek grammar actually functions.

Belleville also misunderstands the argument of the original essay when she says that it "argues that the Greek correlative pairs synonyms or parallel words and not antonyms" (217). This is not, in fact, the argument I make. Rather, my point is that there are two patterns of usage found with regard to *oude* in the NT and extrabiblical Greek literature: "Two activities or concepts are viewed positively in and of themselves, but their exercise is prohibited or their existence is denied due to circumstances or conditions adduced in the context" (Pattern 1) and "Two activities or concepts are viewed negatively, and consequently their exercise is prohibited or their existence is denied or they are to be avoided" (Pattern 2). The issue here is not that of synonyms vs. antonyms but that of a particular type of perception of a given activity by a writer or speaker. For example, in 1 Macc 15:14, we read that "he pressed the city hard from land and sea, and permitted no one to leave or enter it." Clearly, "leave" and "enter" are antonyms, but this is not the crucial point in the present analysis, but rather the fact that both "leaving" and "entering" are viewed positively (rather than one being viewed positively and the other being viewed negatively) by the perpetrator of a given action. This point may be subtle, but an understanding of it is crucial for one to appreciate the argument being made in the present essay.

Beyond this, Belleville merely repeats her earlier argument (noted above) that infinitives are nouns, not verbs and disallows a progression from particular to general in 1 Tim 2:12. Once again, however, it must be noted that the categorization of infinitives as verbs or nouns is not the critical issue, since the present study identified a total of 49 exact syntactical parallels (negated finite verb + infinitive + *oude* + infinitive) in the NT and extrabiblical literature, so that infinitives are compared with infinitives, which clearly is the most accurate comparison possible.

I conclude that none of Belleville's arguments overturns the syntactical patterns identified in the study of the syntax of 1 Tim 2:12 in *Women in the Church* and the implication of these patterns for the proper rendering of 1 Tim 2:12.[17]

Other Recent Contributions to the Study of the Syntax of 1 Timothy 2:12

The following review of other recent contributions to the study of the syntax of 1 Tim 2:12 is significant in that it reveals that Linda Belleville is virtually alone in her criticisms of the study of the syntax of 1 Tim 2:12 in the first edition of *Women in the Church*. As will be seen

below, the essay was exceedingly well received even by egalitarian or feminist interpreters. This demonstrates that Belleville's alternative construal of the syntax of 1 Tim 2:12 (which in any case is largely a restatement of Payne's view, already critiqued in *Women in the Church*) and her strong criticism of the study of the syntax in *Women in the Church* have failed to convince even those who share her egalitarian commitment.

In the first few years subsequent to the publication of the original essay on the syntax of 1 Tim 2:12 in *Women in the Church*, responses were very positive, both overseas and in North America. Peter O'Brien, in a review published in Australia, concurred with the findings of this study,[18] as did Helge Stadelmann in an extensive review that appeared in the German *Jahrbuch für evangelikale Theologie*.[19] Both reviewers accepted the results of the present study as valid.

Even Alan Padgett, in a generally negative review in the egalitarian *Priscilla Papers*, calls the present chapter "a convincing syntactical analysis of v. 12," though he favors reading both infinitives as conveying a negative connotation.[20] Padgett disagrees that *didaskō* is always used positively in Paul, citing Titus 1:11, 1 Tim 1:7 and 6:3, without, however, mentioning that in the second and third instances the word used is not *didaskein*, but *heterodidaskalein*.

Another egalitarian, Craig Keener, in a review that appeared in the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, says that while (in his view) the principle is not clear in all instances cited in the present study, "the pattern seems to hold in general, and this is what matters most." Keener concurs that the contention of the present essay is "probably correct that 'have authority' should be read as coordinate with 'teach' rather than as subordinate ('teach in a domineering way')."[21]

The first substantive interaction did not appear until the publication of I. Howard Marshall's ICC commentary on the Pastorals in 1999.[22] Marshall indicates his acceptance of the findings of the present study by noting that it has "argued convincingly on the basis of a wide range of Gk. usage that the construction employed in this verse is one in which the writer expresses the same attitude (whether positive or negative) to both of the items joined together by *oude*."[23]

Marshall proceeds to suggest, however, that matters are "not quite so simple."[24] In response to the point that Paul would have used the word *heterodidaskalein* had he wanted to convey a negative connotation, Marshall avers that doing so would have implied that while women were not permitted to engage in false teaching, men were allowed to do so. However, as Blomberg points out in a later piece, this objection does not carry force, because the prohibition still could have been clearly framed to avoid this conclusion.[25]

Consequently, Marshall opts for a negative sense of both words because of the reference to Eve in verse 14, which he maintains would be pointless unless Paul here has "some particular false teaching by some women" in mind.[26] Marshall concedes that the text does not say that Eve gave false teaching to Adam, but he claims such is nonetheless implied. Again, however, Blomberg notes that, while women were clearly victimized by false teaching in Ephesus, "no passage ever suggests that they were numbered among the false teachers themselves."[27]

In a lengthy footnote, Marshall says the present study does not appreciate the point that, if the second unit is seen pejoratively, then this will also

be the case with the first unit.[28] To the contrary, this is one of the two patterns shown throughout the entire essay. According to Marshall, Paul is using *didaskein* with the same connotation as *heterodidaskalein*, so the apostle is in fact telling women—but not men—not to teach falsely. How would that not still allow the same implication Marshall disavows, namely that women and men are here treated inequitably?

As to the relationship between *didaskein* and *authentein*, Marshall presents two options: either these two terms are separate (citing Moo and the present study as favoring this option) or the former term represents a specific instance of the latter (i.e., teaching is an act by which authority is exercised). However, this does not quite capture matters accurately. The present analysis sees teaching as included in the exercise of authority, not as entirely separate. There is a partial overlap between the two terms, though exercising authority is the broader concept.

Finally, regarding the relation between verses 11 and 12, Marshall claims that the contrast is between learning in a submissive attitude and teaching in a manner "which is heavy-handed and abuses authority."[29] However, there is no need to import the alleged negative sense of *didaskein* into the way in which the contrast between verses 11 and 12 is construed.[30]

Overall, it appears that Marshall is not prepared to follow his acknowledgment that the present study "argued convincingly" for a particular understanding of the syntax of verse 12 to a conclusion that would require a non-egalitarian reading of the text. Hence he opts for a negative sense of both "teaching" and "exercising authority" on the basis of his construal of the background and reading of the context, particularly verse 14.[31]

Shortly after the publication of Marshall's commentary, William Mounce, in his contribution to the WBC series, comes to rather different conclusions than Marshall.[32] Mounce draws extensively on the present syntactical analysis of 1 Tim 2:12 (quoting at length from its critique of Payne) and integrates it into a full-orbed and coherent exegesis of the passage. While there is no need to rehearse here all the details of his cogent discussion of the verse, it should be noted that Mounce frequently adduces data not adequately (or at all) considered or acknowledged by Marshall:

> • *didaskein* is almost always used in a positive sense in the Pastorals;
> • if Paul is prohibiting women merely from teaching error, verse 13 seems irrelevant;
> • the fact that *didaskein* has no object strongly suggests that the verse is a positive command;
> • *didaskein* and *authentein* are best seen as distinct yet related concepts.[33]

Mounce also points out that the two verbs are separated by five words in 1 Tim 2:12, which further speaks against viewing them as forming a *hendiadys*, where words are usually placed side by side (citing BDF § 442 [16]).[34] Following my identification of the pattern as from specific to general, Mounce concludes that "Paul does not want women to be in positions of authority in the church; teaching is one way in which authority is exercised in the church."[35]

Remarkably, even Kevin Giles, who lodges a 38-page critique against the first edition of *Women in the Church* (plus writing a 20-page surrejoinder),

finds himself in essential agreement with the present syntactical analysis of 1 Tim 2:12.[36] However, by way of special pleading, Giles maintains that "[p]eople, even apostles, break grammatical rules at times," so that *oude* may function differently in the present passage than everywhere else in attested contemporaneous Greek literature.[37]

This is, of course, possible, but highly unlikely. In my extensive research in both biblical and extrabiblical Greek literature, I found no evidence of anyone "breaking the rules" in his or her use of *oude*. It seems that even Giles himself does not trust this kind of reasoning, for he later floats the possibility that both *didaskein* and *authentein* are to be understood negatively—in keeping with the pattern of usage identified in the present study.[38]

Craig Blomberg, in an appendix included in *Two Views on Women in Ministry*, renders the following assessment:

> Decisively supporting the more positive sense of assuming appropriate authority is Andreas Köstenberger's study of pairs of infinitives in "neither . . . nor" constructions both throughout the New Testament and in a wide-ranging swath of extrabiblical Greek literature. Without exception, these constructions pair either two positive or two negative activities. So if the "teaching" in view in 1 Timothy 2:12 is not false teaching but proper Christian instruction, then *authentein* must be taken as appropriate authority as well.[39]

Blomberg proceeds to discuss the question of whether or not the two infinitives form a *hendiadys*. Blomberg contends that he has identified a "largely overlooked. . . informal pattern throughout 1 Timothy of using pairs of partly synonymous words or expressions."[40] However, virtually all of these examples are nouns. Blomberg concludes that the two terms are "closely related" (agreed) and "together help to define one single concept" (this may go a bit too far).[41]

Blomberg finds it "overwhelmingly likely" that in 1 Tim 2:12 Paul is referring to "one specific kind of authoritative teaching rather than two independent activities." However, this represents a false dichotomy, since no allowance is made for partially overlapping terms as in a pattern from specific to general.[42] Pointing to related passages such as 1 Tim 3:2; 5:17; and Titus 1:5–7, Blomberg contends that the import of the two verbs in 1 Tim 2:12 is one thing only: women "must not occupy the office of elder/overseer."[43]

To be sure, the parallels adduced by Blomberg suggest that 1 Tim 2:12 clearly means at least that—women ought not to serve in the office that epitomizes teaching and ruling authority.[44] Yet it appears that Blomberg's position, by reducing the issue solely to that of "no women elders/overseers," may be unduly minimalistic. The principles adduced by the quotations of OT Scripture in 1 Tim 2:13–14 would seem to suggest that 1 Tim 2:12 is grounded in more foundational realities than a mere surface prohibition of women occupying a given office. For this reason a more nuanced application of the passage seems to be needed.[45]

While critical of the chapter on hermeneutics in the first edition of *Women in the Church* (though see Robert Yarbrough's response in the second edition), another egalitarian scholar, Wil-

liam Webb, wrote that "I must commend the book for its exegesis in a number of the other chapters, written by other authors."[46] Later, he remarks, "In one of the finest *exegetical* treatments of 1 Timothy 2 available today, the authors of *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9–15* develop the text in its lexical and grammatical aspects in much the same way as I would be inclined."[47] Elsewhere, Webb comments that "the exegesis by Schreiner, Baldwin, Köstenberger, etc. is persuasive and will make a lasting contribution."[48] One surmises that this would include the syntactical analysis in the same volume. This is all the more remarkable as William Webb is an egalitarian.

In her critique of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's reconstruction of Christian origins, Esther Ng notes that Fiorenza apparently takes both infinitives in 1 Tim 2:12 as having a neutral sense (meaning "teaching" and "having authority" respectively), and as linked to *oude* to mean two separable actions, though both related to men. This, she notes, puts the matriarch of feminist hermeneutics in agreement with "the more historical and conservative interpretation."[49] In the same note, Ng also refers to the studies by Wilshire, Baldwin, and the present study.

Later, Ng acknowledges that some "scholars with feminist inclinations" take *authentein* in a negative sense (e.g., Payne, Fee) and then see the two infinitives as so closely related as to mean "teaching in a domineering way."[50] She continues, "However, since a negative connotation of *didaskein* is unlikely in this verse (see below), the neutral meaning for *authentein* (to have authority over) seems to fit the *oude* construction better. . . . While the *oude* joins two separate activities, teaching and exercising authority are still closely associated, as the contrast with 'quiet learning in submission' makes clear."[51] Hence it is clear that Ng follows the conclusions reached in the present study precisely and in their entirety.

In a review published in the *Review of Biblical Literature* in May 2004, Judith Hartenstein of Marburg University, Germany, interacts with the reprint of my essay on 1 Tim 2:12 in the essay collection *Studies on John and Gender: A Decade of Scholarship*.[52] She notes that

> Köstenberger shows through a syntactical study that 1 Tim 2:12 forbids women to teach and to have authority over men, not only to abuse authority. . . . This teaching of 1 Timothy is consistent with the praxis in Pauline churches, as Köstenberger [in an essay on women in the Pauline mission] cannot find any evidence of contrary roles of women in the Pauline epistles. In Köstenberger's opinion, this role of women—where men bear ultimate responsibility—should be authoritative in the modern church.

While this reviewer has accurately summarized the contention of the present study, however, she proceeds to state,

> I certainly do not agree with this result. My theological position is very different from that of Köstenberger. Nevertheless, I often find his analysis of texts and exegetical problems convincing and inspiring, especially if he uses linguistic approaches.

> . . . Likewise, I agree with Köstenberger's reading of 1 Tim 2. Köstenberger shows that the text demands a hierarchy between men and women and is meant as normative teaching. But with a different, far more critical view of the Bible, I need not accept it as God's word. (It helps that I do not regard 1 Timothy as written by Paul.)

In a remarkably honest and candid fashion, therefore, this reviewer affirms the present analysis of 1 Tim 2:12 and acknowledges that she differs not for exegetical or linguistic reasons but because she holds a "far more critical view of the Bible." Especially since she does not regard 1 Timothy as having been written by Paul, she need not accept the teaching of 1 Timothy 2 as God's word though it is "meant as normative teaching." While space does not permit a full-fledged critique of her stance toward Scripture in general or 1 Timothy 2 in particular, it seems clear that Hartenstein's presuppositions are problematic and unacceptable even for inerrantist evangelical egalitarians.

This is not to say that *every* disagreement with the present essay by egalitarians must necessarily stem from an errantist stance toward Scripture, nor is it to imply that no exegetical or linguistic arguments could be advanced within an inerrantist framework. Nevertheless, this reviewer's candor makes explicit what may often be an unacknowledged factor in feminist or egalitarian interpretations of 1 Tim 2:12, namely, presuppositions that in fact override the actual exegesis of the passage. Whether or not this is acknowledged by egalitarian or feminist interpreters, their choice of which exegetical arguments to embrace may be (and often seems to be) motivated by their prior commitment to egalitarianism. How refreshing it is when this is openly acknowledged as in the case of Hartenstein's review.[53]

Finally, Wayne Grudem, in his encyclopedic work *Evangelical Feminism & Biblical Truth: An Analysis of More Than 100 Disputed Questions*, accurately summarizes the contribution of the original essay and concurs with its findings.[54] Grudem properly interacts with Sarah Sumner's objection that I have made a "mistake" in saying that the word *didaskō* in 1 Tim 2:12 has a positive force, because the same word is used negatively in 1 Tim 6:3 and Titus 1:11.[55] In fact, in 1 Tim 6:3 it is not the same word, but the word *heterodidaskalein* ("to teach falsely") that is used, and in Titus 1:11 the context clearly indicates a negative connotation by the qualifier "teaching *for shameful gain what they ought not to teach*." No such negative qualifier is found in 1 Tim 2:12, however.

Grudem also deals with I. Howard Marshall's objection to my taking the word *didaskō* in 1 Tim 2:12 in a positive sense, claiming that this "overlooks the fact that to say 'But I do not permit women to give false teaching' in this context would imply 'But I do allow men to do so.'" Yet as Grudem rightly points out, Marshall himself argues that *authenteō* has a negative nuance of "exercising autocratic power."[56] Hence the same objection he lodges against my essay would equally apply to his interpretation.[57]

Conclusion

As the above survey of scholarly responses to the original essay on the syntax of 1 Tim 2:12 has shown, the identification of two distinct syntactical

patterns has met with virtually unanimous acceptance, even among egalitarian and feminist interpreters, and has held up very well to scholarly scrutiny. Only Keener hinted at and Belleville expressed criticisms. Belleville alleged that, first, *didaskein* and *authentein* are not verbs; that, second, the construction is a poetic device following grammatical rules of its own; and that, third, there are no parallels for a pattern from specific to general.

However, as mentioned, all three objections can be met. First, Greek grammars regularly and rightly treat infinitives under the rubric of verbs. Second, poetic device or not, Belleville has not overturned the clear and consistent syntactical patterns demonstrated in the present study, a pattern that has been accepted as valid even by virtually all other egalitarian scholars, including Marshall, Keener, Padgett, Giles, and Webb. Third, Belleville does not consider Acts 21:21, a genuine NT parallel, nor does she take adequate note of the almost fifty extra-biblical parallels adduced in the essay on the syntax of 1 Tim 2:12 in the first edition of *Women in the Church*.

Marshall, finally, while accepting the overall validity of our syntactical analysis, contends that *didaskein* is negative (see also Padgett, Giles). This, however, is unlikely in light of the fact that all instances of this verb in the Pastorals (to go no further) carry a positive connotation barring clear contextual qualification to the contrary. Marshall's arguments have been effectively refuted by Mounce and Blomberg.[58] For this reason, even after a decade of scrutiny, the results of the present study should not only be upheld as valid, but should now be considered as an assured result of biblical scholarship and hence ought to constitute the foundation upon which a sound exegesis of the present passage is conducted. ■

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[1] Most of this material is taken from my essay on the syntax of 1 Tim 2:12 in the second edition of *Women in the Church: An Analysis and Application of 1 Timothy 2:9–15*, ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger and Thomas R. Schreiner (Grand Rapids: Baker, forthcoming in August 2005). Used by permission.

[2] See my review of Belleville's work in *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 44, no. 2 (2001): 344–46.

[3] Linda Belleville, *Women Leaders in the Church: Three Crucial Questions* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 173 (the same assertion is made on p. 175). See the critique of Payne's study in Andreas J. Köstenberger, "A Complex Sentence Structure in 1 Timothy 2:12," in *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9–15*, ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger, Thomas R. Schreiner, and H. Scott Baldwin (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 82–84.

[4] Belleville, *Women Leaders*, 175–76. It is unclear why Belleville disallows the converse word order, especially in light of the occurrence of this pattern in Acts 21:21 (cited in my original essay in *Women in the Church*, 103, n. 15).

[5] Belleville, *Women Leaders*, 177. However, see the critique of Payne's study in Köstenberger, "Complex Sentence Structure," 82–84.

[6] Belleville, "Women in Ministry," in *Two Views on Women in Ministry*, ed. James R. Beck and Craig L. Blomberg (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 135–36, with reference to Köstenberger, "A Complex Sentence Structure in 1 Timothy 2:12," in *Women in the Church*, 81–103. But see the reviews by Andreas Köstenberger (cited in n. 2 above) and Thomas Schreiner in *Journal for Bibical Manhood and Womanhood* 6, no. 2 (2001): 24–30. In an apparent effort to marginalize the results of the study, Belleville calls it "traditionalist" ("Women in Ministry," 136), implying that it does not represent serious research but rather constitutes an effort to validate a traditional understanding of gender roles by means of the trappings of scholarship. This is hardly accurate, however, since the essay involves extensive interaction with primary material and presents a pattern of the usage of *oude* that has not previously been proposed.

[7] Belleville, "Women in Ministry," 136.

[8] Ibid., 135.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid., 136.

[11] Ibid.

[12] See also Henry Baldwin's convincing critique of Belleville's contention that nouns, rather than verbs, should be studied in relation to the syntax of 1 Tim 2:12 in his essay on *authentein* in the second edition of *Women in the Church*.

[13] Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 587–611, esp.

588.

[14] Ibid., 598–99.

[15] With reference to the first edition of *Women in the Church*, 11–12.

[16] Köstenberger, Schreiner, and Baldwin, eds., *Women in the Church*, 11.

[17] This includes her argument that *authentein* is rendered negatively throughout the history of translation and that only recent English translations have rendered the term positively (pp. 209–10; though she notes that both Martin Luther and William Tyndale translated the term positively as "des Mannes Herr sei" and "to have authoritie over a man" respectively). However, even if this argument were true, this would prove the accuracy of such a rendering as little as the Majority Text proves the superiority of the Byzantine NT text tradition, nor can this argument overturn the demonstrable rules of Greek grammar and syntax with regard to 1 Tim 2:12. What is more, Belleville's argument that the positive renderings of *authentein* in 1 Tim 2:12 in virtually all the major recent and current English translations is "partly to blame" for a "hierarchical, noninclusive understanding of leadership" is open to debate as well.

[18] Peter T. O'Brien, Review of *Women in the Church*, *Southern Cross Newspaper* (September 1966), published by Anglican Media in Sydney, Australia.

[19] Helge Stadelmann, Review of *Women in the Church*, *Jahrbuch für evangelikale Theologie* 6 (1996): 421–25.

[20] Alan G. Padgett, "The Scholarship of Patriarchy (on 1 Timothy 2:8–15): A Response to *Women in the Church*," *Priscilla Papers* 11, no. 1 (Winter 1997): 24.

[21] Craig S. Keener, Review of *Women in the Church*, *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 41, no. 3 (1998): 513–16. In a perceptive comment that anticipates Craig Blomberg's 2001 essay (see below), Keener suspects that this reading would represent a challenge for "the more moderate complementarian view that allows women to teach men provided they are under male authority."

[22] I. Howard Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles* (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1999), 454–60, esp. 458–60.

[23] Ibid., 458.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Such as, "I do not permit the women to continue their false teaching." See Craig L. Blomberg, "Neither Hierarchicalist nor Egalitarian," in *Two Views on Women in Ministry*, 361, n. 137.

[26] Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 458.

[27] Blomberg, "Neither Hierarchicalist nor Egalitarian," 359, noting that this is conceded by the egalitarian Walter Liefeld in "Response," in *Women, Authority and the Bible*, ed. Alvera Mickelsen (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1986), 220.

[28] Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 458, n. 157.

[29] Ibid., 460.

[30] See Köstenberger, "A Complex Sentence Structure in 1 Timothy 2:12," 91.

[31] See further the objection dealt with and answered by Wayne Grudem discussed below.

[32] William Mounce, *The Pastoral Epistles* (WBC 46; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 120–30, esp. 124–26 and 128–30.

[33] Ibid., 125, 129.

[34] Ibid., 128.

[35] Ibid., 130.

[36] Kevin Giles, "A Critique of the 'Novel' Contemporary Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9–15 Given in the Book, *Women in the Church*. Parts I and II," *EQ* 72, no. 2 (2000): 151–67 and *EQ* 72, no. 3 (2000): 195–215. See my response "*Women in the Church*: A Response to Kevin Giles," *EQ* 73 (2001): 205–24.

[37] Giles, "Critique, Part I," 153.

[38] Giles, "Critique, Part II," 212.

[39] Craig Blomberg, "Neither Hierarchicalist nor Egalitarian," 363.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid., 364.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Though it is not entirely clear to me how this conclusion renders Blomberg "neither hierarchicalist nor egalitarian," as he suggests in the title of his essay. I see how he wants to avoid some of the negative connotations associated with the term "hierarchicalist" and how he is more open to women in leadership than strict non-egalitarians, but clearly he shares with the latter their central tenet and thus hardly occupies a true middle position between those who believe in women holding positions of ultimate authority in the church and those who do not. Also, in his title he erects somewhat of a strawman by positing "hierarchicalist" as one of the two polar opposites. This is accomplished only by stereotyping his fellow-complementarians. Is Blomberg implying that Thomas Schreiner or Ann Bowman, for example, the authors of the two non-egalitarian essays in the same volume, are "hierarchicalists"? It appears Blomberg is able to occupy the center in the debate only by pushing others with whom he shares their central tenet further to the right.

[45] On issues of application, see Dorothy Patterson's chapter in the second edition of *Women in the Church*.

[46] William J. Webb, *Slaves, Women & Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001), 35. It is beyond the scope of the present chapter to respond to Webb's categorization of this work as "patriarchal" (p. 282 *et passim*), other than to note that the label is tendentious, inflammatory, and inaccurate.

[47] Ibid., 225.

[48] Ibid., 244, n. 3.

[49] Esther Yue L. Ng, *Reconstructing Christian Origins? The Feminist Theology of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza: An Evaluation* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2002), 285, n. 170.

[50] Ibid., 287, n. 184.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Judith Hartenstein, Review of Andreas J. Köstenberger, *Studies in John and Gender*, *Review of Biblical Literature*, posted at www.bookreviews.org (since the posted review contains no page numbers, no page numbers will be cited below). See Andreas J. Köstenberger, *Studies in John and Gender: A Decade of Scholarship* (Studies in Biblical Literature 38; New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 261–82. The reprinted essay is "Syntactical Background Studies to 1 Tim 2.12 in the New Testament and Extrabiblical Greek Literature," in *Discourse Analysis and Other Topics in Biblical Greek* (ed. Stanley E. Porter and D. A. Carson; JSNTSup 113; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 156–79 (a slightly modified version of the essay that appeared in the first edition of *Women in the Church*).

[53] See Tom Schreiner's comment on p. 107 in *Women in the Church* that "[t]hose scholars who embrace the feminist position, such as Paul Jewett, but argue that Paul was wrong or inconsistent in 1 Timothy 2, are exegetically more straightforward and intellectually more convincing than those who contend that Paul did not actually intend to restrict women teaching men in 1 Timothy 2."

[54] Wayne Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism & Biblical Truth: An Analysis of More Than 100 Disputed Questions* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2004), 314–16.

[55] Ibid., 315, n. 111, with reference to Sarah Sumner, *Men and Women in the Church: Building Consensus on Christian Leadership* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003), 253 n. 21, who in turn cites Padgett, "Scholarship of Patriarchy," 24. See also Tom Schreiner's similar critique of Sumner in his essay in the second edition of *Women in Church*.

[56] Ibid., 316, with reference to Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 458. See also Tom Schreiner's critique of Marshall in his essay in the second edition of *Women in the Church* and Grudem's interaction with the views of Blomberg and Belleville on the syntax of 1 Tim 2:12 on pp. 316–19 of his book.

[57] For a detailed interaction with Marshall, see already the discussion above.

[58] As discussed, Blomberg himself, while concurring with the overall thrust of the present study, takes its implications into a somewhat different direction than seems warranted.

SPRING 2005
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"The Nature of Authority in the New Testament" (Ch 15) by Walter L. Liefeld

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Walter Liefeld's contribution to the volume *Discovering Biblical Equality* is customarily irenic and scholarly. His mostly measured assessments are those of a reverent theologian doing his best to read the Scriptures. That posture is always commendable. Especially notable is Liefeld's strong position regarding the nature of spiritual leaders viewed as considering themselves servants rather than asserting themselves as authorities or, in the language of Peter, as "being lords over God's heritage." Liefeld appropriately emphasizes the biblical perspective of servant posture. Much of the contemporary discussion regarding rights, privileges, authority, entitlements, etc. has missed the biblical mark by light years. Hence, one can only applaud the even-handed emphasis of Liefeld regarding authority, especially his emphasis that the only real authority is God's authority.

On the other hand, there are peculiarities in Liefeld's understanding which must be noted. One must begin with his definition of authority. Liefeld says, "Authority in the sense under consideration is a narrower term used to describe the right to command others and enforce obedience" (255-256). If the one with authority is Christ, this definition has possibilities. Although he did not coerce obedience while on earth nor does he do so in the present, there is coming a day when "every knee shall bow and every tongue confess." Certainly he does have the right to command others. However, this definition, if intended for the church, seems inadequate in its applicability. In keeping with the remainder of Liefeld's article, in which he stresses the servant posture, it is better to argue that the authority of the apostles and of all subsequent lesser forms of authority arise first as a result of the commissioning of Christ.

In the second place, this authority is sustained on the basis of a godly life and complete obedience to the commands that have been given by Christ. For example, the Great Commission (Matt 28:16-20), has as its *raison d'etre* the fact

that it is the command of Christ to take the gospel to the ends of the earth and to baptize and to teach those who respond affirmatively. The apostles clearly received this authority from Christ and mediated that authority to pastors and deacons in the church of God, and, through them, to all of the people of God. All of these, in turn, are entrusted with certain authority resulting from the authority that has been given to Christ. Their ability, however, to sustain that mandate is what my father loved to call "moral ascendancy." The authority is not sustained by force of arms or intellect but by force of character and faithfulness to Christ. Nevertheless, the authority that belongs preeminently to Christ has in fact been passed on to his church through the apostles, the ministers of the church, and to the people themselves. This is real authority when processed in the moral posture previously indicated.

The authority extends not only to evangelism but also to the "teaching of all things that I have commanded," which is the understanding of evangelicals in every era. This authority embraced not only the words of Christ but also the words of the apostles in Holy Scripture. Hence, when in 1 Tim 2:12 women are not allowed to be in authority over men or in a teaching position over men, this authority comes not only with the authority from the apostle Paul but also from Christ. The church or individual leaders within the church are not left with the right to abrogate the commandment of the Lord. Paul speaks specifically of his own writing, "If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord" (1 Cor 14:37).

As a consequence, it is not easy to see how Liefeld arrives at the conclusion that "in all these narratives the evidence is uniform that authority applies not to preaching but to exorcism and healing and only rarely hears arguments about whether women should perform the latter" (257). Certainly, Liefeld rightly notes in the particular text he has chosen that the authority involved has to do with exorcism and healing, but this conclusion is to overlook the fact that the entire New Testament is bound by the authority of Christ; and, hence, every syllable of it is critically important for the disciple both to honor and to obey. This authority certainly extends to preaching. Again, Liefeld says, "By contrast, it is noteworthy that the gospels do not say that Jesus' teaching authority was transferred to the twelve" (258). While that may be technically true in the sense that there is no expressed statement precisely to that effect, surely one cannot doubt that the apostles understood Christ's authority to be transferred to them to some extent. Otherwise, Paul's claim that if people are spiritual, they should acknowledge what he had written as the word of God (1 Cor 14:37) is an innocuous act of bluster void of any particular authority. Clearly that is not what Paul intended.

When Liefeld argues that the word for "obey" in Heb 13:17, "Obey your leaders and submit to them," is the Greek word *paithō*, which means "persuasion," he is precisely correct. Of course, if one is persuaded, then he is to submit, which is a stronger term. Not only is he to submit, but those to whom he is to submit are spoken of as "those who have the rule over you," an employment of the Greek verb *hegeomai,* a stronger term than Liefeld seems to suggest. Clearly, this word does not enjoin the power and authority of a king, but it does depict a very decisive leader who in fact carries serious spiritual authority.

Regrettable is Liefeld's representation of independent churches, and especially "Baptist" churches, as places where the senior pastor, especially if he is the founding pastor, exercises ultimate—perhaps absolute—authority. While there are certainly some cases of this injustice to which Liefeld might appropriately appeal, this injustice is hardly the rule since Baptist churches, and for that matter many independent churches, practice either congregational rule or elder rule, neither of which lend themselves to "absolute authority." On the other hand, those Baptist and independent churches who recognize the importance of the pastoral position do believe that as long as a senior pastor is not theologically heretical, morally reprobate, or spiritually bankrupt, the church should essentially follow his leadership, even while he labors as a servant to the church he serves. This misrepresentation of congregationalism on the part of Liefeld understandably raises the question of Liefeld's actual knowledge of modern congregational church life.

More disturbing still is Liefeld's dependence upon 1 Cor 7:4 in an attempt to prove that the authority of husband and wife in marriage is equal. While the particular subject under consideration is the most intimate relationship of human life, a relationship in which there is certainly equality does not necessarily transfer into the kind of universal equality for which Liefeld seems to argue. Certainly, ontological equality of husband and wife are established by virtue of the fact that they are both human, made in the image of God, and equally accountable to God. However, just as the same is true for each individual on the face of the earth, nevertheless, civil magistrates, while ontologically equal to the rest of us, are positionally vested with an authority to which we are to submit (Romans 13). So also is the relationship between wife and husband. Nevertheless, in the family relationship itself the wife is told to submit to the husband, and the husband is instructed to love his wife as sacrificially as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it (Eph 5:22-33).

Submission is a word that implies a voluntary recognition of an authority—in this case established by the Lord himself. Equally disappointing is Liefeld's inadvertent misrepresentation of those in the complementarian camp as having made the assumption that 1 Tim 2:12 forbids women "from ever having any authority" (263). Actually, I know of no complementarian who has ever held that view in light of the fact that women are, for example, specifically instructed to teach other women and children (Titus 2:3-5). By the same token, there are limits placed upon the public teaching role.

Again, Liefeld insists,

> What is often overlooked in these discussions is that women traditionally were not welcome as teachers in either Greek or Jewish society. To restrict the ministry of teaching to men would not have been surprising to the world of the New Testament. If missionaries, like Paul, were to be all things to all people to win them to Christ (1 Cor 9:22), public proclamations of Christian teachings would ideally be done by men (265).

To begin, this is a *defacto* attempt to argue that some of what the New Testament says was subject to cultural conditioning. While this position is

certainly one that many have argued, I find it troublesome, not only because it is unconvincing but also because the interpreter is left with the right to jettison just about anything that does not appeal to his own aesthetic sensibilities. More serious is the fact that his position is simply not accurate. For example, there is an explicit command in Titus for godly women to teach younger women the ways of faith. If this is so alien to Greek or Jewish society, why is this command not greeted with total astonishment? By the same token, the attempt to marshal arguments for public teaching ministry from the private instruction in the way of the Lord given by Aquilla and Priscilla to Apollos is an old argument that always fails. I know of no complementarian anywhere who does not believe that men can learn and do learn much from women. In the privacy of a situation that Aquilla and Priscilla had with Apollos, it was certainly appropriate for them to discuss theological matters. Apollos, apparently younger in faith than either of the other two, was able to sharpen his own understandings through those discussions. No violation of the public teaching limitation is discovered herein.

Finally, Liefeld resorts to anecdotal argument when he says, "One pastor recently asserted that to oppose him was to oppose God" (269). Certainly, there is no question but that some men abuse the authority God has given them through such statements and actions, but anecdotal evidence could be marshaled on all sides of this argument, even a notable one that occurred in the initial printing of *Discovering Biblical Equality.* But, such is hardly the point. On the other hand, 1 Tim 2:12 is a rather straightforward and easily comprehended mandate from the apostle Paul. The verse carries with it by virtue of the inspiration of the Bible the very authority of the triune God. It is thoroughly consistent with other instructions given throughout the Bible such as 1 Cor 11:1-12 where divine order in human relationships is plainly stated and where even the distinction between ontological equality and positional submission is implied. Furthermore, the entire lack of precedent in Scripture for providing instances of pastoral or diaconal service from women or of women having a public teaching role in synagogue or church has still not been shown to be in error. In conclusion, Liefeld is correct to insist that from the minister's perspective, the pastor should always perform his duties from the vantage point of a servant. By the same token, the pastor realizes that much of what he does is done with the authority of Christ and the biblical witness of the apostles. This position is stronger than the one Liefeld proposes in his article.

In sum, Walter Liefeld sounds an appeal for servant leadership that is critical for the church in a day of the assertion of rights, authority, power, and entitlement. Nevertheless, he also invokes essentially the same well known egalitarian arguments. These views amount to (1) ignoring precedent in Scripture; (2) marshalling revisionist and complicated interpretations of numerous passages in Scripture, which otherwise appear to be straightforward; and (3) largely ignoring 2,000 years of Christian interpretation, guided instead by a "hermeneutics of interest," which allows a social concern to determine how one approaches the text of Scripture.

Perhaps complementarians may be forgiven for having higher regard for more liberal theologians who, while agreeing with egalitarian conclusions, do so without misrepresenting or reinterpreting Scripture. The position that

Paul opposes women in pastoral roles but in so doing is simply mistaken seems to me to be a position of greater integrity. But, of course, the battle for feminism is already won in liberalism and liberal churches. Evangelical churches, on the other hand, remain as the last outposts of a concerted effort to read the Bible and follow its teachings regardless of conventional wisdom and social agenda. Therefore, I suppose, egalitarianism must attempt the impossible. ■

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JBMW 10/1 (Spring 2005) 60-62

"Biblical Priesthood and Women in Ministry" (Ch 16) by Stanley J. Grenz

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Before offering any form of summary or critique of this chapter, I would first like to express my deepest condolences to the family of Stanley Grenz at the event of his unexpected, untimely death. Our prayer for his family and friends is that the God of all comfort would minister to and fellowship with them as they mourn the loss of a son, a brother, a father, a grandfather, and a friend. May we all learn to number our days as we ponder afresh that our earthly lives are but a vapor and that we will soon meet our Maker.

Summary

The main goal of Grenz's essay—which is adapted from his larger work, *Women in the Church*, co-authored with Denise Muir Kjesbo[1]—is to refute those who argue that the priestly character of the pastoral office entails that only men may exercise pastoral leadership. Some complementarians—mainly from within the liturgical traditions—argue that the pastoral office (or function) is to be seen as the instantiation of a general biblical principle of male priesthood. Their argument is roughly as follows: clergy constitute a priesthood; women could not be priests; therefore women cannot be clergy.

The error, according to Grenz, rests in the first premise. The new covenant counterpart to old covenant priesthood is not found in the pastorate, but rather in the priesthood of all believers. Furthermore, the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers entails that "the status of priest is exactly what forms the basic qualification for all church officers" (276). The pastoral role is to be filled by people gifted for the pastorate serving among the gifted people of God. Since priesthood is the basic qualification for the pastorate and the *charismata* are distributed without distinction, both men and women are thereby qualified and gifted to serve as elders and pastors.

Response

In some ways it is difficult to know how to respond to Grenz's essay, for I—along with most complementarians[2]—*join* Grenz in rejecting the faulty premise that the pastoral office (or function) is an instantiation of the priesthood. The priesthood was a shadow pointing forward to the substance, Jesus Christ, our great High Priest. All believers are united in our Priest, and via union with him we comprise a "royal priesthood" (2 Pet 2:5, 9).

Does this mean that Grenz's egalitarian ecclesiology is thereby established or vindicated? By no means. To see why, it may be helpful to imagine an unlikely, but perhaps illuminating, fictional dispute. Let us imagine that two theologians are having a debate over the qualifications for eldership. Their disagreement is not about gender, but about whether or not one must be a mature believer in order to be an elder. The theologian who believes that only mature believers are qualified to be elders offers the following argument: elders constitute a priesthood; new converts could not be priests; therefore new converts cannot be clergy.

The theologian who believers that *all* believers are qualified to be elders points out that it is the church, not the pastorate, that fulfills the priesthood. Furthermore, God distributes the gifts indiscriminately, and it is the combination of priesthood and gifting—not maturity in our walk with the Lord—that qualifies one for the office (or function) of elder.

The theologian who believes that new believers may be elders has effectively refuted the peculiar argument of the mature-elders-only theologian, but this does *not* mean that he has established his own position, nor that he has refuted his opponent's conclusion. The reason is that Scripture specifically weighs in on the contested conclusion: "He [an elder] must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil" (1 Tim 3:6).

I would suggest that an analogous—though by no means identical—situation occurs in the essay by Grenz. The arguments sound fine, until you realize that Paul has addressed this very issue and prohibited the very conclusion that Grenz seeks to draw! Just as 1 Tim 3:6 ("he must not be a recent convert") defeats the idea that recent converts may be elders, so 1 Tim 2:12 ("I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man") defeats the idea that women may be elders. Grenz believes that the combination of indiscriminate gifting by the Spirit combined with the fact that the priesthood of believers is the fulfillment of the old-covenant priesthood yields the conclusion that women may be elders. But Paul explicitly forbids that very conclusion. In order for Grenz's argument to work, it must depend on his revisionist interpretation of 1 Tim 2:12 and other crucial texts that have a more direct bearing upon whether or not women are scripturally permitted to be elders.

But Grenz has a response to this argument. He suggests that complementarians, in their attempt to skirt the ecclesiastic implications of the New Testament teaching on spiritual gifts, have driven a sharp wedge between the *charismata* and the ordained office. In other words, they erect a false dichotomy between the gifting of the Spirit and the exercise of the pastoral role.

But this does not change my response in the least. How do we decide the relationship between role and gift? By seeing if the New Testament writers

drew any distinctions between them. Paul clearly taught that God indiscriminately distributes the gifts within the church, and he also clearly teaches that only qualified males are to be elders. Therefore, he implicitly drew a distinction between the two, and he did not draw the conclusion that Grenz draws, namely, that women may serve as elders.

I would suggest that Grenz's essay is successful only in defeating the method of argumentation employed by those who build their case for complementarianism upon the assumption that the pastorate is an instantiation of an all-male priesthood. Those who reject such an assumption will be unfazed by this essay. It neither defeats complementarianism nor advances egalitarianism, for the issue cannot be decided based upon the priestly—or non-priestly—character of the pastorate. The issue will be decided based upon whether or not Paul specifically forbade women from entering into that office or exercising that function. I join the other contributors to this issue in maintaining that careful, contextual, grammatical-historical exegesis vindicates the complementarian understanding that Paul appeals to the creation order to establish his conviction that only men may serve as elder-pastors in the church. ■

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[1]Stanley J. Grenz with Denise Muir Kjesbo, *Women in the Church: A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1995), 173-98.

[2]Grenz writes that Thomas Schreiner, in his review of *Women in the Church* (*TrinJ* 17 [Spring 1996]: 121) "only cautiously endorses the argument from the all-male priesthood in the Old Testament" (274). But this is incorrect. Schreiner *agreed* with Grenz that his "dismissal of this argument [that only males can truly represent Christ to the congregation] is on target" and that one cannot "justify the exclusion of women from ordination merely by observing that women could not be priests in the OT." Schreiner went on to say—and this is the only sentence Grenz quotes—that "there is a *suggestive* pattern in that women functioned as prophets in both the OT and the NT, but they do not serve as priests in the OT nor as elders in the NT" (my emphasis). Pointing to a pattern as "suggestive"—with connotations of possible implications and hints—is different from endorsing the argument, however cautiously.

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"God, Gender and Biblical Metaphor" (Ch. 17) by Judy L. Brown

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> Thou hast been faithful to my highest need:
> And I, thy debtor, ever, evermore,
> Shall never feel the grateful burden sore.
> Yet most I thank thee, not for any deed,
> But for the sense thy living self did breed
> That Fatherhood is at the world's great core.[1]

Judy Brown, in her chapter in *Discovering Biblical Equality*, entitled "God, Gender and Biblical Metaphor,"[2] seeks to dissuade her readers from viewing God in masculine terms by explaining that such terms are merely ways in which we speak of God in figurative language, but a language which does not reflect who he really is (287). She reminds us that God is spirit and that the Bible presents God through personification and anthropomorphism which reflects only a likeness to God (287-88). Titles like "Father" and "King" are human characteristics ascribed to God but should not be carried too far for self-serving reasons (287-88).

She then seeks to affirm the use of the masculine gender, third personal singular pronoun in modern translations for the person of God. Declaring that even though God is not male she does recognize that English, Greek, Hebrew, and most ancient and modern languages do not have a third person personal pronoun which does not express gender. Consequently, she continues, the third person pronoun *he* refers to a male person or to a generic individual without reference to gender (288). She concludes, by alluding to Carl F. H. Henry, that the only pronoun that may be used of God is a masculine, but the point is not "to convey that God has a sexual or gendered nature but to emphasize God's personal nature. When *he* is used for God in Scripture, it is used in its general sense as a generic personal pronoun, not in its gender-specific sense as a masculine pronoun" (288).

Though Brown is correct that Henry believes any sexual overtones should be avoided in speaking of the biblical teaching regarding God, he also recognizes that masculine terminology is inherent in speaking of God in a way that feminine terminology is not. Henry says,

> But the Bible's predominant use of masculine imagery and metaphors is not to be hurriedly dismissed as a matter of indifference. Even as the biblical writers do not indiscriminately employ anthropomorphisms with reference to God, so the gender-uses of the inspired writers involve ontologically important conceptual distinctions, even though they do not convey sexual connotations. The biblical linguistic precedents are to be considered normative for Christian theology.[3]

Brown rightly understands that there is a temptation to speak of God as if he were a male sexual being, if one depicts him as a physical being. She is right to emphasize that attempts to do so in ancient Israel would have been a form of idolatry, prohibited by God on the first table of the Law. She is also correct to argue that a male (and thus sexual) deity led to the need for female (sexual) deities, and that God is, rather, spirit. Brown, however, goes on to say something much more:

> Moreover, the prohibition against ascribing sexual characteristics to God cannot be circumvented by positing that God's masculinity is metaphysical (and not physical). While some pagan and Eastern religions spiritualize sexuality—casting masculinity and femininity as spiritual polar forces defining and pervading all of reality—such notions are utterly alien to biblical teaching. According to Scripture, God created sexuality when he created physical life on earth. The being and nature of God does not partake of or participate in sexuality in any way (289-90).

God is not a sexual being, either male or female—something that was considered to be true in ancient Near Eastern religion. He even speaks specifically against such a view in Num 23:19, where the text has God saying he is not a man [*ish*], and in Deut 4:15-16, in which he warns against creating a graven image of himself in "the likeness of male and female." But though he is not a male, the "formless" deity (Deut 4:15) has chosen to reveal himself largely in masculine ways. The inherent equation of human masculinity with human male sexuality, however, would require that references to God in masculine terms is merely a "picture" of God for the purpose of human understanding (290). There would be, then, no metaphysical or telic reasons why the personal nature of God is spoken of in masculine terms, or why God is Father and Son from all eternity and spoken of repeatedly in strong masculine names, or why he is pictured performing seemingly masculine tasks (though granted there are a few instances when seemingly feminine acts are performed by God).

Brown appears to understand that masculine language for God comes

from a cultural, patriarchal context of the Middle-East rather than something intrinsic in God (290). After making this point, she contends,

> The man was the central figure in society, and the husband-father was the authority figure as the family's primary protector and provider. It is understandable, then, that masculine terms would be the common choice for describing a God who is the greater protector, provider and authority figure. . . . In ancient times, all these traits were more characteristic of men than of women and were summed up in the traditional father's role (290).

The perspective that the Fatherhood of God originates from the cultural attempt to explain God falls short of the evidence. The culture of the ancient Near East did not create the reality of who God is by the name assigned to him in Scripture. God revealed himself, his identity, and then began to transform the culture. God is certainly not a male, but he has chosen to reveal himself to us primarily in masculine terms which reflect his personal identity and how he will work with his creation, in rule, in provision, in protection, and the like. Moreover, divine Fatherhood and Sonship are not temporal in nature, though our weak imitations are; God is the eternal Father and the eternal Son. One comes only to God through the language by which he has chosen to reveal himself to us and not by our creating his reality and who we might want him to be.

Elizabeth Achtemeier insightfully comments,

> It is not that the prophets were slaves to their patriarchal culture, as some feminists hold. And it is not that the prophets *could not* imagine their deities. It is rather that the prophets . . . *would not* use such language, because they knew and had ample evidence from the religions surrounding them that female language for the deity results in a basic distortion of the nature of God and of his relation to his creation.[4]

It is clear that Brown does not believe that God named himself, and then sought to order a world in which the man acted, from Adam onwards, as the protector, provider, and authority, and that the woman, from Eve onwards, was to be the nurturer and in submission to a father and a husband, as a reflection of him.

Roland M. Frye, who accepts the use of inclusive language for people, nonetheless believes that such language for God is unacceptable:

> Language for God is not equivalent to the kinds of naming we use in ordinary speech. . . . [W]e recognize that ordinary names for creatures are subject to human custom, choice, and change. According to biblical religion, on the other hand, only God can name God. Distinctive Christian experiences and beliefs are expressed through distinctive language about God, and the changes in that language proposed by feminist theologians do not

> merely add a few unfamiliar words for God . . . but in fact introduce beliefs about God that differ radically from those inherent in Christian faith, understanding and Scripture.[5]

In line with the foregoing is the important distinction regarding human seeking to understand the inscrutable, hidden God who is only known through his self-revelation. Certainly people, apart from the clear revelation of Scripture, have made God (in their minds) to be any number of distorted images (Rom 1:20-23), but only God has a right to name himself. It behooves us to simply accept God's self-revelation.

When Brown deals with the Father representation of God in the New Testament she believes (rightly) that the terminology is relational rather than sexual. But then Brown concludes that God is Father because of Jesus' relationship with his Father in heaven, and that Jesus has made this intimate relationship available to believers who are thus able to call God "Father." The fatherhood of God, then, "primarily expresses our family relationship with God through Christ. It is not intended to signify that God's essential nature is masculine, or more masculine than feminine, or gendered in any sense" (290).

I believe that she fails to understand the issue of essence and person in her discussion of the persons of God. If, in fact, the divine essence (*ousia*) precedes the person (*hypostasia*) God is an impersonal being. Patrick Henry Reardon rejects such a perspective as contrary to the ancient creedal formulas of the church:

> The Apostle's Creed, for example, does not begin with the divine essence but with the Person of the Father: *Credo in Deum, Patrem omnipotentem*. The Nicene Creed likewise does not make God first *ousia* but *hypotasis*, not *essentia*, but *persona*: "I believe in one God, the Father almighty."
>
> In identifying God first as the Father and then affirming that the Son is begotten of the Father and that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father—in holding, that is, that the *pater* is the *arche*—then we necessarily affirm patriarchy in the Holy Trinity. Indeed, inasmuch as all the Christian dispensation is Trinitarian, there is a necessary inference that "all of the Christian revelation is patriarchal."[6]

Reardon also argues that "Patristic literature asserts that in God the name *Father* is not titular but real. It is a 'proper' name, pertaining to God as God and not simply to God's relationship to us. Before he is our Father outside the Trinity, he is the Son's Father within the Trinity (see John 20:17)."[7]

Brown goes on to explain why she believes that God is expressed in masculine terms in the Bible. It is similar to how he is likened to animals, or even inanimate objects. This is merely a way for humans to understand God, an anthropomorphism. She writes,

> Even as Scripture likens God to various animals (Deut 32:10-12; Hos 5:14; 11:10;

> 13:7)—certainly not because God is an animal but because some animals have characteristics that help humanity better understood God—so too Scripture depicts God in terms of roles or attributes associated with men. This is done not because God is male or essentially masculine in nature but because men in ancient cultures possessed characteristics, including authority, that help portray God's relationship to his people. In a similar manner, Scripture likens God to various inanimate objects or entities (e.g., rock, fortress, shield, gate, bread, light), not because God is inanimate but because such things have an identity or a quality that helps humanity grasp certain qualities that are true of God (290-91).

She concludes from her manner of argument, consequently, and quite naturally, that authority is not really specifically invested in man:

> Furthermore, the fact that Scripture frequently portrays God's authority (along with a number of his other attributes) by means of masculine titles and word pictures does not mean that authority is necessarily or exclusively a masculine attribute. It simply means that Scripture reveals God as a personal being who has the power to command obedience—an attribute that typically characterized male persons and not female persons during biblical times (291).

Brown does not distinguish personal qualities of the eternal Father (and the eternal Son) from figures of speech used in temporal settings as God is manifested to humans. Donald Bloesch speaks to this question of the intrinsic nature of Father and Son in contrast to mere metaphors when God is compared to a rock, or is expressed in feminine terms at times. To see God as Father and Son because of human fathers and sons, is to turn biblical theology regarding God on its head. Fatherhood is patterned after God's Fatherhood, not vice versa.[8]

According to Bloesch, the names of God are analogical; they reveal God's identity. They speak to identity, the being of God, unlike Creator or Rock, which are metaphors that seek to explain his actions. Bloesch, citing Elizabeth Achtemeier, says to speak of God as Mother is to prepare for pantheism which would lead us to regard creation as coming out of the womb or being of God and that this would then be an extension of God.[9]

Brown also speaks of feminine imagery in the Bible and puts it on par with masculine imagery of God. For example, God is said to be like a

> mother eagle—stirring up the nest, hovering over the young and carrying the young in flight (Deut 32:11). The language is identical to that of Gen 1:2, in which "hovering" is ascribed to God's Spirit. Moses described God as being the One who both fathered and birthed Israel (Deut 32:18; "formed" in-

> stead of "birthed" in KJV ignores the wording of the Hebrew text "writhe in pain" and the fact that this wording was used in reference to childbirth) (291).

She goes through the remainder of Scripture pointing out ways in which God is spoken of as involved in feminine activities. Even believers being "born again" is seen as feminine imagery for God and his activity (292).

Brown concludes with her discussion on feminine imagery:

> Of course, none of these analogies means that God is female, any more than the masculine imagery means that God is male. The Spirit God is neither male nor female and is certainly not bisexual. Again, it must be emphasized, the Spirit God transcends all characteristics of physical creatures, including sexuality. . . . Defining the Creator according to the creation lowers the Creator to the level of the creation and produces serious theological errors (292-93).

Several of Brown's underlying assumptions about God need to be clarified. She is certainly right that we must view God analogously, even regarding his being viewed in masculine terms. Analogy shares components of univocal and equivocal language,[10] so that when God is spoken of as Father, this means in fact that he *is* a Father, though far more than human fathers. Analogical language, then, is neither equivocal nor univocal, but rather "there is a partial resemblance between our words and the transcendent reality to which they point."[11] That is, God is certainly different from humans, particularly (for our discussion) male humans, but also, in some sense, males share their masculinity with God who is perfectly masculine (not male) after whom masculine beings are an imperfect replica. Reardon sounds an alarm about classifying Father, unlike Mother or motherly characteristics, as a metaphor:

> [I]t appears to me that classifying the Father's proper name as only metaphorical is not, in practice at least, to explain it; it is to explain it away. It makes God's revelation nothing more than a restatement of our ignorance of him, so that we are back where we started, as though there had never been a divine revelation in Jesus Christ.[12]

The biblical text does not present God the Father as acquiring his name from human usage but human father being patterned after the Father of heaven. As F. F. Bruce says,

> Eph. 3:14f. probably means that God is 'the Father [*pater*] from whom every fatherhood [*patria*] in heaven and on earth is named', 'every *patria* is so named after the *pater*' (G. Schrenk, *patria*, TDNT V, 1017). God is the archetypal Father, all other fatherhood is a more or less imperfect copy of his perfect fatherhood. . . . According to Clem. of Alex., in what seems to be a reference to this passage, . . . 'every lineage [or fa-

> therhood] runs back to God the maker.' (Strom. 6, 7).[13]

In the words of W. G. M. Martin, "The Fatherhood of God is not a mere metaphor drawn from human relationships. The very opposite is the case. . . . The archetype of all fatherhood is seen in the God-head, and all other fatherhoods are derived from Him."[14]

Moreover, the use of Father, in contrast to other terms such as Rock or King, is an essential part of his personhood rather than merely a description of how he acts or even relates to us. He is the eternal Father, even as the Son is the eternal Son. In the relationship of Father and Son, the Son, as is characteristic of a son, is subordinate to the authority of the Father; and the Father, in some sense, is the eternal producer, begetter, of the eternal Son.

Another problem with Brown's view is the idea that our language of God is an attempt for us to understand him rather than this language being his self-expression. That is, rather than speaking of anthropomorphic and anthropopathic language, we should speak of theomorphic and theopathic language. We are made in the image of God, not he in ours.

Brown writes, "God is said to see, but a Spirit God doesn't have actual eyes; God is said to hear, but a Spirit God doesn't have ears" (288). Certainly, as a spirit, God does not have the physical organs of eyes and ears, nor for that matter the same intellectual nor emotional characteristics and limitations of humans. But Brown has made an important error. She has assumed that seeing and hearing may only be done by physical organs, and that, even in humans, seeing and hearing reside only in the physical and not in the immaterial part of humans. Through physical organs, human persons are able to receive light and sound, but such functions are deeper than the physical reception as human brains register and record phenomena of the physical world. The immaterial mind is what really thinks and works through the brain. Thus, God has an ability to see, hear, and think apart from the physical organs, and the manner of our physical interaction with our immaterial self is inferior to him. Consequently, like God, we think, feel, see, hear, and so on, but our doing so is only a weak likeness to his ability without a physical body.

We have been created in the image of God to function as he functions, but he is far more than us in all of his attributes. This is also true regarding sexuality. God has a self-revealed masculinity in Father and Son, but this is not maleness, for maleness deals with human sexuality (the Hebrew words for male and female are the physical sexual organs). Even so, our sexuality does bear a weak reflection to the infinite creativity of God as a spirit being.

> In the Bible it is said that God is *like* a mother in some respects, but that he is a father. It may be that maternal similes [sic] (or more of them) could be introduced into liturgical language. However, the introduction of feminine names, titles, pronouns, or metaphors would be to speak of God in terms other than those in which he has revealed himself in Scripture. It may well be, that masculine imagery for God reflects an important truth about the nature of his relationship with us, and therefore one

> that we are not at liberty to change.[15]

I would commend Brown for her section on feminist extremes, in which she speaks of possible extremes that feminists might advocate in this issue. She advocates staying with biblical terminology of God rather than subtracting or adding to it. Inasmuch as she is speaking of metaphors about God, I would concur, whether God is spoken of in masculine, feminine, or neuter (inanimate) ways. This, however, does not deal with the personal sense of God being eternally, not culturally, a Father and a Son.

In her next section on traditionalist extremes, I would agree, in part, with what she points out. Certainly we should not think of God as a physically sexual being, though he is creative, and our sexuality is but a weak representation of that creativity. Her conclusion, though—that even if God were masculine, this would in no way mean that spiritual leadership should be limited to the male gender—is a *non sequitur* in light of the abundance of Scripture that teaches differently. Even the apostle Paul relies heavily on the priority of Adam in his creation as a basis of male headship or authority in the home and church. I agree with much that she argues, but the effort to move from God not being a male to the view that males are not entrusted with leadership roles in the home and church is weakly argued. She fails adequately to make the connection on why this is so.

Brown continues her chapter on the matter of the image of God in male and female (296-299), a point with which I do not generally disagree, though I believe she has failed to deal squarely and carefully with the import of maleness and femaleness in Genesis 1 and 2, and Paul's teaching regarding these chapters. I would like to complete this brief interaction by considering her understanding of Jesus as a man. She argues that Jesus was born as man mainly because of the culture into which he was born:

> In order to be a representative human being (albeit without sin), Jesus had to be either male or female. The choice could not have been based on God's gender, for God is neither male nor female. Nor could the choice have been based on God's preference, for God does not favor men over women. What, then, determined Jesus' gender? The culture into which Jesus was born is the most likely possibility (295).

In other words, Jesus would not have been accepted as a teacher or Messiah as a woman. He had to be a man, though she says that this was probably not theologically required, only culturally (295). She does believe that it is important to use the titles God the Father and God the Son, rather than God the Mother and God the Daughter, because the Bible uses them. But her reasons for God to be a Father and a Son are unfounded. She bases it on the physical birth of the Son, his acceptance in the culture as a male child, and the likelihood that "male dominance" needed to be overturned by a male (296).

Male and female in Genesis are sexual, and man and woman are sexual distinctions. Brown seems to reject, or to be uninformed of, the eternal nature of the Father and the Son taught in the Scriptures and in the teachings of the Christian church from early times.

She seems to be incapable of ac-

cepting a view that masculinity and fatherhood reflect—even if imperfectly—the personal nature of God. Man, then, is made after the personal nature of God, not God made after the personal nature of men. Scripture presents Adam created directly by God first, then Eve is created indirectly by God from Adam. She is other than man, and is in fact also in the image of God as the man, but Paul distinguishes her likeness from that shared by men, and that she reflects the likeness of the man (1 Corinthians 11). It is on the basis of the priority of the man in creation, the nature of this relationship in the *imago Dei*, and the sin of the woman that Paul constructs his theology of leadership in the church and in the home. ■

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[1] George MacDonald in the dedication to his father in his first book in 1857.

[2] Editor's Note: Brown's article appears in the original edition of the book. After it was released, it became known that Brown had been involved in an adulterous lesbian affair and found guilty on felony accounts of breaking and entering with the intent to commit murder and malicious wounding. InterVarsity Press officials announced that they did not learn about the incident until April of 2005 and that they would cease publication of the book. IVP plans to re-release *Discovering Biblical Equality* without the article by Brown. See the full story at http://www.gender-news.com/ article.php?id=71. Nevertheless, since Brown's article was pulled because of her actions and not because of the content of her article (with which the editors of the book presumably agreed), it was decided that *JBMW* would respond to the article.

[3] Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority* (6 vols.; Waco, TX.: Word, 1976-1983; repr.; Wheaton: Crossway, 1999), 5:160.

[4] Elizabeth Achtemeier, "Female Language for God: Should the Church Adopt It?" in *The Hermeneutical Quest: Essays in Honor of James Luther Mays on his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Donald G. Miller (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick, 1986), 109.

[5] Roland M. Frye, *Language for God and Feminist Language: Problems and Principles*, Reports from the Center 3 (Princeton: Center of Theological Inquiry, 1988), 1.

[6] Patrick Henry Reardon, "Father, Glorify Thy Name!" in *Reclaiming the Great Tradition: Evangelicals, Catholics and Orthodox Dialogue*, ed. James S. Cutsinger (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997),106-07.

[7] Ibid., 108.

[8] Donald Bloesch, "Does God Have a Name?" an unpublished address delivered 25 September 1990.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Aristotle defines and distinguishes equivocal and univocal in the following manner:

> Things are said to be named 'equivocally' when, though they have a common name, the definition corresponding with the name differs for each. Thus, a real man and a figure in a picture can both lay claim to the name 'animal'; yet these are equivocally so named, for, though they have a common name, the definition corresponding with the name differs for each. For should any one define in what sense each is an animal, his definition in the one case will be appropriate to that case only . . .
>
> On the other hand, things are said to be named 'univocally' which have both the name and the definition answering to the name in common. A man and an ox are both 'animal', and these are univocally so named, inasmuch as not only the name, but also the definition, is the same in both cases: for if a man should state in what sense each is an animal, the statement in the one case would be identical with that in the other (Aristotle, *Categories*, §1, trans. E. M. Edghill, Great Books of the Western World, The Works of Aristotle, ed. Robert Maynard Hutchins [Chicago: William Benton, 1952], 1:5).

[11] Donald Bloesch, *The Battle for the Trinity: The Debate over Inclusive God-Language* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant, 1985), 14.

[12] Reardon, "Father, Glorify Thy Name!" 109.

[13] F. F. Bruce, "Name," in *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. Colin Brown, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 2:655.

[14] W. G. M. Martin, "The Epistle to the Ephesians," in *The New Bible Commentary*, ed. F. Davidson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953), 1023. See also Reardon, "Father, Glorify Thy Name!" 110.

[15] A report from the Doctrine Commission of the Anglical Diocese of Sydney, "Language, Gender and God," Year Book of the Diocese of Sydney, 1992 Synod Summary: Language, Gender and God, 450-51.

Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood
JBMW 10/1 (Spring 2005) 72-80

"Equal in Being, Unequal in Role": Exploring the Logic of Woman's Subordination" (Ch 18) by Rebecca Merrill Groothuis

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What is the Battle?

Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, not only the author of the chapter under review but also one of the editors of *Discovering Biblical Equality*, sets the tone for her chapter as well as for the volume as a whole in an interview in which she brushed aside "exegeting a few controversial biblical proof texts . . . or proof words" and indicated that she wanted to show that "biblical equality makes sense from every angle."[1] In so doing she immediately puts herself at odds with a large segment of the evangelical world who would see careful exegesis of pertinent texts, together with linguistic analysis of the words within those texts, as the bedrock of any search for understanding what God is saying in setting his guidelines and establishing his mandate for women and men in how they should live, serve, and interact with one another. The issue remains that divine guidelines and paradigms must be primary and foremost and the molding factors for individual choices.

Groothuis must be an extraordinary woman. According to her on-line biography, with a B.S. degree in psychology, she has been lecturing at Denver and Fuller seminaries, while through personal study equipping herself to do research and write in biblical studies and theology, disciplines other than those she formally studied. In the author information of her publications she is identified as "a free-lance writer and editor." Perhaps her decision to change venue from her formal study to her avocation of writing on topics in theology and philosophy accounts for the lack of biblical and theological references in her allusions to passages of Scripture and her lack of direct interaction with those whom she considers her opponents.

Interestingly, Groothuis not only defines the terms of her own position, but she also redefines the terms describing the positions she is critiquing. Such casuistry may give one a bit of an edge when trying to defeat an opponent and her position, but it does smack of a less

than scholarly approach to academic debate. The pressure is then upon the reader not only to read what Groothuis has written but also to be careful to read the words of those whose positions she seems to be maligning and systematically redefining in the process. For example, in footnote 25 of her chapter, she alludes to Piper and Grudem as arguing that "just as the animals were to be submissive to the man, so was the woman." Here are the words Piper and Grudem actually penned,

> The context makes it very unlikely that *helper* should be read on the analogy of God's help, because in Genesis 2:19-20 Adam is caused to seek his "helper" first among the animals. But the animals will not do, because they are not "fit for him." So God makes woman "from man." Now there is a being who is "fit for him," sharing his human nature, equal to him in Godlike personhood. She is infinitely different from an animal, and God highlights her value to man by showing how no animal can fill her role.[2]

Misrepresenting the positions of one's opponent is a less than convincing method of gaining ascendancy or even achieving the coveted equality!

What Are the Presuppositions?

Since Groothuis has written a lengthy chapter, a brief review cannot begin to interact with her litany of views and positions, much less her misinterpretations of complementarian positions, such as the example previously given. Perhaps the best starting point for evaluation would be to identify as much as possible the presuppositions of Groothuis in contrast to my own. Groothuis is seemingly comfortable being identified as an egalitarian since she is on the Board of Reference for Christians for Biblical Equality and would, I presume, agree with their statement of faith. Writings from her own pen in no way seem to move her out of the mainstream of egalitarian ideology. On the other hand, I was on the founding board for The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood and remain on its Board until now. My evaluation is from the standpoint of a complementarian. When Groothuis redefines complementarity *ex nihilo* without regard to the carefully prepared documents of the CBMW founders, even the most casual reader must admit that this revisionism makes any meaningful interaction almost impossible.

Groothuis and I embrace a completely different presupposition on anthropology or the divine plan for manhood and womanhood. But, even more important is the presupposition from which we are working respectively with reference to Scripture. I am assuming that Groothuis, as many egalitarians, would embrace inerrancy. I certainly hold that every syllable of God's Word is true. Here we find a real dilemma in that logical consistency demands that any belief system does not violate the principles of traditional logic, a point Groothuis tries to use in marshaling the *law of noncontradiction* to her aid, "A and non-A cannot both be true at the same time in the same respect" (304) or more commonly expressed, "A contradictory system cannot express a viable way of life." Certainly Scripture will not express two contradictory positions—even in two different locations since all of Scripture is

God-breathed. Perhaps the difference in our presuppositions is pinpointed in the fact that I also believe Scripture is sufficient—timeless and timely all at once. If, however, Groothuis refuses to exegete Scripture, what difference will it make if her experience trumps or reinterprets Scripture?

Groothuis tries to juxtapose two clear theological truths: equality and subordination. She acknowledges the truth that women and men are equal ontologically and spiritually, but then she tries to interpret this principle to make it conform to contemporary culture by suggesting that a truth from God must be compatible with logical human reasoning. She posits that for complementarians to suggest ontological equality but positional subordination in biblically dictated areas is illogical. *But*, complementarians see no contradiction. They believe that the language of Scripture showing both equality and difference simply unite in a complementary way. For example, the phrase used by the writer of Genesis (Heb., *'ezer kenegdo*, literally "helper like unto himself"), defines the way the woman functions or how she does her assignment, i.e., as a helper, while the rest of the phrase makes clear that she is equal, like, and in the image of God just as the man from whom and for whom she was created (Gen 1:27; 2:18-23).

What Are the Rules of Engagement?

Groothuis seemingly refuses to engage on the issue important to complementarians, i.e., the text of Scripture—what does God say? Rather, she insists on redefining complementarity, a word she considers ambiguous, even though the word was carefully coined to express a view of equality and oneness marked by cooperation and interdependence as found in the bibilical mandate. She asserts that she has chosen the term "traditionalism," along with "patriarchy" to identify the position opposite to egalitarianism, and one must leave to Groothuis herself whether or not these choices were meant to be pejorative, based on modern perceptions of these words, which have been hijacked and reprogrammed by feminists. On the other hand, she seems quick to attempt to add to her egalitarianism a component of "complementarianism."[3]

How are these terms defined by an objective dictionary? "Traditionalism is a system holding that all knowledge is derived from original divine revelation and then transmitted by tradition."[4] It is further nuanced with the descriptor "strongly favoring retention of the existing order: conservative, orthodox, right."[5] I find no problem with this label for someone who believes that God imparted absolute truth in Scripture and that he has given enough in his inspired Word that any serious seeker can find him and can know how to live. And if one has this truth, does it not follow that this truth can be transmitted from generation to generation?

"Patriarchy [Gk. *patria*, "father," and *arche*, "beginning" or "rule"] is a social system [going back to the beginning of civilization] in which the father is the head of the family and men (i.e., the fathers) have authority over women and children."[6] Interestingly whether one takes the meaning to be "beginning with fathers" or "rule of fathers," the description fits what is found in the creation order and recorded in Scripture. As has often been the case, feminists have revised meanings of words as well as the facts of history. In the case of patriarchy, modern dictionaries note the meaning

accorded to this word in "gender politics as referring to any form of social power given disproportionately to men" and consequently, as noted in the dictionary, feminist writers argue "that it is necessary and desirable to get away from this model in order to achieve gender equality." Again, the dictionary notes that "these writers are oversimplifying the complexities of society, or that such gender roles are not necessarily harmful. . ." and the critics of such feministic tampering with the language and history note that feminists are "trying to replace patriarchy with matriarchy," which should be, if anything, "an equally harmful system."[7]

Whatever the intentions of Groothuis, I am not offended by being labeled a traditionalist or patriarchalist, *if* commonly understood and officially recorded historical definitions are used. However, I will not give up the identification as a "complementarian," which also clearly identifies my position, nor will I allow the term to be hijacked without my own personal protest by any who seek to cover their own diametrically opposite positions by using a word warmly embraced by evangelicals, especially when in so doing the true definition is distorted.

Groothuis seems comfortable with the egalitarian label, and the dictionary defines egalitarian as "affirming, promoting, or characterized by belief in equal political, economic, social, and civil rights for all people" or more simply "a person who believes in the equality of all people."[8] Strict egalitarianism has run into difficulty along the way, such as in material and political egalitarianism as within communism and liberation theology. The Evangelical Women's Caucus split in 1986 over the lesbian influence and subsequent efforts by a lesbian minority of egalitarians. This incursion found its way into this volume under review, and any movement away from clear role distinctions grounded in the creation order makes it more difficult to avoid attacks on heterosexuality, which is not only normative but also divinely mandated. Perhaps this liability explains why some egalitarians, such as Stanley Grenz and Groothuis herself, have tried to refine egalitarianism by linking it with complementarianism. If I were to follow the lead of Groothuis in trying to reframe the egalitarian position in relationship to my own complementarianism, I would couple egalitarianism with "anarchy" (Gk. *anarchia*, "without a leader" or "without head or chief"). The definition suggests "absence of any form of political authority" or a world in which every man or woman is a law unto himself (Judg 21:25). The definition continues that there is the "absence of any cohesive principle, such a common standard or purpose."[9] I choose not to identify Groothuis or CBE as anarchists because of the misunderstanding of language technicalities in the perception of most people. I simply ask for the same courtesy on the part of egalitarians. Perception and understanding among the general public demands a certain care and restraint in how one presents her own position and even more so in how one presents the position of one who differs. Perhaps the safest and most appropriate plan is for egalitarians to define themselves and support their platform from the biblical text and then engage complementarians in the text of Scripture.

Groothuis identifies her hermeneutic as much by what she does not cite in her chapter as what she does write. In an earlier monograph she says, "This book arises from my own experiences . . . and from the sampling of similar stories that I have heard from other Christian women. . . . Experience . . . has a way of

nudging one's mind into explorations of different perspectives and new alternatives."[10] Groothuis alludes to Scripture, saying that "experience is illuminated by the truth of God's Word and the guidance of the Holy Spirit."[11] Nevertheless, experience and contemporary culture appear to take precedence over scriptural exegesis.

Here lies her impasse with complementarians: Groothuis is seeking to enhance her experience, thereby seeking new ideas and different ways of living for personal fulfillment and freedom in her service to the Lord; on the other hand, many women and men, as I, are looking for the truth of Scripture and obedience to the word of God. Passion for personal fulfillment and the liberty to follow the way that seems most compatible with giftedness and calling is not the motivating factor. They are looking for the narrow path (Matt 7:13-14), the dying to self (Matt 10:39), the giving up of personal satisfaction and the opportunity to serve the Lord on his terms however incongruous they may seem in the modern era (Prov 3:5-6). Of course, that narrow way with its clearly marked boundaries may seem to be characterized by what Groothuis describes as a "maze of rules and restrictions."[12] Yet many believers do not feel "cruelly" forced behind certain lines, for Jesus himself set the example of "delight[ing] to do his [the Father's] will" (Ps 40:8).

More preposterous and incongruous is the way Groothuis speaks of "an agenda the church has imported from modern culture" when feminism, according to recorded historical facts, is indeed the ideology overwhelming this generation. It is manifesting itself in the church as "biblical" feminism or egalitarianism. There are changes sweeping the evangelical world, and they do indeed fit neatly with the culture. But is this cultural revolution imposing itself upon Scripture to mold God's word into what is relevant for the age? God has spoken clearly that his children are *not* to be "squeezed into the world's mold" (Rom 12:2), but rather they should be "transformed" so that they can transform the world.[13]

While shunning the obvious struggle between orthodoxy and heresy (on issues such as the Trinity) and between the biblical (which assumes a natural reading of the whole of Scripture) and secular (which by coincidence fits the feministic agenda of the age perfectly), Groothuis is absolutely correct in seeing that the main battleground between egalitarians and complementarians is theological and hermeneutical disagreement.[14]

Groothuis does bring her reader to the continental divide in the issue of how men and women are to relate to one another in the home and in the church—where orthodoxy (what is right to believe) meets orthopraxy (what is right to do). From her position as an egalitarian, to be consistent in making her case that there can be no differentiation in the roles of a husband and wife in the home or in the assignments of the man and woman in the church, she must establish the premise that any differentiation means a corresponding distinction in worth or value between them. That means tampering with the Trinity since she must also establish that God the Father and God the Son are not only ontologically equal but also equal, and the same, in their respective roles, which would exclude the Son's voluntary subordination to the Father.

Interestingly in centuries of church history, the Son's eternal subordination to the Father has not been questioned by the mainstream of orthodoxy, but objections to this doctrine (beginning in the

fourth century with Arius who asserted a natural inequality within the triunity known as Arianism—a clearly identified heresy) have come to the forefront in the modern era through the ideologically motivated egalitarian discussions.[15] These discussions are not emerging from careful exegesis of the biblical texts or from research into the documents of church history. Any excursus into Scripture or into the annals of church history would demonstrate that the Arian heresy—or "emphatic subordination"—is the denial that the Son and the Father share the same essence or nature. On the other hand, the understanding of "economic subordination" or the subordination of mission or task was officially adopted as the orthodox position of the church from the fourth century (at the Council of Nicea) until now. The Son's obedience did not denigrate him or lessen his worth but exalted him and glorified the Father (Phil 2:5-11). Viewing a person's worth solely according to his role and perceived status in society not only is not biblically based but also is a poor criterion for interpersonal relationships. Who I am ultimately is not determined by what I can do. My ultimate worth is found in who I am in Christ—a woman created in his image. I may be unable to do certain tasks physically, emotionally, socially, or even spiritually (because of biblical boundaries), but God is interested in my obedience—to his written word more than to what *I feel* he is revealing to my own understanding.

How Do You Evaluate the Historical Record?

Groothius makes grand sweeping statements for which she supplies little or no evidence. She suggests that "for most of church history women were denied equal status with men because it was held that women were simply inferior persons by God's design."[16] The evidence for such universal assessment is not compelling. But, even if it were, in the biblical record (which is not addressed in her chapter), does Paul or Peter or Jesus Himself suggest that women are inferior? All are cognizant of the creation order and couch their teaching within its boundaries. To place the theologians or free-lance writers of the twentieth or twenty-first century, or even of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, above the Church Fathers and the Reformers seems a bit presumptuous even if you put aside certain passages of Scripture.[17]

What appears to be assigning inferiority to women may be merely the suggestion of God-ordained differences between women and men, e.g., in the physical area. Groothuis may also interpret exegesis of a text discussing the divine assignment to women in an author like Clement as making them inferior when, for example, Clement was very clear in presenting his ideas about the importance of a woman's work in the home so much so that he noted she should give her best energies to that task and be in subordination to her husband. In so doing, he made no distinction in spiritual responsibilities. He did see a clear division in her sphere of human activity or function. He expressed the woman's position as "inferior" to the man's because of that position as one of rank under the leadership and headship of her husband.[18]

Critics reveal their own presuppositions when they indicate that a woman's worth is tied to her "authority" and the recognition of that authority by equity in household chores and in what she is allowed to do in the church. A careful examination of most of what is found from the pens of the Church Fathers

does indeed confirm the functional subordination of the woman, but it is for her good and not for her hurt; and more important it is based upon careful exegesis of the Scripture. There are also numerous letters of praise about women from the Fathers.

In the New Testament, Phoebe is described as a "servant" and "helper" (Rom 16:1-2), and "older" or spiritually mature women are identified as teachers of younger women or women who are new in the faith (Titus 2:3-5). Women are described as wives and mothers and daughters, and then there are clear instructions on what it means to be a wife, mother, or daughter. So subordination describes how a woman does her assignment in relation to a man; it is in itself not a task she performs. It is the pathway to obedience, and the obedience is clearly to God even though he may evaluate that obedience by how a woman relates to her husband or to those in authority in the church.

"Rhetorical decoys" are tools used to pull attention away from the plain reading and natural understanding of Scripture. Such human logic and eloquent discourse may appear to resolve the conflict between egalitarian philosophy of what is appropriate for modern culture and an enlightened society on the one hand and a complementarian understanding of what is written in Scripture to be understood as timeless principles above evaluation molded by personal experience on the other. Timeless principles are not reinterpreted by personal experience, but they become timely ways of understanding the principles embedded in biblical truth and molding your life in obedience to those principles regardless of how irrelevant they may appear to the logic of the modern mind.

Groothuis caps her argument with a clear statement reflecting again her own presuppositions: "Not even God can make a logical contradiction true. And if it can't be true, it can't be biblical."[19] But Groothuis has failed to show that the complementarian position is contrary to logic. What is in view here are not the principles of Aristotelian logic, but Groothuis's understanding of those. Appropriately, one is reminded of Isaiah's judgment, "'For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,' declares the Lord" (Isa 55:8). Looking for emotional impressions or humanly reasoned conclusions is sublimated to the task of finding a sure word from God, which you first embrace by faith and then learn its lessons on the road of obedience.

In interacting with such scholarly theologians as Grudem and Piper, Schreiner, Baldwin, Köstenberger, Ortlund, Knight, Neuer, and Hurley who base their discussions and interpretations upon a careful exegesis of the text, Groothuis would do well to engage them with straightforward exegesis. Debate demands that you discuss the same topics from the same general framework and using clearly defined language in the classical sense. Any individual can find a way to substantiate almost any claim if allowed to redefine terms, revise history, reimagine doctrinal tenets proven over the centuries, and trump hermeneutical understandings with personal experience and cultural relevance.

Even if the question of one's experience is broached, the results are different from those Groothuis expects. Groothuis asks, "Why should an equal person be excluded from certain key areas of human activity and ministry?"[20] The first problem is to define key areas. I have chosen first and foremost to be a homemaker (although my academic credentials and

perhaps even my giftedness and certainly my opportunities might open many more options to me). Is this chosen "position" or "role" or "assignment" not a key area? Why? Is to provide a place of comfort and nurture for my family and any others God brings to my path not important in the overall schema; to help my husband with a myriad of tasks and to have reared my children up in the Lord and to invest now in my grandchildren—who would dare say that homemaking and family are not key areas! And who would suggest that such an assignment becomes a key area because I chose it!

God established the home and relationships therein from creation. He does not leave to us important decisions like how we are to glorify him, and we do not select the choices that qualify us for obedience! Homemaking is a key area because God made it so with the many ministries that spring from this accepted task. I did not "feel" called to do homemaking. I honored the biblical mandate set for women who choose to marry: I became a helper to my husband, and I accepted the assignment of managing my household and nurturing my children. However, if I had not married, I do not believe for a minute that I would then have *carte blanche* to do anything I was gifted or trained to do in the kingdom of Christ. I am still under mandate to determine where I might serve within the boundaries established by God himself.

Groothuis misrepresents the complementarian position by alleging that complementarians believe that "by virtue of her female being, a woman is fit to be subject to man's will and unfit to exercise her own will with the freedom and authority accorded a man" (303). This distortion of the biblical text blurs the matter considerably. First, as a female, a woman is in the image of God just as the man. This ontological statement is the basis from which one can move forward with further discussion. Egalitarians and complementarians are agreed on this point—why try to make them seem at opposite ends of the spectrum? This point is not debatable, at least among members of The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood and in the published works of complementarians now in the marketplace. Second, a woman does indeed exercise her own will. Biblical submission calls for voluntarily choosing to submit. R. T. France suggests a more etymological translation of the Greek verb: as "order oneself under," based on the root *tassō*, which is concerned with "order" and on the regular usage of the Greek middle voice, which usually carries a reflexive sense.[21] Thus, the choice has nothing to do with being "fit" or "unfit" but with being obedient to God. Third, freedom and authority are tricky concepts in the biblical context if you are trying to understand these terms in a secular world setting as opposed to a spiritual framework. Freedom, according to Scripture, is not the liberty to do what you choose any more than authority is the right to do what you feel you should do. Both of these terms are limited by putting aside personal rights and accepting the place God has given. The greatest freedom is in bondage to Christ, including the mandates he has given on how men and women are to live in relation to one another, and exercising headship with authority that is given by him alone. There is indeed a contrast between the ontological understanding of personal worth and being on one hand and the teleological understanding, which presents the divine design or purpose for that being, on the other.

A Concluding Word

Groothuis seems determined to set imaginary boundaries beyond what is recorded in Scripture, perhaps from lack of a careful exegetical study or maybe even in an effort to make those boundaries appear so oppressive that they should be ignored as "illogical." Consider again her attempt to shackle complementarians with a position that they interpret Scripture to mean that men are "fit" to do certain things that women are not "deemed fit to do." Not only is this insulting to me as a complementarian who happens to be a woman, but it is to suggest a careless interpretation of Scripture. For the record, here is the basis for a complementarian view of Scripture:

> (1) Women and men are created in the image of God (Gen 1:27) and are "joint heirs" in their spiritual inheritance (1 Pet 3:7) and without distinction "in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28).
> (2) Women and men are created with a divine purpose. In their relationship one with the other they are to glorify God and provide a tool for God to reveal himself to his creation. Before the woman was created, the man was created and given a clear assignment, which included spiritual leadership since he was entrusted with the clear instruction on life and death (Gen 2:15-17); the woman was created from the man and for the man to be a helper to him in his responsibility (Gen 2:18); the man was clearly identified as the head or leader (1 Cor 11:3); his headship was defined as well (Eph 5:25-29); women also have been given instruction on how they do their assignment, with a gentle and quiet spirit (1 Pet 3:3-4).

A beautiful plan—both equality and complementarity are clearly included. ■

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[1] "Biblical Gender Equality: Complementarity Without Hierarchy Interview," *IVP Academic Alert* 14 (Winter 2005): 1.
[2] John Piper and Wayne Grudem, eds., *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991), 87.
[3] Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, *Good News for Women* (Grand Rapids: Baker 1997), 15.
[4] *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language,* 4th ed. (Houghton Mifflin, 2000).
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Groothuis, *Good News for Women*, 11.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid., 12.
[13] Phillips' translation of Rom 12:2.
[14] Groothuis, *Good News for Women*, 15.
[15] See articles by Stephen Kovach and Peter Schemm, "A Defense of the Doctrine of the Eternal Subordination of the Son," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 42 (1999): 461-76; and Bruce Ware, "Tampering with the Trinity: Does the Son submit to His Father?" *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* 6, no. 1 (2001): 4-12.
[16] "Biblical Gender Equality," 3.
[17] See Charles Ryrie, *The Role of Women in the Church* (Chicago: Moody, 1970), 53-122 for an excellent balanced discussion of the writings of the Church Fathers on women. See also my dissertation, *Aspects of a Biblical Theology of Womanhood*, (D.Theol. diss., University of South Africa, 1998), 23-30. If you really want to examine the subject, read the Church Fathers in their own words—not a quote from them here and there.
[18] Clement of Alexandria, *The Instructor* 3.10 (Ante-Nicene Fathers 2:283).
[19] "Biblical Gender Equality," 3.
[20] Ibid.
[21] R. T. France, *Women in the Church's Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 33-34. See also my extended discussion in my *Aspects of a Biblical Theology of Womanhood*, 192-95.

SPRING 2005
JBMW 10/1 (Spring 2005) 81-87

"The Subordination of Christ and the Subordination of Women" (Ch 19) by Kevin Giles

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Introduction[1]

Author Kevin Giles's contribution to *Discovering Biblical Equality* is a rebuttal of the doctrine of the eternal subordination of the Son and Spirit to the Father. It is a chapter-length exposition of a thesis he develops in full in his *The Trinity and Subordinationism*.[2] He seems to assert, as most complementarians do, that the eternal relationships within the Godhead do have some theological and practical bearing for how the husband-wife and man-woman relationships should be viewed. For Giles, though, subordination in role necessarily entails inferiority in being; this leads him to reject the equal-yet-different paradigm of gender roles.

This review will survey the chapter's contents, and then provide some thoughts on critical mistakes Giles makes in his thesis, theological method, usage of important terms, representation of a few key theologians.

Content of the Chapter

Purpose and Thesis

Giles's purpose is to explain what he calls the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, compared with an unorthodox view that is championed by many evangelicals today. He asserts that "to teach the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father in being or role, person or function, is to teach contrary to the way the best theologians have interpreted the Bible across the centuries and to reject what the creeds and the Reformation confessions of faith affirm" (336). Arguing that tradition is on his side, the author claims that orthodox expressions of the Trinity reject every form of the eternal subordination of the Son. To ignore theological tradition in this case is to step out of the boundaries of orthodoxy.

By rejecting the doctrine of the eternal subordination of the Son in any form or fashion, Giles hopes to dismiss the argument made by those he calls "conservative evangelicals." They believe

this doctrine contributes to a biblical understanding of the ontological equality of women and men in the home and in the church, while preserving functional subordination. He argues, to the contrary, that personal equality cannot be reconciled to permanent role subordination.

Giles begins his argument by outlining the alternative positions, stating that all believers affirm the subordination of the Son in the incarnation. His view, which he believes expresses historic orthodoxy, limits subordination to the incarnation. On the other hand are those who, according to Giles, argue that "the subordination of the Son seen in the incarnation defines his relationship with the Father in the eternal or immanent Trinity" (337). These types of thinkers have "always" been around (337). Most conservative evangelicals, however, put a new twist on an old idea by claiming that the Son is eternally subordinated to the Father in role and function, not in being. Giles claims that this position arose out of the need to find theological justification for maintaining a male-dominated church and societal order in the wake of the women's liberation movement of the 1960s. His problem is that this teaching stands in the lineage of heretical subordinationist teachings of the past.

The Historical Argument

Giles then turns his attention to the theologians that he says rejected all talk of subordination within the Godhead. Athanasius is the most important contributor to the early development of the doctrine because he, unlike Arius, properly understood the entire scope of the Bible. Two passages determined his thinking on this: the prologue to John's Gospel, and Phil 2:5-11. Thus, according to Giles, Athanasius affirms the temporary subordination in the incarnation while clearly denying any eternal subordination, either in being or work. Giles writes, "For Athanasius, ontological equality demanded functional equality. One implied the other" (339). Giles goes on to write that since the Father and Son always act "cooperatively and conjointly" (340), the distinction between them made by Athanasius is seen in their relations to one another. In other words, the primary difference between these two members of the Godhead is that the Son is not the Father and the Father is not the Son.

Giles surveys Augustine's understanding of subordination as well, noting that Augustine begins his important *De Trinitate* with an appeal to the complete equality of the members of the Trinity. Similar to Athanasius, Augustine sets a "canonical rule" (341) whereby all passages that speak to the subordination of the Son refer only to his incarnation. As in his discussion of Athanasius, Giles asserts that Augustine believed "the Persons of the Trinity are differentiated primarily by their relations to one another" (342).

John Calvin's understanding of trinitarian doctrine is also surveyed. Calvin begins his treatment of the Trinity in the *Institutes* by explaining what "the divine three" ought to be called (342). He suggests that the term "person" be understood as a subsistence in God's essence. Though Calvin does not explain exactly what this differentiating subsistence is, he is clear that the three subsistences, or persons, share equally in the divine being or essence of God. From this Giles concludes, "This definition of a divine Person does not allow for any subordination whatsoever" (342).

Giles goes on to explain that historic Christian creeds and confessions implicitly exclude "the eternal subordination of the Son in function/role," because

they confess that the Father and the Son are "one in being" (344). He says that the Athanasian Creed in particular grounds the distinctions in the Trinity in differing relations, not works or function (345).

Nineteenth- and twentieth-century ontological subordinationism is most notably expressed in the work of Princeton theologian Charles Hodge. Giles views Hodge's proposal as making the Father ontologically superior to the Son and Spirit. Thus, says Giles, "[A]lthough the Son is divine, he is subordinate in *his being as the Son* as well as in *his work as the Son*" (346). Giles credits late twentieth century theologians with rescuing the doctrine of the Trinity from this bleak period, citing Millard Erickson, David Cunningham, and Wayne House as recent evangelical examples.

Giles concludes with a short section on what he calls "reading the Bible theologically" (348), which is essentially a restatement of his view of how Athanasius and Augustine battled Arian teaching. Quoting Bible texts back and forth across a doctrinal divide is often fruitless. Instead, the proper course is to determine what is "theologically primary" (348) by looking at the Bible and church tradition to see how the Scripture must be read and interpreted. His final conclusion is that "the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity stands in opposition" to those who hold to the eternal functional subordination of the Son and the ordering of male-female relationships (352).

Evaluation of Giles's Work

Thesis and Theological Method

Giles's thesis is greatly hindered by the fact that he sustains a misunderstanding about the nature of the discussion. His goal is to show the "orthodox" view of the doctrine of the Trinity, and in so doing, to prove that the eternal functional subordination of the Son falls outside of the boundaries of orthodoxy (336-337).[3] But the question of whether or not the Son is temporarily or eternally subordinated to the Father is not a matter of trinitarian orthodoxy. Numerous scholars have shown this either explicitly or implicitly—whether in agreement with eternal subordination or not.[4] There is room in trinitarian orthodoxy for both views. Those who argue for the eternal functional subordination of the Son do not claim that those rejecting it are outside of the boundaries of trinitarian orthodoxy.[5] Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of Giles in his criticism of those who do affirm the eternal functional subordination of the Son.

There are several weaknesses in Giles's thesis and theological method. First, he builds his thesis on the relationship between tradition (as a theological source) and the concept of subordination rather than on the more important question one must ask regarding the concept of subordination—that is, what does the Bible teach about the concept of subordination? Evangelicals ought to agree that there is something intentionally good, by God's design, about the biblical concept of one-way submission or subordination found in trinitarian relations and male-female relations in particular. The biblical emphasis on the value of one-way submission in relationships (seen, for example, in John's Gospel on the Trinity, in Paul on male-female relations, and in Peter on master-slave relations) is completely obscured in Giles's treatment. In other words, tradition properly understood as a theological source should never obscure the clear teaching of a biblical concept.

Second, tradition as a source or contributor in theology has been invested with far too much hermeneutical value. Giles's chapter is largely devoted to quoting selectively from church fathers, thus establishing the orthodoxy of his position. For him, this tradition is defined as the way the Bible has been read or interpreted by the best theologians of church history (336). Tradition as a theological source is not a new concept. Theologians have long recognized four major sources for doing theology: Scripture, reason, tradition, and experience.[6] But, affirming tradition as a theological or hermeneutical source does not necessarily require that there be a variety of valid readings of a text of Scripture.

Also, Giles assumes from the outset that subordination always and necessarily involves inferiority. Without proper explanation, this is a *non sequitur*. In order to make his case he misinterprets complementarian views and then links them to these false assumptions. For example, he summarizes a complementarian view by saying, "women—simply because they are women—are the subordinate sex and this can never change. Surely this suggests that women are inferior to men in some way" (338). This is a misunderstanding of complementarianism. Regarding eternal subordination in particular, he writes, "[W]hen subordination is both permanent and obligatory, the personal inferiority of the subordinate is implied. If one party is *always* and *necessarily* subordinate to the other, the subordinate person must lack something the superior person possesses" (348). Again, this is a poor understanding of the doctrine of eternal functional subordination, and his second statement does not follow from his first without more explanation. "Subordination" and "inferiority" are not synonymous terms, despite Giles's undefended assumptions.

Usage of Important Terms

The terms "subordination" and "subordinationism" are used frequently in the context of trinitarian discussion, and have a clearly defined usage. Theologians of the past have spoken in some sense of the subordination of the Son and the Spirit within the boundaries of orthodoxy. Subordination*ism*, however, describes a heretical formulation of the doctrine of God, usually referred to as ontological subordinationism. Ontological subordinationism is recognized as heresy because it says the Son and Spirit do not share directly in the very being or essence of God the Father. The term subordinationism, then, is not used functionally (eternal or temporal) but rather ontologically (regarding being and essence only). This usage is well attested.[7]

Giles ignores the accepted distinction between these terms. Instead of offering an objective assessment of the possibility of the doctrine of the eternal subordination of the Son, Giles ignores the very helpful categorical distinction made between subordination and subordination*ism* (337, 339, 340, 342, 345, 347). Grudem, Kovach and Schemm, and Letham all affirm the ontological equality of the Son with the Father and in so doing reject the heresy of ontological subordinationism.[8] Furthermore, those who authored the 1999 Sydney Doctrine Report argue for an ontological basis of the subordination of the Son (335), yet another expression within the bounds of orthodoxy. They also affirm the complete equality of being/essence of the Son even if it is expressed in a more Eastern (derived) sense.[9] In short, most of the theologians cited in this chapter have been unfairly represented, if not misrepresented.

Theologians on the Eternal Subordination of the Son

Athanasius is the most important theologian in this discussion not only because of his understanding of the relationship between the Father and the Son but also because Giles claims to be following his lead hermeneutically. As far as interpretive method goes, Giles repeatedly claims to be following Athanasius's "scope" of Scripture (339, 348-349). By scope of Scripture, Giles understands Athanasius to mean "how the Bible should be correctly read" (339). In as much as Giles presents the scope of Scripture as the proper way to view the incarnation of the Word for the purpose of human salvation, he is correct.[10] However, Giles's use of Athanasius's concept of the scope of Scripture is problematic in at least two ways.

First, Athanasius's concept is not so much a hermeneutical method that distinguishes the incarnational nature of the Son from the ontological nature of the Son, as Giles suggests, as much as it is a hermeneutic that unites the incarnational nature with the ontological—or better, that grounds the incarnational nature in the being of God for the purpose of human salvation.[11] Thus it does not necessarily follow that Athanasius categorically rejects the eternal functional subordination of the Son. It is arguable that Athanasius envisages an eternal order in the Godhead that harmonizes well with the concept of eternal subordination.[12] Additionally, it is important to recognize that Athanasius's understanding of the Father as "unoriginate" and "uncaused" in the divine being suggests an eternal irreversible order in the Trinity.[13]

Second, Giles overstates the contrast between Athanasius's theological method (scope of Scripture) and Arius's proof-text method. While Arius ends up in the wrong place, it is not so much due to making the Bible mean whatever he wants it to mean. Rather, Arius, like Athanasius, has significant theological presuppositions driving his interpretation of the text. Arius starts theologically in the wrong place.[14] One does not get this sense from Giles and thus the reality of the textual battle over Nicene orthodoxy has not been presented accurately. There is much more to say about Patristic exegesis before, during, and after Nicea, but suffice it to say that the parallels between Arian heretics and those arguing for the eternal functional subordination of the Son may not be quite as obvious to others as to Giles.

Concerning Augustine, Giles states rightly that the great theologian sought to "prove by appeal to the Bible the complete equality of the divine Persons" (341). That is not in doubt. But he goes on to say that when Augustine wrote in *De Trinitate* of the sending of the Son, "what is in mind is the Son's mission to become the incarnate mediator" (341). According to Giles, this sending should not be understood to relate to the eternal relations between the Persons. Robert Letham has rightly criticized such an approach to Augustine's work. He points out that in Augustine's mind the sending of the Son precedes the work for which he is sent.[15] The bishop of Hippo wrote, "The Son is not only said to have been sent because the Word was made flesh, but therefore sent that the Word might be made flesh."[16] Letham writes that Augustine's conclusion is in fact that the "sending preceded his incarnation, and so his incarnate life and ministry can (as appropriate) reveal something of his eternal relations."[17]

It is not easily demonstrated that Calvin rejects a subordination or relational order among the persons of the

Trinity either. The opposite appears to be the case. For example, Calvin calls the Father the "first in order," and identifies him as "the beginning and fountainhead of the whole divinity."[18] Again he says, "We admit that in respect to order and degree the beginning of divinity is in the Father."[19] Calvin explains that the distinctions of the Persons carry peculiar qualities such that there is an irreversible order among them. The three Persons share in the same essence and yet a reasoned order is kept among them—such an order, however, does not take away from the deity of the Son and Spirit.[20]

Hodge understood Calvin to teach that in some sense the Son is subordinate to the Father. After citing a lengthy section of Calvin, Hodge summarizes, "We have here the three essential facts involved in the doctrine of the Trinity, namely, unity of essence, distinction of persons, and subordination without any attempt at explanation."[21] Robert L. Reymond, who goes to great lengths to explain exactly what it is he thinks Calvin means by the eternal generation of the Son, is more careful than Giles in his assessment of Calvin's view of the Son's subordination. He says Calvin contends against all subordination with respect to the Son's "divine essence."[22] Concluding his treatment of the generation of the Son, Reymond explains that he is in agreement with Calvin's view that the Father precedes the Son by reason of order—however, going beyond what "order" means he cannot say. Like Calvin, however, he is sure about rejecting ontological subordinationism—"there is no essential subordination of the Son to the Father within the Godhead."[23]

Conclusion: On the Son's Subordination

Giles claims that in order to maintain an orthodox view of the doctrine of the Trinity one must reject the possibility of the eternal functional subordination of the Son to the Father. He argues that the history of trinitarian doctrinal development affirms his view. Further, he suggests that all modern trinitarian expressions that harmonize with the Nicene tradition reject the possibility of the eternal subordination of the Son, whether in being or in function. The primary purpose of this article, however, has been to show that Giles often overstates his case and in some instances simply misrepresents the facts. The question of the eternal subordination of the Son is not a question of trinitarian orthodoxy. Further, the evidence given ought to encourage readers to investigate more thoroughly the way Giles represents each theologian he uses to present his claims. Apparently, these reviewers see the boundaries of trinitarian orthodoxy as a bit wider than does Giles—something for which traditionalists are not normally known. In the end, Giles's intention to expose the heresy of the eternal functional subordination of the Son has not been successful. ■

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[1] This article is an abbreviated version of my "Kevin Giles's *The Trinity and Subordinationism*: A Review Article" in the *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* 7, no. 2 (Fall 2002): 67-78. I am grateful to Jason Hall for his assistance in adapting that review for its purpose in examining Giles's work in *DBE*.

[2] Kevin Giles, *The Trinity & Subordinationism: The Doctrine of God & the Contemporary Gender Debate* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002).

[3] The "eternal functional subordination" of the Son is to be distinguished from the "eternal subordination" of the Son. Without the qualifier "functional," it is possible, though not correct, to read the word "eternal" as synonymous with "ontological." I prefer the phrase "eternal functional subordination" because it makes

clear that the Son's subordination is not "ontological subordinationism."

[4] Cf. A. H. Strong, *Systematic Theology,* 3 vols. in one (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1907), 343-44; Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 60; Craig S. Keener, "Is Subordination within the Trinity Really Heresy? A Study of John 5:18 in Context," *Trinity Journal* 20, no. 1 (1999): 39-51; and John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2002), 719-22.

[5] I am are unaware of any evangelical who affirms the "eternal functional subordination" of the Son and in so doing also declares that those who do not support the same view are outside of the boundaries of trinitarian orthodoxy. The purpose of Kovach and Schemm's article, for example, was to defend the view in light of an apparently revisionist reading of the history of the doctrine, not to argue that "temporal functional subordination" is outside of the boundaries of orthodoxy. See Stephen D. Kovach and Peter R. Schemm, Jr., "A Defense of the Doctrine of the Eternal Subordination of the Son," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 42 (1999): 461-76.

[6] See Alister McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 3d ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 159.

[7] See "Subordinationism" in Karl Rahner and Herbert Vorgrimler, eds., *Dictionary of Theology*, 2d ed. (New York: Crossroad, 1981); Millard Erickson, *Concise Dictionary of Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986); Frances Young, *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983); Joseph A. Komonchak, Mary Collins, Dermot A. Lane, eds., *The New Dictionary of Theology* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1987); see also Michael E. Bauman, "Milton, Subordinationism, and the Two-Stage Logos," *Westminster Theological Journal* 48 (1986): 177-182.

[8] See Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994) 251; Kovach and Schemm, "A Defense of the Doctrine of the Eternal Subordination of the Son," 462-63; Robert Letham, "The Man-Woman Debate: Theological Comment," *Westminster Theological Journal* 52 (1990): 67.

[9] Cf. John V. Dahms's articles on this: "The Generation of the Son," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 32 (1989): 493-501; and "The Subordination of the Son," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 37 (1994): 351-64.

[10] See James D. Ernest, "Athanasius of Alexandria: The Scope of Scripture in Polemical and Pastoral Context," *Vigiliae Christianae* 47 (1993): 341-62.

[11] Ibid., 342, 351.

[12] See Kovach and Schemm, "A Defense of the Doctrine of the Eternal Subordination of the Son," 466-67.

[13] Alvyn Pettersen, *Athanasius* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse, 1995), 164-67.

[14] See J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1978), 227.

[15] Robert Letham, *The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology and Worship* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2005), 494.

[16] Augustine, *De Trinitate* 2.5.7

[17] Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 494.

[18] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 1.13.25.

[19] Ibid., 1.13.24.

[20] Ibid., 1.13.20.

[21] Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 1:467; cf. 528-29.

[22] Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, 2d ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 326.

[23] Ibid., 335.

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"Biblical Hermeneutics: Basic Principles and Questions of Gender" (Ch 20) by Roger Nicole and "Hermeneutics and the Gender Debate" (Ch 21) by Gordon D. Fee

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Introduction

Since its inception in the 1970s, North American egalitarianism has developed a distinct hermeneutic of its own with regard to its interpretation of gender-related passages in Scripture. It is not the purpose of the present article to address this subject comprehensively.[1] Rather, the scope of this brief essay is limited to providing a response to the hermeneutical chapters by Roger Nicole and Gordon Fee in the book *Discovering Biblical Equality*.[2]

Biblical Hermeneutics: Basic Principles and Questions of Gender

In his 8½-page long chapter entitled "Biblical Hermeneutics: Basic Principles and Questions of Gender" Roger Nicole sets out to "show how following valid hermeneutical principles will aid in the proper understanding of the passages relevant to the gender discussion" (355). At the very outset, Nicole affirms the divine authorship of Scripture and the primacy of authorial intent. In the remainder of his short piece, Nicole puts forth six foundational hermeneutical principles for evangelical interpretation.

> These are
> (1) literal or figurative meaning;
> (2) prescriptive or descriptive texts;
> (3) individual, collective and universal references;
> (4) peripheral versus central doctrines;
> (5) fragmentary versus canonical interpretations; and
> (6) the situation of those being addressed or represented.

In principle, these distinctions are unobjectionable, and Nicole is to be commended for setting them forth as common ground for discussion. Nicole's application of these principles, however, is not quite as unobjectionable. For example, Nicole writes that "Paul's descriptive analogy between Adam's priority in creation and Eve's priority in sin in 1 Timothy 2:13–14—even though it is used to support the ad hoc prescription in 1 Timothy 2:12—seems to fall far short of being theologically prescriptive or determinative" (357). In a related footnote, he asserts that the "primary point of the analogy is that the woman, who was created second, was first to yield to the deception of Satan" and admonishes, "One simply cannot make universal gender statements on the basis of ad hoc descriptions that are used to serve other points" (357, n. 5).

There are several problems with this line of argument. First, Nicole assumes at the very outset that 1 Tim 2:12 is an "ad hoc" prescription or description (following Gordon Fee?), which begs the question in presupposing non-normativity from the start. Yet the prescriptive or descriptive nature of this statement must be demonstrated, not assumed. Second, Nicole unduly conflates verses 13 and 14 by reducing their message to Eve, having been created second, yielding first to the temptation. More likely, however, Paul in these verses adduces two arguments, not one: women are not to teach or have authority over men because (1) Adam was created first, then Eve (v. 13); and (2) Eve sinned first, thus subverting the divine pattern, with disastrous consequences (v. 14). Hence, according to Paul, the Fall of humanity flowed from a violation of the implications of the order of creation, which is of permanent significance.

This, in turn, has ramifications for the proper ordering of relationships and ministries in the church. Because God first created the man, and then the woman, Paul argues, and because of the grievous consequences resulting from God's creation order, it is likewise men, not women, who ought to teach and have authority in the church, while women ought to learn in full submission (vv. 11–12). Nicole has unduly truncated Paul's argument and hence missed the important connection between Paul's command in v. 12 and its biblical foundation as cited in verses 13 and 14.

Nicole goes on to assert that "patriarchy is never *prescribed* in either Testament" (357). Thus 1 Tim 2:12 cannot be prescriptive. Once again, however, Nicole's presuppositions seem to be driving and predetermining exegesis. At the very start he classifies 1 Tim 2:12 as a "patriarchal text," and since "patriarchy is never *prescribed* in either Testament," 1 Tim 2:12 cannot be prescriptive (357). This, of course, is not exegesis, but an exercise in dogmatic deduction.

As a second case in point, Nicole cites Paul's "description" of male authority "in the Greco-Roman household," which, according to Nicole, "does not attain to a prescription for all times" (358). Nicole even asserts that "husbands are never instructed in the Bible to 'exercise authority over,' 'provide leadership for' or 'be responsible for' their wives" (358). This is an astonishing claim in light of the fact that Paul, in Eph 5:22–24 plainly states, "Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church . . . Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything." Earlier in the same epistle, Paul wrote that "God placed all things under his [Christ's] feet and appointed him to be head over

everything for the church" (Eph 1:22). In context, Christ's headship is defined as being "far above all rule and authority, power and dominion," extending even to the heavenly realm, including Satan and demons, and both to the present age and to the age to come (Eph 1:21).

In light of passages such as these, how can Nicole say that "husbands are never instructed in the Bible to 'exercise authority over,' 'provide leadership for' or 'be responsible for' their wives" (358)? He himself seems to sense the weakness of his position when he concedes that Scripture may do so "by implication," but maintains that "implication is not prescription." Is Christ's authority over the church and its need to submit to him as head then optional and "merely descriptive" as well? It seems hard to avoid the impression that egalitarians such as Nicole here go to some lengths in trying to evade the clear, abiding significance of a natural, straightforward reading of the text.

For these reasons the distinction between prescriptive and descriptive texts adduced by Nicole is unobjectionable as such, but Nicole's application of this principle is highly dubious at several points.

Another questionable application is found in the context of Nicole's discussion of "peripheral versus central doctrines." Nicole proposes that "Spirit gifting, which receives considerable attention in the New Testament," ought to be viewed as "more central than 'church order,'" asserting that "there is *no prescriptive passage* that dictates the structures or nature of church order" (359). Once again, this is an astonishing claim in light of the fact that a considerable portion of the Pastoral epistles, including passages such as 1 Tim 3:1–12, are given to apostolic directives concerning qualifications for church leaders, both elders/overseers and deacons. Here Nicole seems to be considerably more radical than other egalitarians who would be reluctant to set aside passages such as these as "non-prescriptive" and hence "peripheral."

Once again, while the overall guideline adduced by Nicole seems sound in principle, his application of this principle to the interpretation of gender-related passages in Scripture seems unduly guided by his egalitarian presuppositions which predetermine the outcome and make hermeneutics a tool in the exegete's hand that allows him to steer the exegesis of a given passage or set of passages in a desired direction rather than serving as a foundation that guides exegesis in keeping with the message of a given text, interpreted in context.[3]

Nicole concludes that "most of the differences between patriarchalists [his preferred term for complementarians] and egalitarians in the present gender debate are hermeneutically based" (363). He expresses his hope that by setting forth some basic principles of hermeneutics there will be common ground on which to move toward greater consensus or at least a more reasoned debate. As the brief interaction above demonstrates, however, the problem seems to be not so much on the level of hermeneutical *theory* but at the point of the *application* of these hermeneutical principles *in practice*.

Hence the solution, likewise, is to be found in the foundational presuppositions driving the practical application of hermeneutical principles by interpreters of biblical gender passages. The final arbiter must remain the text of Scripture itself: Does a given interpretation attain plausibility and probability as a valid understanding of a passage in the light of context, word meanings, syntax, historical-cultural background, and so

on, or does it appear strained and merely possible but not probable? It is my observation and conviction that the egalitarian interpretation of the major gender texts in Scripture often falls in the latter, rather than the former, category.

Hermeneutics and the Gender Debate

We turn now to Gordon Fee's 18-page chapter on "Hermeneutics and the Gender Debate," some of which appeared previously in *Gospel and Spirit: Issues in New Testament Hermeneutics*.[4] At the outset, Fee, who is Pentecostal, sets "the gospel of grace and gifting" over against "Paul's own rejection of law keeping" (i.e., legalism) and an approach that turns "questions of gender relationships into a form of law in which 'roles' and 'structures' are placed on the same level as the ethical obligation to love one's neighbor" (364-65).

In his section on "Why Hermeneutics?" Fee affirms the importance of the biblical author's intended meaning, notes the impact of the presuppositions of the interpreter, and stresses the significance of relevance. He proceeds to outline what are the distinctively evangelical presuppositions about the nature of Scripture and the source of authority as resting intrinsically in Scripture as external to the interpreter. He also discusses the inspiration of Scripture and notes both divine and human aspects of Scripture and the implications of Scripture being a divine as well as a human word.

Fee proceeds to sketch the "fundamentalist mindset" as one driven by a "longing for absoluteness in all matters" and detects an ancient precedent in the Pharisees' practice of legalism and of putting a "hedge around the law" (369). According to Fee, being unwilling to trust God "without absolute certainty" is "its own form of idolatry" (370). Although it is our human tendency to eliminate ambiguity, we must learn to trust God. God gave us his Word in the context of particular historical circumstances and by way of certain literary genres. This constitutes a divine accommodation to our human situation.

Also, we find in Scripture diversity within an essential unity. The traditional principle of the "analogy of Scripture" is helpful, but sometimes difficult to apply. Forced harmonization is to be resisted. Hence, Fee notes that Scripture reveals "a degree of ambiguity, accommodation and diversity," which causes many to opt for the extremes of fundamentalism or liberalism" (371). Fee instead urges a "radical middle" aimed at a "higher degree of common understanding," reaffirming authorial intentionality over against reader-response criticism and postmodernism" (371). As Fee himself observes, little that he has said so far is controversial or under dispute by evangelicals, including those engaging in the debate over gender roles in the church.

The rest of Fee's essay is devoted to two areas of concern: (1) the construction of "theology by way of implication" rather than on the basis of clear and explicit statements in Scripture (similar to Nicole's distinction between descriptive and prescriptive texts, see above); and (2) the practice of turning ad hoc biblical commands into "a form of Christian law." On the first matter, Fee contrasts universal human sinfulness (clear) with the nature of the resurrection body (disputed). Other less-than-clear matters cited by Fee are tongues as initial physical evidence of Spirit baptism; the mode of baptism; and frequency of Eucharist observance.

Fee puts male-female relationships in both church and home in this latter

category—according to Fee, "[T]here is no *explicit* teaching in the New Testament either about this relationship or about church order, structures of worship" (374). This, for Fee, includes the notion "that only men may hold certain church offices" and even the very notion of "offices" in the church itself. The reader at this point may ask, "What about Eph 5:21–33?" According to Fee, Paul here "assumes a Greco-Roman patriarchal culture . . . but he does not thereby bless the culture itself nor explicitly instruct men to exercise authority over their wives" (374). He contends that the household codes in Colossians and Ephesians are especially "elitist," being directed toward only certain wealthier households.

Fee concludes that in light of "the ambiguity of the New Testament evidence and the lack of explicit teaching on patriarchy as the norm in the new creation," deriving "a theology of patriarchy" from Eph 5:21–33 is illegitimate (375). He has no doubt that this passage *reflects* the patriarchy of the Greco-Roman world, but he maintains that it does not therefore bless this worldview theologically. Rather, Paul is merely concerned to tell believers how to live out their Christian lives *in a patriarchal setting* such as their current one (375).[5] In a footnote, Fee acknowledges that "some use Ephesians 5:23 ('the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church') to theologize regarding patriarchy," but according to Fee, this is "full of dubious exegetical jumps" (376, referring to comments found elsewhere in *DBE*).

This is an interesting strategy. First, Fee says the husband's headship and the wife's submission are taught merely "by implication" rather than explicitly. On this count, of course, one wonders how Fee can still affirm that "[t]here is no question that these texts *reflect* the patriarchal worldview of the Greco-Roman world" (375)! If patriarchy is taught in Eph 5:21–33 only by implication, how can Fee say the passage without a doubt reflects patriarchy? This seems to be a clear contradiction.

Second, Fee says that Eph 5:21–33 is limited in application to certain wealthy households and to a patriarchal Greco-Roman setting and hence relative and culture-bound. He did not get this from the text itself which he claims is what is the proper object of interpretation, nor is there any evidence that such a limited application was authorially intended (which, to determine, Fee affirms to be the proper aim of interpretation).

Rather, Fee's interpretation of Eph 5:21–33 is a good example of how a particular reconstruction of the historical background of a given passage is used to overwhelm and in fact mute the explicit teaching of Scripture. One wonders if the biblical teaching on male-female roles in the home really belongs in the category of mode of immersion, frequency of Eucharist observance, and tongues as initial sign of Spirit baptism, or if this teaching is in fact more central and clear than Fee allows.

I have engaged Fee at some length in my forthcoming commentary on the Pastoral Epistles in the New Expositor's Bible Commentary series and thus will refrain from doing so here as far as his interpretation of 1 Tim 2:12, his second example of "theology by implication," is concerned. Fee interprets *authentein* as "domineer," referring to Linda Belleville, a view that has been adequately critiqued above. As in his previous writings, Fee dismisses Paul's teaching in this passage by labeling it "ad hoc." Yet in light of Paul's use of Genesis 2–3 elsewhere in his writings (see, e.g., 1 Cor 11:8–9,

written several years prior to 1 Timothy), it is unclear how Paul's use of this portion of Scripture in 1 Tim 2:13–14 could possibly qualify as "ad hoc."[6] More likely, the argument from the man's prior creation to the man's authority in the church formed part of Paul's customary rationale. Likewise, as in his commentary, Fee glosses over 1 Tim 2:13 and only comments on 1 Tim 2:14, which fails to do justice to Paul's rooting of his injunction in 1 Tim 2:12 in creation order prior to the Fall.

Fee believes he has established that "no New Testament text explicitly teaches patriarchy as the divine order that is to prevail across the two biblical covenants" (377). However, Fee does not consider passages such as 1 Cor 11:3: "Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God," which seems to have direct application to the subject at hand. When Fee claims that "the analogy . . . that man is to rule woman because he was created prior to woman . . . occurs nowhere else in all of Scripture [apart from 1 Tim 2:12–13]" (377), he fails to mention 1 Cor 11:8–9, a clear misstatement of fact.

To conclude, Fee sees 1 Tim 2:12 "as an ad hoc word intending to forbid some young widows from being carriers of the 'diseased' teaching in Ephesus," and maintains that the household codes in Ephesians and Colossians "are not intended at all to set boundaries" for anyone (380). Rather than legalism and narrow-mindedness, what counts are Spirit gifting and a love ethic. "Patriarchalists" fail to recognize the ambiguity and diversity of the scriptural witness with regard to gender roles in the home and the church and pharisaically oblige women to a patriarchal system that is merely culturally constrained but not part of the new creation in Christ.

What should be the response of those who are here charged with pharisaism and obscurantism? Are we in truth standing in the way of "the gospel of grace" and the free operation of the Spirit in the home and in the church? This would be a grave sin indeed. But could it be that Fee's case is in fact weaker than he allows? Could it be that the biblical teaching is clearer and more explicit on this subject than he allows? Could it be that his exegesis is less driven by the respect for authorial intention and a supreme regard for the text itself than he believes? Let the reader decide.

Conclusion

It seems that one of the major purposes of *Discovering Biblical Equality*, if not the primary one, is to contest and try to recapture the term "complementarity." This is done by the consistent label of "patriarchalist" and "hierarchicalist" applied to complementarians, in an apparent effort to push complementarians further to the right. In effect, the editors and contributors to this book seem to deny that there is any difference between those advocating modern-day patriarchy and complementarians, or if they do, this is glossed over in order to pronounce complementarians "guilty by association" with those advocating a return to Old Testament patriarchy.

Apart from the fact that this involves a distortion of Old Testament patriarchy—see Dan Block's magisterial recent treatment of this issue[7]—this deliberately misrepresents the way in which complementarianism has consciously distinguished itself from patriarchy ever since its inception. What is more, focusing on "labeling" and "naming" and "renaming" may take a page out of the feminist playbook, but this cannot

conceal the fact that the primary thrust of *Discovering Biblical Equality* does not seem to lie in the exegetical arena but in the area of politics and propaganda.

By the same token, complementarians may want to take up the term "egalitarian," since they affirm women's and men's equality in creation and salvation, in both dignity and worth, to make the point that egalitarians are not the only ones to do so. Why not flip-flop and henceforth call egalitarians "complementarians" and complementarians "egalitarians"? The absurdity of this proposal, I think, illustrates that, in the end, the debate ought to be about more than mere relabeling the other side of the debate and scoring propaganda points.

Most complementarians I know do not focus on "hierarchy" in the sense of a top-down military structure and a "chain-of-command" model. They recognize, with Paul, that the husband's primary responsibility is to love his wife sacrificially and selflessly (Eph 5:25). To deny this, explicitly or implicitly by calling complementarians "hierarchicalists," hardly advances the debate, is not irenic and charitable as many egalitarian proponents like to project their public image, and involves a serious misrepresentation and distortion of the complementarian view.

One gets the impression that *Discovering Biblical Equality* is written primarily, not to engage in serious exegetical debate with the other side, but to advance the cause of the egalitarian movement and to gain adherents to one's view, even if this is accomplished by mischaracterizing the opposing viewpoint. Personally, I do not think this end justifies the means, nor is the price paid worth the possible gain. I certainly hope the political and propagandist nature of this book will be sufficiently clear and transparent to the intended recipients of this volume so that they will not be misled as to the true nature of the biblical teaching on the subject.

In the end, this debate is about truth, not politics; about exegetical responsibility, not propaganda. As Gordon Fee himself affirms, "The scriptural view is that one must speak the *truth* in love" (369). We ought not to trivialize the issue by substituting rhetoric for substance. We ought not to marginalize the issue by obscuring the clarity of Scripture. Rather, we should keep our Christian liberty and God's creation order in proper balance; understand how God's household, the church, is rooted in God's order for the original household of husband and wife; cheerfully and jointly submit to the God of Scripture and trust that his creational wisdom is best; and appropriate his enablement to be restored to his original creation purposes in Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. ■

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[1] Though see the present author's contribution, "Gender Passages in the NT: Hermeneutical Fallacies Critiqued," *WTJ* 56 (1994): 259–83.

[2] A brief word regarding the title: though doubtless intended as an allusion to the work's major point of reference, John Piper and Wayne Grudem, eds., *Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991), the notion of "Discovering Biblical Equality" makes one wonder if the contributors to this volume "discovered" something in Scripture that is not really there (in the sense they claim it to be) in the first place—hence it was not "discovered" until recent years. See the essay by Robert W. Yarbrough in Andreas J. Köstenberger, Thomas R. Schreiner, and H. Scott Baldwin, eds., *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9–15* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995) and his essay in the forthcoming second edition of this work.

[3] I have addressed the hermeneutical fallacy inherent in an arbitrary distinction between "paradigm passages" and "passages with limited application" in "Gender Passages in the NT," 273–79. In this section I also deal with the problem of a "canon within a canon" and the perils of "content criticism" (*Tendenzkritik*) adopted by scholars such as I. H. Marshall or F. F. Bruce. This pertains also to Nicole's application of his principle

"fragmentary versus canonical interpretations" to 1 Tim 2:11–12 ("Biblical Hermeneutics," 360).

[4] Gordon D. Fee, *Gospel and Spirit: Issues in New Testament Hermeneutics* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991).

[5] Referring also to Nicole's principle of "peripheral vs. central doctrines," on which see above. Fee interprets the term "head" (*kephalē*) entirely as conveying dependence for one's ongoing life in the world, as wives were on their husbands "in this cultural setting." However, this understanding of *kephalē* hardly does justice to texts such as Eph 1:21–22, which were already cited and discussed above. What is more, lexical evidence for the meaning "source" for *kephalē* is virtually entirely lacking (see Wayne Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth: An Analysis of More Than 100 Disputed Questions* [Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2004], 544-99).

[6] See my "Gender Passages in the NT," 267–71, esp. the chart on p. 268.

[7] Daniel I. Block, "Marriage and Family in Ancient Israel," in *Marriage and Family in the Biblical World,* ed. Ken M. Campbell (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 33–102, esp. 40–44, where Block contends that the term "patricentrism" better captures the essence of the father's role in ancient Israel than "patriarchy." See also Andreas J. Köstenberger with David W. Jones, *God, Marriage and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004), 39–41.

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"A Redemptive-Movement Hermeneutic: The Slavery Analogy" (Ch 22) and "Gender Equality and Homosexuality" (Ch 23) by William J. Webb

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Introduction

How can Christians today know which parts of the Bible are "culturally relative" and which parts apply to all believers in all cultures throughout history?

William Webb argues for a new approach to that question, an approach he calls a "redemptive-movement hermeneutic" (RMH). He summarizes this approach in his two chapters in *Discovering Biblical Equality*, but a longer, fuller statement of his position is found in his 2001 book, *Slaves, Women and Homosexuals*.[1] In both contributions he focused specifically on slavery, men's and women's roles, and homosexuality as examples that illustrate his general approach toward discovering the ethical standards that Christians should follow today.

Since Webb's two chapters in *Discovering Biblical Equality* depend on and summarize his work in *Slaves, Women and Homosexuals*, I will focus most of my analysis on his longer book, while adding additional interaction with his 2004 chapters at points where they supplement his earlier argument.

I published an extensive analysis and critique of *Slaves, Women and Homosexuals* in June of 2004.[2] Therefore, just as Webb's more recent chapters are a summary of his longer book, so this article will be a shorter summary of my earlier critique. But I have also added more interaction with Webb's primary claim in his 2004 chapter, the claim that the Bible's commands about slavery prove that we need to adopt his redemptive-movement hermeneutic. And I have also added some interaction with Webb's fuller explanation of how he understands the New Testament to be "our final and definitive revelation" from God (395).[3]

First, it is appropriate to summarize Webb's system, his "redemptive-movement hermeneutic." Webb claims that the ancient world in which the Bible was written had gravely deficient moral standards. God in his wisdom knew that it would be best to work gradually to lead his people from the moral

practices of the surrounding cultures to much higher standards of moral conduct. Therefore in the Old Testament God gave moral commands that were a great improvement over the standards of the surrounding culture, but were not yet his highest ideal. Webb then argues that in the New Testament, God gave even higher moral standards, making further improvement over what was taught in the Old Testament. But *even these New Testament moral commands were not God's "ultimate ethic."* Our task today is to try to understand the direction in which God was gradually leading his people, so that by observing that trajectory we can discover God's "ultimate ethic" on various topics, an "ultimate ethic" that we should seek to teach and obey today.

Webb's approach has been embraced by many egalitarians because of his conclusions regarding roles for men and women in the home and the church. However, we should note that Webb differs with many egalitarians in his understanding of what the New Testament actually teaches for its own time. In contrast to many earlier egalitarians (who have argued that the New Testament does *not* teach that wives should be subject to their husbands, and that it does *not* teach that only men should be elders), Webb believes that the New Testament *does* teach these things *for the culture in which the New Testament was written*, but that in today's culture the treatment of women is an area in which "*a better ethic than the one expressed in the isolated words of the text is possible*" (*Slaves, Women and Homosexuals,* 36, italics added).

Analysis

(1) Webb's trajectory hermeneutic nullifies in principle the moral authority of the entire New Testament and thus contradicts the Reformation principle of *sola Scriptura*.

At first glance, it may not seem as though Webb "nullifies" the moral authority of the entire New Testament, because he agrees, for example, that homosexual conduct is morally wrong and that the New Testament condemnations of homosexual conduct are transcultural (*Slaves, Women and Homosexuals* [henceforth *SWH*], 39–41, 250–52, and many other places in the book). He also affirms that the New Testament admonitions for children to be subject to their parents are transcultural (*SWH*, 212). Is Webb not then affirming that some aspects of New Testament ethics are transcultural?

The important point to realize is the *basis* on which Webb affirms that these are transcultural commands. Most evangelicals today read a text such as, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right" (Eph 6:1), and conclude that children *today* are to obey their parents because the New Testament was written for Christians in the new covenant age. Since we Christians today are also in the new covenant age (the period of time from Christ's death until he returns), this command is binding on us today.

Most evangelicals today reason similarly about the New Testament texts concerning homosexual conduct (see, for example, Rom 1:26–27; 1 Cor 6:9), and conclude that these are morally binding on us because these texts were written to new covenant Christians, and we today are also part of the new covenant.

But for Webb, *the process is entirely different*, and the basis of authority is different. The commands concerning children and homosexuals are binding on us today not *because they were written to new covenant Christians* and we today are part of the new covenant (I could not find such a consideration anywhere in

Webb's book), but *because these commands have passed through the filtering system of Webb's eighteen criteria* and have survived.[4] Actually, the command concerning children has not entirely survived his filtering process. Webb believes that the commands for children to obey their parents actually teach that *adult children* should continue to be obedient to their parents throughout their adult lives, but that this aspect of the command was culturally relative and need not be followed by us today (see *SWH*, 212).[5]

In this way, it is fair to say that Webb's system invalidates the moral authority of the entire New Testament, at least in the sense that we today should be obedient to the moral commands that were written to new covenant Christians. Instead, only those commands are binding that have passed through his eighteen-part filter.

Someone may object, "Doesn't everyone have to use some kind of cultural filter? Doesn't everyone have to test the New Testament commands to see if they are culturally relative or transcultural before deciding whether to obey them?"

My response is that there is a fundamental difference in approach. Most evangelicals (including me) say that we *are* under the moral authority of the New Testament, and *we are morally obligated to obey its commands* when we are in the same situation as that addressed in the New Testament command (such as being a parent, a child, a person contemplating a divorce, a church selecting elders or deacons, a church preparing to celebrate the Lord's Supper, a husband, a wife, and so forth). When there is no exact modern equivalent to some aspect of a command (such as, "honor the emperor" in 1 Pet 2:17), then we are still obligated to obey the command, but we do so by *applying* it to situations that are essentially similar to the one found in the New Testament. Therefore, "honor the emperor" is applied to honoring the president or the prime minister. In fact, in several such cases the immediate context contains pointers to broader applications (such as 1 Pet 2:13–14, which mentions being subject to "every human institution" including the "emperor" and "governors" as specific examples). Unlike Webb, in making such adjustments we do not have to abandon any New Testament ethical standards or say they are less than perfect. We just obey them by applying them to a similar but somewhat different situation.

But with Webb the situation is entirely different. *He does not consider the moral commands of the New Testament to represent a perfect or final moral system for Christians*. They are rather a pointer that "provides the direction toward the divine destination, but its literal, isolated words are not always the destination itself. Sometimes God's instructions are simply designed to get his flock moving" (*SWH*, 60).

(a) Webb's X→Y→Z principle

At the heart of Webb's system is what he calls a "redemptive-movement hermeneutic." Webb explains his hermeneutic by what he calls "the X→Y→Z principle." The letter Y indicates what the Bible says about a topic. Webb says, "The *central position* (Y) represents particular words of the Bible at that stage of their development of a subject" (*SWH*, 31; see also Webb in *Discovering Biblical Equality* [henceforth *DBE*], 382-83). The letter X represents "the perspective of the *original culture*," and the letter Z represents "an *ultimate ethic*," that is, God's final ideal that the Bible is moving toward.

Therefore in Webb's system, what evangelicals have ordinarily understood to be "the teaching of the Bible" on

particular subjects is in fact only a point along the way (indicated by the letter Y) toward the development of a final or ultimate ethic (Z). Webb says,

> The X→Y→Z principle illustrates how aspects of the biblical texts were *not* written to establish a utopian society with complete justice and equity. They were written within a cultural framework with limited, incremental moves toward an ultimate ethic (*SWH*, 31; also *DBE* 383-84; italics in original).

Therefore, Webb discovers a number of points where "our contemporary culture" has a better ethic than what is found in the words of the Bible. Our culture has a better ethic today "where it happens to reflect a better social ethic—one closer to an *ultimate ethic* (Z) than to the ethic revealed in the isolated words of the biblical text" (*SWH*, 31).

Webb's approach to Scripture can also be seen in the way he deals with biblical texts regarding slavery. Most evangelical interpreters today would say that the New Testament does not command or encourage or endorse slavery, but rather tells Christians who were slaves how they should conduct themselves within that situation, and also gives principles that would modify and ultimately lead to the abolition of slavery (1 Cor 7:21–22; Gal 3:28; Philem 16, 21; see further discussion of slavery in section 3 below). By contrast, Webb believes that the Bible actually endorses slavery; however, it is a kind of slavery with "better conditions and fewer abuses" (*SWH*, 37).

It is rather astonishing that Webb shows no awareness at all of the centuries of Christian commentators who argued against slavery from the moral teaching of the Bible itself (see section 3 below for more detail). Rather than saying that we needed a better ethic than the New Testament (as Webb does), they took the moral teachings of the Bible as definitive and argued that slavery was itself contrary to those New Testament moral standards.

Of course, someone may respond, "But other Christians in the nineteenth century used the Bible to support slavery." Yes, they did, but they lost the argument. Many people have argued wrong things from the Bible at many points in history, but eventually the wrong arguments have been answered and defeated, and the vast majority of God's people have rejected those arguments. Why should we feel any obligation to believe these wrong arguments? By saying that the Bible endorses slavery, Webb is asking us to accept the discredited arguments that failed to persuade the church in previous centuries. He is asking us to believe that the New Testament endorses a morally evil system. He is asking us to adopt the mistaken view of the Bible held by the losing side in the slavery debates. Surely it is not necessary to accept Webb's understanding of the Bible's teaching on slavery. (See further discussion of the Bible and slavery in section 3, below.)

Webb's redemptive-movement hermeneutic approaches the slavery question by saying that the original culture (X) approved of "slavery with many abuses" (*SWH*, 37). Partially correcting that original culture, the Bible (Y) endorses "slavery with better conditions and fewer abuses" (*SWH*, 37). However, Webb believes that on the issue of slavery "our culture is much closer to an ultimate ethic than it is to the unrealized ethic reflected in the isolated words of the Bible" (*SWH*, 37). Today, the ethic of our culture, which

is superior to that of the Bible, has "slavery eliminated and working conditions often improved" (*SWH*, 37).

At the end of the book, Webb recapitulates the results of his analysis regarding slavery:

> Scripture does not present a "finalized ethic" in every area of human relationship. . . . To stop where the Bible stops (with its isolated words) ultimately fails to reapply the redemptive spirit of the text as it spoke to the original audience. It fails to see that further reformation is possible. . . . While Scripture had a positive influence in its time, we should take that redemptive spirit and move to an even better, more fully-realized ethic today (*SWH*, 247).

Therefore, rather than saying that *the New Testament does not endorse or command slavery*, Webb believes that it *does* approve a system of slavery for the people at the time at which it was written. However, in its modifications and regulations of slavery, the Bible starts us along a trajectory that would lead to the ultimate abolition of slavery, though the New Testament never actually reaches that point.

Webb asks why the Bible is this way:

> Why does God convey his message in a way that reflects a less-than-ultimate ethic. . . that evidences an underlying redemptive spirit and some movement in a positive direction, it often permits its words to stop short of completely fulfilling such a spirit? Why did God not simply give us a clearly laid out blueprint for an ultimate-ethic utopia-like society? How could a God of absolute justice not give us a revelation concerning absolute justice on every page? (*SWH*, 57)

Webb's answer to these questions is to see this incomplete movement toward an ultimate ethic as a manifestation of God's wisdom. In showing us that the Bible was making progress against the surrounding culture, but not completely correcting the surrounding culture, we can see God's pastoral wisdom (*SWH*, 58), his pedagogical skill (*SWH*, 60), his evangelistic care for people who might not have heard the gospel if it proclaimed an ultimate ethic (*SWH*, 63), and other aspects of God's wisdom (*SWH*, 64–66).

According to Webb's system, then, Christians can no longer simply go to the New Testament, read the moral commands in one of Paul's epistles, and believe that they should obey them. According to Webb, that would be to use a "static hermeneutic" that just reads the "isolated words of the text" and fails to understand "the spirit-movement component of meaning which significantly transforms the application of texts for subsequent generations" (*SWH*, 34). Rather, we must realize that the New Testament teachings simply represent one stage in a trajectory of movement toward an ultimate ethic.

The implications of this for Christian morality are extremely serious. It means that God's moral commands to New Testament Christians were not morally perfect commands even in the

time they were written—they were just transitional improvements on the surrounding culture. It means that Christians who obeyed those commands and thought they were living lives of holiness before God were not actually doing so, because the commands did not represent a life of perfect righteousness.

Moreover, this system means that our ultimate moral authority is no longer the Bible but Webb's system. Of course, he claims that the "redemptive spirit" that drives his hermeneutic for each area of ethics is *derived* from the biblical text, but by his own admission this "redemptive spirit" is not the same as the teachings of the Bible, but rather is derived from Webb's analysis of the interaction between the ancient culture and the biblical text. Here is his key explanation:

> The final and most important characteristic of a redemptive-movement hermeneutic is its focus on the spirit of a text.... The coinage "redemptive-movement hermeneutic" is derived from a concern that Christians apply the *redemptive spirit* within Scripture, not merely, or even primarily, its isolated words. *Finding the underlying spirit of a text is a delicate matter. It is not as direct or explicit as reading the words on the page.* In order to grasp the spirit of a text, *the interpreter must listen for how the text sounds within its various social contexts*. Two life settings are crucial: the broader, foreign ancient Near Eastern and Greco-Roman (ANE/GR) social context and the immediate, domestic Israelite/church setting. One must ask, what change/improvement is the text making in the lives of people in the covenant community? And, how does the text influence the larger ANE/GR world? Through reflecting upon these social-setting questions *the modern reader will begin to sense the redemptive spirit of the text*. Also, a third setting permits one another way of discovering the redemptive spirit, namely, the canonical movement across various biblical epochs. (*SWH*, 53, italics added).

This paragraph is remarkable for the candor with which it reveals the subjective and indeterminate nature of Webb's ethical system. If the heart of the "most important characteristic" of his hermeneutic is discovered through "reflecting upon" the way the Bible interacts with ancient Near Eastern and Greco-Roman cultures, and through such reflection the interpreter will "begin to sense the redemptive spirit of the text," we have entered a realm so subjective that no two interpreters in the future will be likely to agree on where the "redemptive spirit of the text" that they are beginning to "sense" is leading, and what kind of "ultimate ethic" they should count as God's will for them.

For example, people seeking justification for their desire to obtain a divorce will "begin to sense the redemptive spirit" of more and more reasons for divorce, moving from the one reason that Jesus allowed (adultery in Matt 19:9), to the increasing freedom found in Paul, who allows a second ground for divorce (desertion by an unbeliever in 1 Cor 7:15), along a trajectory toward many other

reasons for divorce as we move toward an "ultimate ethic" (Z) where everyone should be completely happy with his or her spouse.

And on and on it will go. Baptists will "begin to sense the redemptive spirit" of believer's baptism as the New Testament corrects the all-inclusive nature of the religions of the ancient world, and paedobaptists will "begin to sense the redemptive spirit" of inclusion of infants in the covenant community, as the New Testament decisively corrects the neglect and abuse of children found in many ancient cultures.

In fact, this idea of following the movement of the "redemptive spirit" in Scripture has troubling similarities to a Roman Catholic, not a Protestant, view of authority in the church. One of the distinctive differences between historic, orthodox Protestants and the Roman Catholic Church has been that Protestants base doctrine on "Scripture alone" (in Latin, *sola Scriptura*), while Catholics base doctrine on Scripture *plus* the authoritative teaching of the church through history. Webb's redemptive-movement hermeneutic is disturbingly similar to Roman Catholicism in this regard, because it places final authority not in the New Testament writings but in later interpreters' ideas of where that teaching was leading. On this basis a Roman Catholic could argue that more reliable than anybody's *speculation* on where the teaching was leading are the *historical facts* of where the New Testament teaching did lead. So the redemptive-movement hermeneutic would give us the following picture (which actually was fulfilled in church history): (1) Jesus' teachings mention no local church officers or church governing structure; (2) Paul's writings show increased authority given to elders and deacons; (3) the final "ultimate ethic" to which the redemptive spirit of Scripture was leading was worldwide authority given to the Pope, cardinals, and bishops.

The Reformation principle *sola Scriptura* was formulated to guard against the kind of procedure Webb advocates, because the Reformers knew that once our authority becomes "Scripture plus some later developments" rather than "Scripture alone," the unique governing authority of Scripture in our lives is lost.

Now Webb may object that these hypothetical "redemptive spirit" findings could not be derived from a responsible use of his eighteen criteria. On the other hand, I have lived in the academic world for over thirty years, and I have a great deal of confidence in the ability of scholars to take a set of eighteen criteria and make a case for almost anything they desire. But whether or not my hypothetical suggestions are the result of a proper use of Webb's criteria, the point remains: *The standard is no longer what the New Testament says, but rather the point toward which some biblical scholar thinks the Bible was moving*. And that is why I believe that Webb's redemptive-movement hermeneutic nullifies in principle the moral authority of the entire New Testament.

(b) Webb's claim that the New Testament is "our final and definitive revelation"

In his essay "The Slavery Analogy" Webb affirms more clearly that he believes that "the New Testament is our final and definitive revelation" (*DBE*, 395). But what is significant is what else he affirms when we read that sentence in its entirety:

While the New Testament

> is our final and definitive revelation and its underlying redemptive spirit contains an absolute ethic, the *realization* of its redemptive movement is incremental (as in the Old Testament) and not a fully realized ethic (*DBE,* 395).

Webb does not say that the ethical commands we read in the New Testament *are* a morally perfect ethic from God. He says the New Testament's "*underlying redemptive spirit contains* an absolute ethic." And for Webb the "underlying redemptive spirit" is not seen in the actual moral commands of the New Testament but in the direction they were pointing, the direction we should move to improve on those commands. So Webb does not at all view the commands of the New Testament as the "final and definitive" moral standards we are to follow.

In what sense then can Webb say the New Testament is our final revelation? In the sense that its not-yet-perfect ethic shows the way for further improvement, and shows that we need Webb's system! In other words, the New Testament is the final example of revelation from God that shows itself not to be the final moral standard! This is certainly not the sense in which orthodox Christians have previously understood the New Testament to be God's final revelation to us.

Webb's system therefore constitutes a direct denial of the Reformation principle of *sola Scriptura,* the doctrine that "the Bible alone" is the ultimate authority for what we are to believe and do, and that its teachings constitute the norm to which all our beliefs and practices are to conform. In Webb's system the norm is no longer the moral teachings of the Bible but what we can discover about the "ultimate ethic" (Z) toward which the Bible was heading.

(2) Webb fails in many sections of his argument to recognize that Christians are no longer bound by old covenant laws, and thus he frequently neglects to use the fundamental structural division of the entire Bible (the difference between the Old and New Testaments) as a means of determining moral obligations for Christians today.

(a) We should not go beyond the moral teachings of the New Testament.

Although Webb occasionally gives attention to what he calls "canonical movement" from the Old Testament to the New in *Slaves, Women and Homosexuals* (see *SWH*, 77–78 for example), and although he gives somewhat more attention to this development in "Slavery Analogy" (*DBE*, 390-94), for him such development is just additional evidence that we should move beyond the New Testament even as the New Testament developed beyond the Old. He sees the Old and New Testaments as just two steps along the way toward further redemptive-movement in ethical development beyond the New Testament. He says that the fact that "the New Testament is *still* revelation from God within a curse-laden and culturally distinct world" indicates that we "should be less quick to pronounce the movement within the New Testament 'absolute' in all of its particulars rather than incremental like the Old Testament" (*DBE,* 394).

Webb therefore does not think that the development from Old Testament to New Testament is the end, and that the New Testament itself provides the final ethical standard for Christians in the new covenant. His system fails adequately to

consider the fact that the moral standards of the Bible are not based on what God thought might be a temporary, partial step toward holiness for people within any given culture, but are based on God's unchanging moral purity, to which he calls us to conform: "You shall be holy, for I am holy" (1 Pet 1:16). "You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt 5:48). The moral commands of the Bible do not need improvement. They reflect the absolute moral holiness of God himself.[6]

Webb fails to understand what it means to be members of a covenant, particularly the new covenant in Christ. Christians today are members of the new covenant. Just as every covenant in the ancient world had specific conditions telling how the parties of the covenant were to act, so the New Testament has moral commands specifying how we are to act in fellowship with God and with Jesus Christ, the mediator of that new covenant (Heb 9:15). The moral commands of the New Testament are the behavioral requirements placed on us as members of that covenant. When Webb tells us that we do not have to obey some of the moral commands of the New Testament, he is telling us not to obey the written commands of God which he included in the documents that define the new covenant. In other words, he is telling us to disobey the new covenant. It is difficult to overstate the seriousness of this claim.

When Webb claims that "a redemptive-movement hermeneutic has always been a major part of the historic church, apostolic and beyond" (*SWH*, 35), and therefore that all Christians believe in some kind of "redemptive-movement" hermeneutic, he fails to make one important distinction: Evangelicals have always held that the redemptive movement within Scripture ends with the New Testament! But *Webb carries it beyond the New Testament*.

In doing this Webb fails to recognize the centrality of Jesus Christ for all of history. Yes, there is movement and development beyond the Old Testament, because in the Old Testament "at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets." By contrast, "in these last days he *has spoken to us by his Son*, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world" (Heb 1:1-2). In the writings of the New Testament we have a written record of the revelation that God gave us in Christ and the revelation that Christ gave to his apostles. We are not to look for doctrinal or ethical development beyond the teachings and commands of the New Testament, for that would be to look for development beyond the supreme revelation of God in his Son.

Yes, the New Testament explicitly tells us that we are no longer under the regulations of the old covenant (Heb 8:6–13), so we have clear warrant for saying the sacrificial laws and dietary laws are no longer binding on us. And we do see the apostles in a process of coming to understand the inclusion of the Gentiles in the church (Acts 15; Gal 2:1–14; 3:28). But *that process was completed within the New Testament*, and the commands given to Christians in the New Testament say nothing about excluding Gentiles from the church! We do not have to progress on a "trajectory" beyond the New Testament to discover that.

Christians living in the time of Paul's epistles were living under the new covenant. And Christians today are also living under the new covenant. This is "the new covenant in my blood" (1 Cor 11:25), which Jesus established and which we affirm every time we take the

Lord's Supper. That means that we are living today in *the same period in God's plan for "the history of redemption"* as the first-century Christians. And that is why we can read and directly apply the New Testament today.

To attempt to go *beyond* the New Testament documents and derive our authority from "where the New Testament was heading" is to reject the very documents that God gave us to govern our life under the new covenant until Christ returns. It is to reject the Reformation doctrine of *sola Scriptura* and establish an entirely new basis of authority distinct from the Bible itself.

(b) Webb repeatedly fails to consider that we are no longer under the Mosaic Covenant.

When Webb repeatedly gives long lists of Mosaic laws on slavery or wives, and then says it would be foolish to obey what "the Bible" says on these subjects today, unsuspecting readers may think that he has built a persuasive case for his eighteen criteria. But he has not, because the change from old covenant to new covenant means that those dozens of Mosaic laws are not part of what "the Bible" requires of Christians today. We are not under the Mosaic law.[7]

Yet this fundamental omission is pervasive in Webb's book. If someone were to go through his book and remove all the examples he takes from the Old Testament to claim that we cannot obey "the Bible" today, and all the implications that he draws from those examples, we would be left not with a book but with a small pamphlet.

Webb's failure adequately to take into account the fact that Christians are no longer bound by Mosaic covenant legislation is an omission of such magnitude as to nullify the value of this book as a guide for hermeneutics.

(3) Webb repeatedly confuses events with commands, and fails to recognize that what the Bible reports as a background situation (such as slavery or monarchy, for example) it does not necessarily approve or command.

Again and again in his analysis Webb assumes that "the Bible" (in Webb's undifferentiated form, lumping Old and New Testament verses together) supports things such as slavery (see *SWH*, 33, 36–37, 84, 106, 186, 202–03). He also uses monarchy as an example, assuming that the Bible presents monarchy as a favored form of government, one that people should approve or even say that the Bible requires (see, for example, *SWH*, 107, 186, 203).

With respect to slavery, therefore, Webb says that

> a static hermeneutic [this is Webb's term for the hermeneutic used by everyone who does not use his redemptive-movement hermeneutic] would apply this slavery-refuge text by *permitting the ownership of slaves today*, provided that the church offers similar kinds of refuge for runaway *slaves. . . . Christians would dare not speak out against slavery*. They would support the institution of slavery (*SWH*, 33, italics added).

What is rather astonishing is that the only alternative that Webb acknowledges to his position is what he calls a "static hermeneutic." But then he affirms that such a "static hermeneutic" would have to support slavery:

Even more tragic is that, in arguing for or in permitting biblical slavery today, a static hermeneutic takes our current standard of human rights and working conditions backwards by quantum leaps. We would shame a gospel that proclaims freedom to the captive. . . . A static hermeneutic would not condemn biblical-type slavery if that social order were to reappear in society today (*SWH*, 34, 36).

(a) Opposing slavery without adopting Webb's system.

In his eyes there are only two choices: do you support Webb's system or do you support slavery? Which will it be? He appears oblivious to the historical fact that for centuries many Christians have opposed slavery *from the text of Scripture itself*, without using Webb's new system of interpretation, and without rejecting the final moral authority of the New Testament. To say we have to choose between Webb's system and slavery is historically unfounded, is biblically untrue, and is astonishing in its failure to recognize other alternatives.

In actual historical fact, the Bible was used by more Christians to *oppose* slavery than to *defend* it, and eventually their arguments won, and slavery was abolished. But the fundamental difference from Webb is that the evangelical, Bible-believing Christians who ultimately brought about the abolition of slavery *did not advocate modifying or nullifying any biblical teaching*, or moving "beyond" the New Testament to a better ethic. They taught the abolition of slavery from the Bible itself.

Webb shows no awareness of biblical anti-slavery arguments such as those of Theodore Weld in *The Bible Against Slavery*,[8] a book which was widely distributed and frequently reprinted. Weld argued strongly against American slavery even from Old Testament passages such as Exod 21:16, "He that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death" (KJV) (13-15), as well as from the fact that men are in the image of God and therefore it is morally wrong to treat any human being as property (8-9, 15-17). He argued that ownership of another person breaks the eighth commandment, "Thou shalt not steal," as follows:

> The eighth commandment forbids the taking of *any* part of that which belongs to another. Slavery takes the *whole*. Does the same Bible which prohibits the taking of *any* thing from him, sanction the taking of *every* thing? Does it thunder wrath against the man who robs his neighbor of a *cent*, yet commission him to rob his neighbor of *himself*? Slaveholding is the highest possible violation of the eighth commandment (10-11).

But Webb shows no knowledge of such historical argumentation. He makes absolute claims that are simply incorrect, such as these:

> Unless one embraces the redemptive spirit of Scripture, *there is no biblically based rationale for championing an abolitionist perspective* (*DBE*, 395, italics added).

He also says "a redemptive-movement hermeneutic applied to the New Testament" is "the only valid way to arrive at the abolition of slavery" (*DBE*, 395).

But Theodore Weld championed the abolition of slavery even from the moral commands of the Old Testament! Webb says his system is "the only valid way" to arrive at the abolition of slavery, but in historical fact the Christians who actually succeeded in abolishing slavery did not use Webb's redemptive-movement hermeneutic or suggest that we had to replace the New Testament's moral commands with something better.

The New Testament never commanded slavery, but gave principles that regulated it and ultimately led to its abolition. Paul says to slaves, "If you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity" (1 Cor 7:21). And he tells Philemon, regarding his slave Onesimus, that he should welcome him back "*no longer as a slave* but more than a slave, as a beloved brother" (Phlm 16), and that he should "receive him as you would receive me" (v. 17), and that he should forgive anything that Onesimus owed him, or at least that Paul would pay it himself (vv. 18–19). Finally he says, "Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do *even more than I say*" (v. 21). This is a strong and not very subtle hint that Philemon should grant freedom to Onesimus. Paul's condemnation of "enslavers" (1 Tim 1:10, ESV)[9] also showed the moral wrong of forcibly putting anyone into slavery.

The Bible does not approve or command slavery any more than it approves or commands persecution of Christians. When the author of Hebrews commends his readers by saying, "You joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one" (Heb 10:34), that does not mean the Bible *supports* the plundering of Christians' property, or that it *commands theft*! It only means that *if* Christians find themselves in a situation where their property is taken through persecution, they should still rejoice because of their heavenly treasure, which cannot be stolen. Similarly, when the Bible tells slaves to be submissive to their masters, it does not mean that the Bible supports or commands slavery, but only that it tells people who are in a situation of slavery how they should respond.

When we couple Paul's teachings in 1 Cor 7:21, his condemnation of "enslavers" in 1 Tim 1:10, and his directions to Philemon, with the realization that every human being is created in the image of God (see Gen 1:27; 9:6; Jas 3:9; see also Job 31:15; Gal 3:28), and the teaching that whatever we do for the least of Christ's brothers we do for him (Matt 25:40), we then see that the Bible, and especially the New Testament, contains powerful principles that would lead to an abolition of slavery. The New Testament never commands people to practice slavery or to own slaves, but rather gives principles that would lead to the overthrow of that institution, and also regulates it while it is in existence by statements such as, "Masters, treat your slaves justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a master in heaven" (Col 4:1).[10]

J. B. Lightfoot in 1879 summarized the way the New Testament did not immediately prohibit slavery but surely led to its demise:

> [Paul tells Philemon] to do very much more than emancipate his slave, but this one thing he does not directly enjoin. St. Paul's treatment of this individual case is an apt illustration of the attitude of Christianity towards slavery in general. . . . a principle is boldly enunciated, which

> must in the end prove fatal to slavery. When the Gospel taught that God had made all men and women upon earth of one family; that all alike were His sons and His daughters; that, whatever conventional distinctions human society might set up, the supreme King of Heaven refused to acknowledge any; that the slave notwithstanding his slavery was Christ's freedman, and the free notwithstanding his liberty was Christ's slave; when the Church carried out this principle by admitting the slave to her highest privileges, inviting him to kneel side by side with his master at the same holy table; when in short the Apostolic precept that 'in Christ Jesus is neither bond nor free' was not only recognized but acted upon, then slavery was doomed. Henceforward it was only a question of time.[11]

Lightfoot is not using something like Webb's redemptive-movement hermeneutic to seek a better ethic than the New Testament; he is using the New Testament ethic itself, as God's perfect revelation of his will, to argue for the abolition of slavery.

And so it has been throughout the history of the church. Christians have argued not from some "ultimate ethic" beyond the New Testament but from the moral teachings of the New Testament as they worked for the abolition of slavery.

Two recent studies have shown this in more detail. Alvin A. Schmidt notes the following:

> St. Augustine (354-430) saw slavery as the product of sin and as contrary to God's divine plan (*The City of God* 19.15). St. Chysostom, in the fourth century preached that when Christ came he annulled slavery. . . . Slavery was also condemned in the fifth century by St. Patrick in Ireland. For several centuries bishops and councils recommended the redemption of captive slaves … by the fourteenth century slavery was almost unknown on the Continent. . . .
>
> . . . although slavery in America was condoned and defended by many who were members of Christian denominations, there were also strong countervailing voices of prominent Christian leaders who came to be known as abolitionists. . . . the abolitionist movement had a considerably higher percentage of Christian clergy than did the pro-slavery defenders.[12]

Schmidt tells of many prominent abolitionist leaders in England and the U.S. who believed the Bible and were motivated by its teachings in their zeal to abolish slavery, among them William Wilberforce in England, and in the United States Elijah Lovejoy, Edward Beecher, Harriet Beecher Stowe (author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*), Charles Torrey (founder of the Underground Railroad), and William Lloyd Garrison (publisher of the influential periodical *The Liberator*).[13]

In a significant recent study, Baylor University professor Rodney Stark traces the dominant Christian leadership in abolitionist movements in both the United States and England, noting that in the United States 52 percent of the traveling agents of the American Anti-Slavery Society were ordained clergy, as were 75 percent of its local agents.[14] He says that "as abolition sentiments spread, it was primarily the churches (often local congregations), not secular clubs and organizations, that issued formal statements on behalf of ending slavery."[15] He adds, "The abolitionists, whether popes or evangelists, spoke almost exclusively in the language of Christian faith. And although many Southern clergy proposed theological defenses of slavery, pro-slavery rhetoric was overwhelmingly secular —references were made to 'liberty' and 'states' rights,' not to 'sin' or 'salvation.'"[16] And in England, "Those who brought about abolition in Britain quoted not 'liberal principles' but the Bible."[17]

What is significant about these anti-slavery movements is that they did not adopt William Webb's redemptive-movement hermeneutic. They did not see any need to abandon the moral teachings of the New Testament and seek some "ultimate ethic" that improved on the ethic of the Bible. *They argued from the moral standards found in the Bible itself*, and they won the arguments again and again in the minds of the vast majority of Christians.

Therefore, when Webb defends his redemptive-movement hermeneutic as necessary for arguing against slavery, and when he says, "Unless one embraces the redemptive spirit of Scripture, there is no biblically based rationale for championing an abolitionist perspective" (*DBE*, 395), his statement is made in ignorance of the actual history of the Christian church and its opposition to slavery. His statement is not correct, and his argument fails to be persuasive.

But this claim about slavery is basic to Webb's entire argument. Webb's mistaken evaluation of the Bible's teaching on slavery forms a fundamental building block in constructing his hermeneutic. Once we remove his claim that the Bible condones slavery, Webb's Exhibit A is gone, and he has lost his primary means of supporting the claim that we need his "redemptive-movement hermeneutic" to move beyond the ethic of the Bible itself.

(b) Making sense of New Testament texts on women without adopting Webb's system.

Webb claims four examples of New Testament texts regarding women that, he says, we need not (and should not) obey today. He claims we should follow instead a better ethic, one that senses the "redemptive-movement spirit" (*DBE*, 395) in the text and follows its direction to move beyond the commands of the New Testament. His four examples are (1) the requirement for head coverings on women in worship (1 Cor 11); (2) the requirement for women to be silent in congregational gatherings (1 Cor 14:34-36); (3) the instruction for wives to call their husbands "lord" (1 Pet 3:5-6); and (4) the instruction for wives to "submit" to their husbands (Eph 5:22; Col 3:18).

What is remarkable, even astonishing, is that as we read Webb's discussion we see no awareness whatsoever of the fact that responsible interpreters have not understood his first three examples to require what he claims. For example, I know of no responsible evangelical scholar today who argues that women should be completely silent in congregational gatherings or that women should call

their husbands "lord." They do not agree with Webb that we should move beyond the New Testament commands to a better ethic, but they claim that careful, responsible exegesis of those texts shows that the New Testament did not require complete silence of women in church even in the first century, and did not tell wives to call their husbands "lord" even in the first century. That was not what 1 Corinthians 11 and 1 Peter 3 meant even at the time they were written.

In a similar way, though there has historically been some difference among interpreters, many evangelical commentators have understood the commands about head coverings to reflect a custom in first century society in which head covering was an outward symbol either of being married or of being a woman in distinction from a man. Therefore, they have argued, in a society where head covering does not convey that same meaning, the instruction is best obeyed by adopting a different outward symbol that conveys a similar meaning (such as a wedding ring as a sign of being married).[18] (For further discussion of how to determine which New Testament commands are culturally relative, see the final section of this article.)

So Webb's argument about Bible texts on women is similar to his argument about texts on slavery: He argues not against responsible evangelical scholars and their exegesis of these texts, but against a straw man of his own construction. When Webb assumes as true interpretations of the New Testament that no responsible interpreter today supports, and when he completely ignores other interpretations that are widely held in the scholarly literature, it does not increase our confidence that he has adequately considered his theory in comparison to other valid alternatives.

(4) Webb creates an overly complex system of interpretation that will require a class of "priests" who have to interpret the Bible for us in the light of ancient Near Eastern and Greco-Roman culture.

Although Webb does not explain his redemptive-movement hermeneutic at length in his essay "The Slavery Analogy" in *Discovering Biblical Equality*, it is important for readers to understand the complexity of his system as found in *Slaves, Women and Homosexuals*, and what it actually requires us to do before we can determine the moral standards that Christians should follow today. At the heart of Webb's system is his requirement that the interpreter "must listen for how the text sounds within its various social contexts," especially "the broader, foreign ancient Near-Eastern and Greco-Roman (ANE/GR) social context and the immediate, domestic Israelite/church setting" (*SWH*, 53).

How does one do this? Webb gives eighteen criteria which one must use in order to carry out his redemptive-movement hermeneutics properly. His first criterion is called "preliminary movement," and here is how he says it should happen:

> Assessing redemptive-movement has its complications. Without going into an elaborate explanation, I will simply suggest a number of guidelines: (1) the ANE/GR *real* world must be examined along with its *legal* world, (2) the biblical subject on the *whole* must be examined along with its *parts*, (3) the biblical text must be compared to a number of other ANE/GR cultures which themselves

> must be compared with each other and (4) any portrait of movement must be composed of broad input from all three streams of assessment—foreign, domestic, and canonical (*SWH*, 82).

And this is just his procedure for the first of eighteen criteria! Who will be able to do this? Who knows the history of ancient cultures well enough to make these assessments?

If the evangelical world begins to adopt Webb's system, it is not hard to imagine that we will soon require a new class of "priests," those erudite scholars with sufficient expertise in the ancient world that they can give us reliable conclusions about what kind of "ultimate ethic" we should follow today.

But this will create another problem, one I have observed often as I have lived and taught in the academic world: *Scholars with such specialized knowledge often disagree*. Anyone familiar with the debates over rabbinic views of justification in the last two decades will realize how difficult it can be to understand exactly what was believed in an ancient culture on even one narrow topic, to say nothing of the whole range of ethical commands that we find in the New Testament.

Where then will Webb's system lead us? *It will lead us to massive inability to know with confidence anything that God requires of us*. The more scholars who become involved with telling us "how the Bible was moving" with respect to this or that aspect of ancient culture, the more opinions we will have, and the more despair people will feel about ever being able to know what God's requires of us, what his "ultimate ethic" is.

I do not believe that God gave us a Bible that is so direct and clear and simple, only to require that all believers throughout all history should first filter these commands through a complex system of eighteen criteria before they can know whether to obey them or not. That is not the kind of Bible that God gave us, nor is there any indication in Scripture itself that believers have to have some kind of specialized academic knowledge and elaborate hermeneutical system before they can be sure that these are the things God requires of his children.

(5) Webb fails to demonstrate that New Testament teachings on men and women are culturally relative.

Throughout Webb's book he attempts to dismantle the complementarian arguments for male leadership in the home and the church by claiming that the biblical texts on male leadership are culturally relative. Yet in each case, his attempts to demonstrate cultural relativity are not persuasive. In the following section, I consider a few of Webb's claims for culturally relativity in the order they occur in his book.

(a) Webb fails to show that New Testament commands regarding male headship are only a "preliminary movement" and that the New Testament ethic needs further improvement.

Webb claims that the commands regarding wives submitting to their husbands in Eph 5:22–33 are not a final ethic that we should follow today, but are simply an indication of "where Scripture is moving on the issue of patriarchal power" (*SWH*, 80–81). But this claim is not persuasive because it depends on his assumption that the ethical standards of the New Testament are not God's ultimate ethical standards for us, but are simply one step along the way toward an "ultimate ethic" that we should adopt

today (*SWH*, 36–39).

(b) Webb fails to show that Gal 3:28 is a "seed idea" that would ultimately lead to the abolition of male headship once cultural changes made it possible to adopt a superior ethic to that of the New Testament.

Once again, Webb's conception of a "seed idea" is based on his claim that some New Testament commands are inconsistent with that seed idea, and those commands show only that "the biblical author pushed society as far as it could go at that time without creating more damage than good" (*SWH*, 73). Webb claims that the "seed idea" is simply a pointer showing that there should be "further movement" toward a "more fully realized ethic" that is "more just, more equitable and more loving. . . . a better ethic than the one expressed in the isolated words of the text" (*SWH*, 36).

Galatians 3:28 should not be seen as a "seed idea" pointing to some future "higher ethic" but as a text that is fully consistent with other things the apostle Paul and other New Testament authors wrote about the relationships between men and women. If we take the entire New Testament as the very words of God for us in the new covenant today, then any claim that Gal 3:28 should overrule other texts, such as Ephesians 5 and 1 Timothy 2, should be seen as a claim that Paul the apostle contradicts himself, and therefore that the word of God contradicts itself.

(c) Webb fails to show that the Bible adopted male leadership because there were no competing options.

Webb says, "It is reasonably safe to assume, therefore, that the social reality of the biblical writers was the world of patriarchy. . . . This consideration increases the likelihood of patriarchy being a cultural component within Scripture" (*SWH*, 154–55; he makes a related argument in *DBE*, 411). Webb explains that this is because an egalitarian position regarding marriage or the church was simply not an option, given the surrounding culture.

But this criterion is not persuasive. The New Testament teaches many things that were not found in the surrounding culture. No people in the surrounding culture believed in Jesus as the Messiah before he came. Even Webb admits that the idea that husbands should love their wives as Christ loved the church was revolutionary for the culture. The idea that there could be a church made up of Jews and Gentiles fellowshipping together was not an option in the surrounding culture. If Jesus and the apostles had wanted to teach egalitarianism, they would have done so, whether or not it was found in the current culture.

Webb's other response to Ephesians 5 and 1 Corinthians 11 is to say that if Paul had been addressing a different culture he would have commanded something different:

> If Paul had been addressing an egalitarian culture, he may have used the very same christological analogy (with its transcultural component) and reapplied it to an egalitarian relationship between husband and wife. He would simply have encouraged both the husband and the wife to sacrificially love one another (*SWH*, 188–89).

This amazing statement reveals how deeply committed Webb is to finding an egalitarian ethic that is "better than" the ethic taught in the New Testament. Even though he admits that *Paul did not teach*

an egalitarian view of marriage, he says that *Paul would have taught an egalitarian view of marriage* had he been addressing a different culture, such as our egalitarian culture today! Webb is not at all bound by what Paul taught, but here as elsewhere feels free to use his speculation on what Paul "might have" taught in a different situation as a higher moral authority than what Paul actually did teach.

(d) Webb fails to show that wives were to be subject to their husbands only because they were younger and less educated.

Webb says that it made sense for wives to submit to their husbands in an ancient culture because they had less education, less social exposure, less physical strength, and they were significantly younger than their husbands (*SWH*, 213–14; also *DBE*, 411). But these reasons, says Webb, no longer apply today, and therefore the command for wives to be subject to their husbands should be seen as culturally relative. A wife today should just give some kind of "honor" and "respect" to her husband (*SWH*, 215).

Webb's argument here is not persuasive, however, because these are not the reasons the Bible gives for wives to be subject to their husbands. The reasons the Bible gives are the parallel with Christ's relationship to the church (Eph 5:22–24) and the parallel with the relationship between the Father and Son in the Trinity (1 Cor 11:3). Another reason that Paul gives is that this is what "is fitting in the Lord" (Col 3:18). Yet another reason is that it is part of "what is good" (Titus 2:3–4), and another reason is that unbelieving husbands may be "won without a word by the conduct of their wives" (1 Pet 3:1).

Webb's reasons concerning education, age, and social status are merely speculative, and there is no indication that the biblical authors are taking these factors into account when they give these commands. Moreover, these New Testament commands apply to *all* wives, even those who were more intelligent than their husbands, or the same age as their husbands, or physically as strong as their husbands, or had as much social exposure and social rank as their husbands, or as much wealth as their husbands. Webb's reasons are simply not the reasons the Bible uses.

In short, Webb says that the Bible teaches a wife's submission because of Webb's own invented reasons. Then he removes these invented reasons for today's culture and concludes that we can count the command as culturally relative. It is far better to heed the reasons the Bible actually gives, and to believe that these are the reasons that the Bible commands wives to be subject to husbands.

(6) The difficult passages for determining cultural relativity are few, and most evangelicals have already reached a satisfactory conclusion about them.

Webb has made the question of determining when something is "culturally relative" into a much bigger problem than it actually is. The main question is not whether the *historical* sections of the Bible report events that occurred in an ancient culture, because the Bible is a historical book and it reports thousands of events that occurred at a time and in a culture significantly different from our own. The question rather is how we should approach the *moral commands* found in the New Testament. Are those commands to be obeyed by us today as well?

Although my comments in this section are prompted by Webb's book,

they are applicable more broadly to the general question of how we can know what parts of the New Testament are culturally relative and what parts are still binding on us today.

The question of which New Testament commands are culturally relative is really not a very complicated question. It is not nearly as complicated as Webb makes it out to be. The commands that are culturally relative are primarily—or exclusively—those that concern *physical actions that carry symbolic meaning*. When we look at the commands in the New Testament, I think there are only six main examples of texts about which people wonder if they are transcultural or if they are culturally relative:

(1) Holy kiss (Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; 1 Thess 5:26; 1 Pet 5:14)
(2) Foot washing (John 13:14; compare 1 Tim 5:10, which is not a command)
(3) Head covering for women or wives in worship (1 Cor 11:4–16)
(4) Short hair for men (1 Cor 11:14)
(5) No jewelry or braided hair for women (1 Tim 2:9; 1 Pet 3:3)
(6) Lifting hands in prayer (1 Tim 2:8)

The first thing that we notice about this list is that *all of these examples refer to physical items or actions that carry symbolic meaning*. The holy kiss was a physical expression that conveyed the idea of a welcoming greeting. Foot washing (in the way that Jesus modeled it in John 13) was a physical action that symbolized taking a servant-like attitude toward one another. Head covering was a physical piece of clothing that symbolized something about a woman's status or role (most likely that she was a married woman, or possibly that she was a woman and not a man; others have proposed other interpretations, but all of them are an attempt to explain what the head covering symbolized). As Paul understands long hair for a man in 1 Cor 11:14, it is a "disgrace for him," because it is something that was distinctive to women (in that culture at least), and therefore it was a physical symbol of a man being like a woman rather than like a man.

For these first four examples, one can still find a few examples of Christians who argue that we should follow those commands literally today, and that they are still applicable to us. But the vast majority of evangelicals, at least in the United States (I cannot speak for the rest of the world), have not needed Webb's "redemptive-movement hermeneutic" to reach the conclusion that the Bible does not intend us to follow those commands literally today. That is because they are not in themselves *fundamental, deep-level actions* that have to do with essential components of our relationships to one another (such as loving one another, honesty with one another, submission to rightful authority, speaking the truth and not lying about others, not committing adultery or murder or theft, and so forth). Rather they are outward, *surface-level manifestations* of the deeper realities that we should demonstrate today (such as greeting one another in love, or serving one another, or avoiding dressing in such a way as to give a signal that a man is trying to be a woman, or that a woman is trying to be a man). Therefore the vast majority of evangelicals are not troubled by these four "culturally relative" commands in the New Testament because they have concluded that *only the*

physical, surface manifestation is culturally relative, and the underlying intent of the command is *not culturally relative* but is still binding on us today.

In seeing these outward manifestations as culturally relative (long before Webb's book was written), evangelicals have not adopted Webb's viewpoint that we need to move to a "better ethic" than that found in the New Testament commands. Evangelicals who take the Bible as the very words of God, and who believe that God's moral commands for his people are good and just and perfect, do not see these commands as part of a deficient moral system that is just a "pointer" to a higher ethic. They see these commands as a part of the entire New Testament ethic that they even today must submit to and obey.

For most people in the evangelical world, deciding that a holy kiss is a greeting that could be manifested in another way is not a terribly difficult decision. It is something that comes almost intuitively as people realize that there are of course different forms of greetings among different cultures.

The last two items on the list need to be treated a bit differently. When we rightly interpret the texts about jewelry and braided hair for women, I do not think that they prohibited such things *even at the time they were written*. Paul says that "women should *adorn themselves* in respectable apparel, with modesty and self control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire" (1 Tim 2:9). Paul is not saying that women should never wear such things. He is saying that those things should not be the things that they consider the source of their beauty. That is not how they should "adorn themselves."

This sense of the prohibition becomes even more clear in 1 Pet 3:3. The ESV, which is very literal at this point, translates the passage as follows:

> Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair, the wearing of gold, *or the putting on of clothing*—but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious (1 Pet 3:3–4).

If this passage forbids braiding of hair and wearing of gold, then it must also forbid "the putting on of clothing"! But surely Peter was not telling women they should wear no clothes to church! He was rather saying that those external things should not be what they look to for their "adorning," for their source of attractiveness and beauty to others. It should rather be the inner character qualities which he mentions.[19] Therefore I do not think that the statements about jewelry and braided hair for women, *when rightly understood*, are "culturally relative" commands, but they have direct application to women today as well.[20]

Finally, should men be "lifting holy hands" in prayer today? Personally, I lean toward thinking that this may be something that is transcultural and that we should consider restoring to our practice of prayer (and praise) in evangelical circles today. (I realize that many Christians already do this in worship.) On the other hand, since this is an outward, physical action (and thus some may think that it falls in the same category as a holy kiss or the washing of feet), I can understand that others would conclude that this is simply a variable cultural outward expression of a physical expression of an inward heart attitude

toward God and dependence on him and focus on him in our prayers. It seems to me that there is room for Christians to differ on this question, but in any case it certainly is not a complicated enough question that it requires Webb's entire "redemptive-movement hermeneutic" to encourage us to move beyond the ethic of the commands that we find in the New Testament.

Is it really that simple? Are the only matters in dispute about cultural relativity just these simple physical items or actions, all of which carry symbolic meaning? Perhaps I have missed one or two other examples,[21] but I suspect it really is that simple. I believe God has given us a Bible that he intends believers generally to be able to understand (what has traditionally been called the clarity or the perspicuity of Scripture). Surely the question is not as complex and confusing as Webb's book portrays it.

At this point someone may object, what about all those other passages that Webb lists at the beginning of his book (*SWH*, 14–15), passages which we found so difficult to classify regarding the question of cultural relativity?

My response to that is that there are other widely-accepted principles of biblical interpretation that explain why many other commands in the Bible are not binding today. These principles of interpretation, however, are far different from Webb's principles, because they argue that certain commands are not binding on Christians today because of *theological convictions about the nature of the Bible and its history*, not because of *cultural analysis* or because of convictions about *cultural relativity*, and surely not because of any conviction that the New Testament commands were simply representative of a transitional ethic beyond which we need to move as we find a better ethic in today's society.

The following list gives some kinds of commands in the Bible that Christians do not have to obey in any literal or direct sense today (a fact which is evident apart from Webb's "redemptive-movement hermeneutic"):

> (1) The details of the Mosaic law code, which were written for people under the Mosaic covenant.[22]
> (2) Pre-Pentecost commands for situations unique to Jesus' earthly ministry (such as "go nowhere among the Gentiles" in Matt 10:5).
> (3) Commands that apply only to people in the same life situation as the original command (such as "bring the cloak. . . . and above all the parchments" in 2 Tim 4:13, and also "no longer drink only water" in 1 Tim 5:23). I would also put in this category Acts 15:29, which is a command for people in a situation of Jewish evangelism in the first century: "That you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled" (note that Paul himself explicitly allows the eating of foods sacrificed to idols in 1 Corinthians 10).
> (4) Everyone agrees that there are some passages, especially in Jesus' earthly teaching, that are difficult to understand in terms of how broadly we should apply them. Passages like, "Do not refuse the one who would borrow from you" (Matt 5:42) must be

interpreted in the light of the whole of Scripture, including passages that command us to be wise and to be good stewards of what God has entrusted to us. But *these are not questions of cultural relativity*, nor do these difficult passages cause us to think that we must move beyond Jesus' teaching to some kind of higher and better ethic. We agree that we are to be subject to this teaching and to obey it, and we earnestly seek to know exactly how Jesus intends us to obey it.

(5) There are differences among Christians today on how much we should try to follow commands regarding the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit such as, "Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons" (Matt 10:8). Some Christians think we should obey those commands directly, and they seek to do exactly what Jesus commanded. Other Christians believe that these commands were given only for that specific time in God's sovereign work in the history of redemption. But the important point here is that these differences are *theological*. This is not a dispute over whether certain commands are *culturally relative* because the point at issue is not one of ancient culture versus modern culture, but is rather a theological question about the teaching of the whole Bible concerning the work of miracles, and concerning God's purpose for miracles at various points in the history of redemption.

After we have made these qualifications, how much of the New Testament is left? Vast portions of the New Testament are still easily and directly applicable to our lives as Christians today, and many other passages are applicable with only minor changes to modern equivalents.

As I was preparing to write this analysis of Webb's book, I read quickly through the New Testament epistles, and I was amazed how few of the commands found in the epistles raise any question at all about cultural relativity. (I encourage readers to try the same exercise for themselves.)

Where it is necessary to transfer a command to a modern equivalent, this is generally not difficult because there are sufficient similarities between the ancient situation and the modern situation, and Christian readers generally see the connection quite readily. It is not difficult to move from "the wages of the *laborers who mowed your fields*, which you kept back by fraud" (Jas 5:4) to "the wages of the *employees who work in your factory*, which you kept back by fraud." It is not difficult to move from "honor the *emperor*" (1 Pet 2:17) to "honor *government officials* who are set in authority over you." It is not difficult to move from "Masters, treat your *slaves* justly and fairly" to "Employers, treat your *employees* justly and fairly." It is not difficult to move from "*Slaves*, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord" to "*Employees*, obey your employers" (with the general biblical principle that we are never to obey those in authority over us when

obedience would mean disobedience to God's laws). It is not difficult to move from "food offered to idols" (1 Cor 8:10) to other kinds of things that encourage Christians to violate their conscience. And, to take one Old Testament example of a command that everyone believes tells us what God expects today, it is not difficult to move from "You shall not covet your neighbor's…ox" (Exod 20:17) to "You shall not covet you neighbor's car or boat."

My suggestion, then, about the question of culturally relative commands, is that it is not that difficult a question. There are perhaps three to five "culturally relative" commands concerning physical actions that carry symbolic meaning (at least holy kiss, head covering, foot washing; perhaps short hair for men and lifting hands in prayer), but we still obey these by applying them in different forms today. There are other broad categories of commands (such as Mosaic laws) that are not binding on us because we are under the new covenant. There are some fine points that require mature reflection (such as to what extent the details of the Old Testament show us what pleases God today). But the rest —especially the commands in the New Testament addressed to Christians in the new covenant—were written for our benefit, and they are not for us to "move beyond," but to obey. ■

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[1] William Webb, *Slaves, Women and Homosexuals* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001).

[2] See my review article "Should We Move Beyond the New Testament to a Better Ethic? An Analysis of William J. Webb, *Slaves, Women and Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis,*" *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 47 (2004): 299-346. This article also appeared as Appendix 5 in Wayne Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth: An Analysis of More Than 100 Disputed Questions* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2004), 600-45. Another helpful review of Webb's approach is found in Thomas R. Schreiner, "Review of *Slaves, Women, and Homosexuals*," *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* 7, no. 1 (Spring, 2002): 48-49, 51 (his review was originally published in *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 6, no. 1 [2002]: 46-64).

[3] Webb's second chapter in *Discovering Biblical Equality* is "Gender Equality and Homosexuality" (401-13). He argues that homosexual conduct is contrary to biblical ethics in the Old Testament, the New Testament, and in his "ultimate ethic" as well. Though I disagree with the methodology he used to reach this conclusion and with the "redemptive-movement hermeneutic" structure within which he argued, I do not differ with his conclusion that homosexual conduct is morally wrong today, and therefore I will not interact specifically with that chapter in any detail in this essay. My differences with his redemptive-movement hermeneutic are found in what follows in this essay as I interact with his longer book.

[4] In order to determine if a New Testament command is to be followed today, Webb proposes eighteen criteria by which it should be evaluated. The criteria are too complex to explain fully in a brief space here, but his names for the criteria, with page numbers in *Slaves, Women and Homosexuals*, are (1) Preliminary Movement (73), (2) Seed Ideas (83), (3) Breakouts (91), (4) Purpose/Intent Statements (105), (5) Basis in Fall or Curse (110), (6) Basis in Original Creation, Section 1: Patterns (123), (7) Basis in Original Creation, Section 2: Primogeniture (134), (8) Basis in New Creation (145), (9) Competing Options (152), (10) Opposition to Original Culture (157), (11) Closely Related Issues (162), (12) Penal Code (179), (13) Specific Instructions Versus General Principles (179), (14) Basis in Theological Analogy (185), (15) Contextual Comparisons (192), (16) Appeal to the Old Testament (201), (17) Pragmatic Basis Between Two Cultures (209), and (18) Scientific and Social-Scientific Evidence (221). I discuss these criteria at various points in "Should We Move Beyond the New Testament to a Better Ethic?" but see especially 337-41.

[5] Webb does not consider the far simpler possibility that first century readers would have understood the word "children" (Greek *tekna*) to apply only to people who were not adults, and so we today can say that Eph 6:1 applies to modern believers in just the same way that it applied to first century believers, and no "cultural filters" need to be applied to that command.

[6] However, just as Webb wrongly asserts that the New Testament endorses slavery, so he presents distorted and incorrect interpretations of several Old Testament commands, such as claiming the "the Old Testament accepts the treatment of human beings as property" (*DBE*, 385), or "the husband's implied authority to physically discipline his wife" (*DBE,* 387). Webb also claims that the Bible in Hosea 2 endorses the idea of a husband physically disciplining his wife after the analogy of God who disciplines the people

of Israel (*SWH*, 189–90; also *DBE,* 387). But here Webb is assuming a very unlikely view of Hosea 2, and he is surely assuming a morally offensive view of God and the Bible, because he is claiming that Hosea 2 could have rightly been used by husbands within Israel as a justification for stripping their wives naked and confining them physically as discipline for wrongdoing! This is something the Bible nowhere teaches, and certainly it is not taught in Hosea 2, but Webb claims it is taught there as an example of an inadequate Old Testament ethic. In other cases he wrongly takes events in historical narratives and assumes that they are approved or commanded (*DBE,* 385). It is troubling to see Webb labor so hard to show that the infinitely holy God of the universe actually gave people commands that were morally deficient or morally wrong, rather than working harder at explaining those commands in a way that makes clear that they were not wrong.

[7] In *DBE,* 384-87, he attempts to show the moral inferiority of several Old Testament laws, but in several cases he interprets them in a hostile rather than a sympathetic light, giving them a harsh meaning that is not part of the text itself, and in other cases he mistakenly takes narrative examples as if they were commanded or approved.

[8] The following citations are from the 1838 edition: Theodore Weld, *The Bible Against Slavery* (4th edition; New York: American Anti-Slavery Society, 1838). The book was first published in Boston in 1837. See also several essays in Mason Lowance, ed., *Against Slavery: An Abolitionist Reader* (New York: Penguin Books, 2000).

[9] The NIV has "slave traders" in 1 Tim 1:10, but the term *andrapodistes* included not only trading but also capturing slaves to be traded.

[10] It would also be a mistake to assume that what the New Testament refers to when it mentions "slaves" or "servants" (Greek *doulos*) was in general the same situation as the horrible, dehumanizing condition of many nineteenth century slaves in the U.S. A *doulos* in the time of the New Testament had a higher social status and better economic situation than free day laborers, who had to search for employment each day (see Matt 20:1-7). In Matt 25:15, slaves are entrusted with "talents," which were about 20 years' wages for a laborer. Thus the slave who received five talents received approximately the equivalent of $500,000 in 2005 U.S. dollars, and was left to manage it and invest it. "Servants" or "slaves" in the first century were tutors, physicians, nurses, household managers, shop managers, and executives with decision making authority. Although slaves were not free to seek employment elsewhere, they owned their own property, were protected by extensive Roman laws, and could usually expect to earn their freedom by age thirty (see Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 342-45, for more information).

[11] J. B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1959; reprint of 1879 edition), 324-25.

[12] Alvin A Schmidt, *Under the Influence: How Christianity Transformed Civilization* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 274-75; 278-79. Schmidt notes that defenders of slavery "engaged in faulty reasoning, giving descriptive passages in the Bible prescriptive meaning" (278).

[13] Ibid., 276-85.

[14] Rodney Stark, *For the Glory of God* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 343.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid., 344.

[17] Ibid., 353.

[18] It is surprising that Webb fails even to mention, for example, the explanation of head covering in 1 Corinthians 11 as a culturally variable symbol as defended by Thomas Schreiner, "Head Coverings, Prophecies and the Trinity: 1 Corinthians 11:2-16" in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, ed. by John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL.: Crossway, 1991), 124-39. And Webb fails to mention the argument of D. A. Carson that "the women should keep silent in the churches" in 1 Corinthians 14:34 means they should not speak out in judgment of prophecies, in "'Silent in the Churches': On the Role of Women in 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 140-53. Both articles have extensive references to other literature on these passages. For more recent discussion of these passages see Wayne Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, 78-80, 232-23, 332-39.

[19] Some translations of 1 Pet 3:3 say that women should not put on "fine clothes" (so NIV; similarly RSV, NRSV, NLT, NKJV), but there is no adjective modifying "clothing" (Greek *himation*), and the ESV, NASB, and KJV have translated it more accurately.

[20] I realize that others might argue that such braided hair and jewelry in the first century was recognized as an outward symbol of low moral character, and that was the reason that Paul and Peter prohibited it. I'm not persuaded by this because Peter still prohibits the "wearing of clothing," and I cannot think that only women of low moral character wore clothes in the first century. But if someone does take this position, it does not matter much for my argument, for this would then simply be one additional physical action that carries a symbolic meaning, and in this case also the prohibition would not be one that would apply absolutely to women who wanted to wear braided hair or jewelry today, since they would not convey that meaning in modern society.

[21] I am not saying that *all* physical actions with symbolic meaning are culturally variable, but most are. At least two are not, because the New Testament gives commands indicating that baptism and the Lord's Supper should be observed in the church for all time, since they are given by Jesus as abiding symbols (and more than symbols) to be observed by the new covenant people of God.

[22] I realize that many people, including me, would argue

that many of the laws in the Mosaic law code give us guidance on the kinds of things that are pleasing and displeasing to God today. In some ways that question is one of the more difficult questions in biblical interpretation. But I know of no Christians who would say that Christians today are actually under the Mosaic covenant, and therefore bound to obey *all* of the commands in the Mosaic covenant, including the commands about sacrifices and clean and unclean foods, and so forth.

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"In Search of Holy Joy: Women and Self-Esteem"(Ch 25) by Joan Burgess Winfrey

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Summary

This free-ranging chapter by Joan Burgess Winfrey, professor of counseling at Denver Seminary, explores how women find "holy joy" in discovering a healthy view of their "work of ministry" and their "ministry of work." Winfrey acknowledges that self-esteem is a multifaceted concept, in need of clarity. Its true meaning is uncovered only when "we bring theological discernment to bear on psychological theory" (433). Without attempting to produce such a definition in her sixteen-page chapter, she mentions two key factors: a sense of worth and a sense of competence. In her counseling, she has found that women often feel a lack of worth and competence, a lack that affects them as they seek to exercise their gifts in the church. Women frequently believe that they are less intelligent, capable and valuable than men. Winfrey attributes this lack of self confidence to their having accepted certain social and psychological categories that exclude them from the work of the kingdom. If we are to restore women's sense of "kingdom purpose," she says, we must work to reduce the "phenomena that have placed women outside the gate for…millennia, rendering them anemic and sometimes powerless to flourish on their own behalf and on behalf of Christ and his kingdom" (432).

To aid us in understanding how we have arrived at this state of affairs, Winfrey discusses three major influences on female self-esteem. The first is the fall. Winfrey echoes Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen's work on the fall, which encourages us to "go beyond biological, familial and cultural explanations" (435) of gender stereotypes and struggles. Adam and Eve are both called to two tasks as they reflect the image of God: "accountable dominion" and "sociability." The fall "foretells an unreciprocated desire for intimacy on the part of the woman and a tendency to abuse poser in the case of the man" (436). Thus fallen women, even Christians are prone to seek peace at any price and to ensure relation-

ship and nurture even at the expense of obedience.

The second influence is that of Freud, whose huge contribution to psychology Winfrey praises in passing while agreeing with a passage in Betty Friedan's *Feminine Mystique* that claims America turned to Freud to get rid of a bad conscience about consumerism. The results for women were not positive: "If the new psychological religion—which made a virtue of sex, removed all sin from private vice, and cast suspicion on high aspirations of the mind and spirit—had a more devastating personal effect on women than men, nobody planned it that way" (438, quoting Friedan). Freud depended on the "Victorian woman, whose degradation and inferiority were taken as the natural order of things" (439). Freud's pleasure principal gave consumer driven Americans an excuse to idolize a "Leave it to Beaver" world, which was, in turn, adopted by the church as a biblical model of relating. This resulted in divided gender spheres, with men doing "real work" and women thoroughly domesticated.

Such definitions, based on a biological model, led to a "functionalism" that does not well-define "kingdom purpose." As Friedan put it, "By giving absolute meaning and sanctimonious value to the term 'woman's role,' functionalism put American women into a kind of deep freeze"(439, quoting Friedan). Winfrey mentions Del Birkey's work on "role theology," which sets up a conflict between "gender, gender roles, authority or hierarchy" and the Bible's emphasis on "spiritual gifts, agape love, servant leadership and mutual submission"—aspects which properly determine Christian ministry according to Birkey (440). Ministry determined on the basis of gender relegates women to "a position in the church that is parallel to, if not worse than, their position in society" (440).

The third influence on women's self-esteem comes from developmental psychology based on a male model of what maturity should be. Winfrey argues that prior to the 1980s, psychologists tended to measure women's identity against male development. Brett Webb-Mitchell suggested that the Enlightenment overemphasized individualism and logical categories, rather than considering maturity as a pilgrimage, a "mindbodyspirit act of the person," who matures through the grace of God to the full stature of Christ (442). Women accept and participate in a false understanding of their place when they restrict themselves to social/physical or relational roles that have been defined for them by inaccurate psychological models, whose weaknesses have, in turn, been intensified in the context of the church.

Winfrey concludes her study by mentioning a few of her fears; that women will continue to be exploited by those who take advantage of their "warm and good" relational context; that women will accept the "dichotomies and categories" offered them by inadequate psychological models; that churches will continue to relegate women to "social-emotional realms, especially the home," encouraging them to continue believing that "godliness with contentment" is the "divine appointment for women"(444). She calls for a "theological self-concept," without which we cannot determine what we as women want. Women want to "participate in the unfolding drama of redemption," to "love and work" as full citizens of God's City; to "be honored as anointed vessels in God's plan of reconciliation"; to engage in "honest dialogue with the men in our lives"; to "listen and be heard"; and finally, "to ripen into Christian adulthood and grow up gifted in the name of Jesus"

(445-46).

Critique

Winfrey's obvious compassion for women uncertain of their place in the world and in the church comes through loud and clear in her chapter, as does her desire to count in the kingdom of Christ. However, she falls into the very trap she asks others to avoid. She appeals to Christian women to resist the society's or the church's definitions of the value of women, and to seek, rather, a sense of worth and competence in "the strength of God's truth" (445). No Christian eager to understand women's place in ministry would disagree with this desire, but in order to define our "work of ministry" and our "ministry of work," it is not sufficient to sprinkle a dash of Bible into a psychological potpourri to produce an appetizing dish.

Winfrey calls for a working definition of self-esteem, one which would bring together "valuable, respectable research in psychology with teachings of Scripture as they relate to the many layers of the self." She asks us not to base our self-esteem on models created by traditionalists, but she bases her definition on conclusions drawn by psychologists writing from a secular worldview: "Although writings on gender have frequently reflected a secular worldview, the body of knowledge on the subject accumulated in the biological and social sciences is of much potential value to the church" (437). She even seems to equate the research of pagan psychologists with God's revelation in nature: "The church has the duty of accumulating, interpreting and sifting scientific and cultural knowledge, and the privilege of speaking to the needs of society from God's truth. This is accomplished through the humility that ensues from the recognition of our finiteness and through persistent effort to discover truth, both from God's revealed Word and from his creation, which is also part of his revelation" (437).

Such faith in psychology as neutral science is puzzling, since Winfrey has readily admitted that psychological constructs are difficult to measure and not at all the same as definitions and measurements in the physical sciences. Because of this, "we should not attempt to stringently apply the rigors of the scientific method to the study of humans" (434). Do we not, as Bible-believing Christians, bear the responsibility of stringently applying the truths of the *Scripture* to our study of humans, since God himself created and defined us? Winfrey calls for such an approach—"We need a theological self-concept" (445), but utterly fails to help us find it in the Scriptures. Christians cannot rely on interpretations of human motivations and goals offered by those who have no understanding of why humans were created or what their God-given goals should be. Christians can never take off their biblical glasses, especially in analyzing the state of the human soul, which is the sole domain of God's Spirit (1 Cor 2:11-16; 4:3-5).

Having admitted that there is virtually no way to define self-esteem, Winfrey calls on women to exercise it more boldly. Says Winfrey, "Self-esteem, adequately defined, may well determine not only the ability of Christian women to follow God's call on their life but indeed the belief that God would call them at all."(431) This is rather curious reasoning. If we could only define self-esteem (which we cannot), we could not only offer women the ability to follow God's call, but insure their belief in that call. Winfrey contents herself with various psychological models, such as Sanford and Donovan's definition—"the

reputation we have with ourselves"(433). Though she would not like to see it put so baldly, Winfrey is arguing that a woman cannot truly serve the kingdom until she has found a liberated sense of worth and competence by breaking with traditional views of woman's role in the church and erasing the misconceptions that traditionalists have foisted on her about the nature of God. The problem woman is the one who "gives herself away at the expense of her self-respect" (443). Winfrey works with such a woman "helping her reframe her internal representations of God, a crucial step in the healing of her soul" (443). The reader is not told which representations of God are exorcised and which rush in to take their place. In the end, it seems that the woman herself is the one who defines her work and her joy. "There exists for each one, as the beloved, a God-breathed self-statement and job description. The pursuit and discovery of that divine intent hold the secrets of joy and the composition of self-esteem" (432).

The problem with defining our work of ministry according to our "self-statement" is that the Scriptures do not equate calling with self-esteem, even if we do not use the term "self-esteem" in its most secular definition. We must not delude women by presenting their present joy as the treasure they should seek. Joy is the ultimate by-product of service, a gift of the Spirit that infuses us now in some deep sense, but which will come to fruition only as we accept God's definition of our calling, enduring the trials he has ordained for us, sacrificing ourselves and our desires for the joy that is set before us (Matt 25:21; Luke 6:22-23; 10:20; John 16:20-22; Rom 14:15-19; 2 Cor 7:4ff; 8:1-2; Jas 1:2; 4:7-10; 1 Pet 1:6-8). Winfrey points to a question we may justly ask: "What have we come to the kingdom for?"(444), though it would be better phrased differently: "To what does God call me, a woman in his kingdom?" We do not have the right to answer that question. Only God can, and if he has already defined that purpose, then we have no right to redefine it. It is true that each woman is unique and will serve Christ as an individual, but she is not free to define her calling according to her gifts, if she steps outside the boundaries God has drawn. Winfrey suggests that those boundaries have been misunderstood by the church, which is surely true to some extent. But the question remains, and Winfrey's article does not answer it: Has God himself set limits on women's ministry in the church? If so, women must respect them in their service to Christ and his kingdom.

It is beyond the scope of this brief review to offer a thorough response to such a question. However, one mistake that sometimes blinds us is to think of calling as the sum of our passion and our gifts. Gifts do not equal calling. Passion does not equal calling. And even the sum of *gifts* + *passion* ≠ *calling*. God has poured out his gifts lavishly on his children. We all have God-given gifts we have never pulled off the shelves to use yet in God's kingdom. We do not have the time in this brief life to develop all the gifts God has given us, and Paul even suggests that we are to ask God for gifts we do not yet possess (1 Cor 12:31)! So gifts cannot be the unique and determining factor in calling. Nor can our passions define that calling.

Jesus passionately wished that the cup could pass from him, but it was not the Father's will, to which he obediently submitted himself in spite of the suffering he endured. It was Jesus' God-given calling to save his people. How urgently he must have longed to march into

Jerusalem, set himself up as king, and shepherd the lost sheep of Israel. Did he have the gifts to be their king, priest, and pastor? Absolutely. Did he have the desire and passion? Definitely. Was it God's calling? Yes, but he was not to accomplish that calling the "easy" way. This is the case for every Christian. We have godly passions to serve the kingdom, and we have gifts God has given us to accomplish his purposes, but we must submit our gifts and passions to God and follow the path he lays before us. That path for women's service is defined in Scripture. She was created after Adam, as "a helper fit for him" (Gen 2:18). This pre-fall creation definition does not change in Christ's kingdom, though we understand it more deeply and have greater power to accomplish it.

This leads us to the third puzzling aspect of Winfrey's article, namely her aversion to "dichotomies and categories." Arguing that such divisions come from the Garden of Eden, she does not mean that God set such divisions in his creation, but that dichotomies are a result of the fall. "Femininity and masculinity are more accurately depicted on a continuum," she argues. "Prior to the 1960s, psychological research…conceptualized masculinity and femininity as bipolar opposites. The view of male and female as opposites, having mutually exclusive qualities, has deep historical roots" (437). She sees the sharp distinctions some Christians make between male and female roles as a Christianized form of the biological determinism of Freud.

Opposites do come from the Garden of Eden, but they were ordained before the fall. In all of God's work of creation, he constantly makes distinctions. He calls the light day and the darkness night; he separates the waters from the dry land; he creates species that reproduce "after their own kind;" and he creates "male" and "female." He calls each creature into existence and sets it in its own holy (sanctified) place. Each part of God's creation brings honor and glory to his name as it accomplishes the "role" for which it has been set apart and called. So an elephant finds joy in its "elephantness" and a rock in its "rockness." The donkey "knows its master's crib." Masculinity and femininity are not on a continuum! This idea is what our present culture is trying to force upon us, to the detriment of our familial and societal health. The destruction of God's dichotomies is the goal of pagan spirituality, which finds its ecstasy in bringing together the opposites and in attempting to destroy the differences God has set in our world.

Winfrey is certainly not consciously advocating any pagan spiritual experiences, but because she values so highly (and borrows from so freely) what she considers to be "valuable, respectable research in psychology" (433), she is prone to absorbing definitions and values far from those given us by God in the Scriptures. God calls men to serve him as men, and he calls women to serve as women. If this is structural and biological determinism, then it is not Freud's, but God's. Both sexes are equally servants of Christ. Both are equally in God's image. But a Christian woman's "holy joy" is found not in rebelling against the clear teachings of Scripture that she is to be in submission to her husband and is to refrain from taking on a teaching or authoritative role in the administration of Christ's church. Her joy is found rather as she plunges her roots deep into the power of the Spirit within her to live out her holy creation calling as a woman, set apart and sanctified to follow the path her Creator and Savior has laid down for her. In her whole-hearted obedience to that "set-apart" call, she will find holy joy. ■

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Annotated Bibliography for Gender Related Articles in 2004

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In this issue of the journal we profile some of the most significant gender-related articles from 2004. Here is a brief reminder about the categories we are using and our intent in using them. By *Complementarian* we simply seek to designate an author who recognizes the full personal equality of the sexes, coupled with an acknowledgment of role distinctions in the home and church. By *Egalitarian* then, we intend to classify evangelicals who see only undifferentiated equality, i.e., affirming they see no scriptural warrant for male headship in the home or the church. Under the *Non-Evangelical* heading, we have classified important secular works as well as articles that broach the subject of biblical gender issues from a religious, albeit, non-evangelical point of view. This category also serves as our classification for Liberal scholars wanting to retain some sort of Christian identity. Finally, under the *Undeclared* heading, we have listed those articles that do not give sufficient indication of their fundamental stance for us to classify them more specifically.

Complementarian Authors/Articles

Branch, Alan. "Radical Feminism and Abortion Rights: A Brief Summary and Critique." *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* 9, no. 2 (2004):19-25.

Branch summarizes the radical feminist worldview and its implications for the public policy of abortion rights advocates. His assessment of radical feminism especially takes into consideration the work of Rosemary Radford Ruether, Mary Daly, and Ginette Paris. Branch then suggests that the overarching principle supplied by radical feminism is the demand for absolute autonomy. With respect to abortion rights, this demand is then inserted into public policy by way of agitating for the absolute reproductive autonomy of women. In turning to a brief critique, Branch notes that the

worldview of radical feminism grows out of a key theological error, namely the embrace of pantheism. This theological mis-step then, naturally leads to sexual chaos and the intergenerational violence that is committed in the name of abortion rights.

Duncan, Ligon and Terry Johnson. "A Call to Family Worship." ***Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*** **9, no. 1 (2004): 6-16.**

Duncan and Johnson enjoin parents—and particularly fathers—to fulfill the task of leading their families in regular worship together. In addition to marshalling the biblical directives behind such a responsibility, this article is a goldmine of wisdom concerning practical application. The authors also offer helpful advice on how to get started and how to persevere in the face of apathy or even resistance from one's family. Readers will take great encouragement at the potential long-term cumulative effect of consistent and committed family worship for fifteen minutes a day, six days a week, for the duration of a child's stay in the home.

Grudem, Wayne. "Is Evangelical Feminism the New Path to Liberalism? Some Disturbing Warning Signs." ***Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*** **9, no. 1 (2004): 35-84.**

Grudem provides a thoroughgoing critique of egalitarian arguments and tendencies that tilt towards effectively negating the authority of Scripture for our lives. After drawing an historical connection between liberalism and evangelical feminism, Grudem first evaluates fifteen ways in which egalitarians have denied the authority of Scripture outright. Then he turns to an examination of ten additional ways in which egalitarians have indirectly nullified the Bible's authority by an appeal to untruthful or unsubstantiated claims. Finally, in several concluding sections, Grudem points out where these disturbing trends are likely to take the egalitarian movement. This article, which is an adapted excerpt from Grudem's recent book (*Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth* [Multinomah, 2004]), will make an excellent resource for pastors and concerned laity who would benefit from a summary-like "field manual" addressing many of the most prominent egalitarian arguments.

Grudem, Wayne. "Should We Move Beyond the New Testament to a Better Ethic?" ***Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*** **47 (2004): 299-346.**

Grudem offers a thorough analysis and detailed criticism of William Webb's redemptive movement hermeneutic proposal in *Slaves, Women and Homosexuals*. He unfolds twenty-three detailed criticisms concerning Webb's argument, and then comments specifically on each of Webb's eighteen hermeneutical criteria. According to Grudem the underlying problem with the whole proposal is that it sets up a scheme that "nullifies in principle the moral authority of the entire NT and replaces it with the moral authority of a 'better ethic.'"

Hawkins, Susie. "The Essence of the Veil: The Veil as a Metaphor for Islamic Women." ***Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*** **9, no. 1 (2004): 29-34.**

Hawkins explains the "veiling" customs of women in Islamic nations, the point of which is to avoid attracting male attention because Islam essentially views the female body as the cause of sexual immorality. She further documents how certain Islamic regulations help to institutionalize the oppression of women. In her conclusion, Hawkins expands her

insights to include some suggestions to keep in mind when Christian women attempt to reach out to Muslim women.

Heimbach, Daniel R. "Manhood, Womanhood and Therapeutic Morality." *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* 9, no. 2 (2004): 30-34.

After describing therapeutic sexual morality (TSM), Heimbach provides a very interesting discussion of its psychological history and development. He then expounds seven reasons why Christians must reject the worldview of TSM. Heimbach points out that the fundamental problem with TSM is that it tragically esteems sex—not God—as the ultimate satisfier of mankind's deepest needs.

Liederbach, Mark. "Manliness and the Marital Vow: A Look at the Meaning of Marriage and its Implications for Men as They Enter Into the Covenant of Marriage."*Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* 9, no. 2 (2004): 4-9.

Liederbach makes a convincing case that the ultimate end of marriage is the "experience and expansion of the worship of God in all the earth." Therefore, he contends that if men maintain a focus on this larger purpose as they lead in marriage, then they will find a stronger fabric to their marriages when difficult times come. And, as a result, they will not only be less likely to divorce, but they will also enter more deeply into the proximate joys of marriage.

Peace, Martha. "The Influence of the World." *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* 9, no. 2 (2004): 26-29.

Peace opens her article with a thoughtful account of the early history of American feminism and the psychological pillars undergirding it. She then turns to examine specific ways that we, in the church, have been influenced by this worldly philosophy, before finally pointing out Scripture's antidotes to these attitudes.

Scott, Stuart W. "Profiling Christian Masculinity." *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* 9, no. 2 (2004): 10-18.

In this article, Scott aims to demonstrate what true biblical masculinity is and is not. The backdrop to the discussion is a brief examination of the sinful distortions of masculinity throughout the ages, and especially in the more recent trend toward relativism. Over against these failed cultural notions of masculinity, Scott evaluates six fundamental realities that are true of men and women. He then turns to an examination of key characteristics drawn from the life of Jesus as well as from the qualifications given for male leadership in the church. Scott then concludes with an analysis of four characteristics (viz., Leader, 1 Corinthians 13 Lover, Protector, Provider) in which men must excel if they are to fulfill the major roles given to them, before offering a final definition of biblical masculinity.

Walton, Mark David. "What We Shall Be: A Look at Gender and the New Creation." *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* 9, no.1 (2004): 17-28.

Walton addresses himself to the question of whether or not resurrected believers in the new creation will retain their gender distinctiveness as male and female. Walton notes that such a question is of particular relevance, given the rampant gender confusion of the

contemporary climate. Upon surveying three possible views, Walton makes the exegetical and theological case that our gender distinctives shall remain even in the new creation.

Egalitarian Authors/Articles

Carlson-Thies, Christiane. "Man and Woman at Creation: A Critique of Complementarian Interpretations." *Priscilla Papers* 18, no. 4 (2004): 5-9.

Carlson-Thies alleges that the complementarian reading of Genesis 1-2 is plagued by a double standard and an illegitimate appeal to the Pauline interpretation of the creation narrative. Indeed, it appears to her that complementarians have begun with an extra-biblical precommitment to male authority, which they force on the text in an effort to "exclude" women. What emerges from this presentation, however, is Carlson-Thies's failure to recognize more than one strand of emphasis in the creation narrative, as well as in the broader scope of biblical teaching. Egalitarians, such as Carlson-Thies, often think that complementarians are trying to manipulate the text when they argue that men and women share full personal equality, but carry out different roles. Complementarians, however, point out that this formulation is born out of a reading of the dual emphases in Scripture. Finally, it is worth noting that Carlson-Thies does not think that Paul's interpretation of the creation narrative is definitive.

Haddad, Mimi. "Evidence for and Significance of Feminine God-Language from the Church Fathers to the Modern Era." *Priscilla Papers* 18, no. 3 (2004): 3-11.

Haddad's aim in this article to demonstrate that a number of theologians throughout church history have used feminine as well as masculine metaphors to refer to God. She stresses throughout, that these feminine metaphors were a way of picturing God's immanence as well as his transcendence. Haddad is also concerned, however, that we not overestimate the significance of Jesus' masculinity. She writes, for instance, "Though gender was part of Christ's humanity, Christ's humanity is more central than his gender. To absolutize Christ's gender is to lose the universality of Christ's sacrifice. . . . The point of the incarnation is that Christ represents the flesh of all people. Thus Christ is far more often understood as human . . . than as male." What Haddad seems to suggest is that we should emphasize Jesus' generic humanity more than his maleness, lest we risk excluding women from the sphere of salvation. By way of response, I will mention just two points and then suggest a couple of resources. First, while agreeing with Haddad that God is not a physically gendered being, that is not all that needs to be said. It is true that the Bible, on a few occasions, does use feminine imagery for God, though it never uses feminine names (e.g., Mother) or pronouns (e.g., she) for God. Conversely, God has seen fit to reveal himself in Scripture with masculine names, appellatives, and pronouns. It seems then that, without identifying himself as physically male, God's purposeful self-revelation in masculine terms does intend to tell us something about his nature and character. Secondly, speaking of the incarnate Christ's maleness as a mere historical accident fails to take into account the eternal Father-Son relationship of the first and second person of the Trinity. For more detailed interactions with these important questions see "Seven Reasons Why We Can-

not Call God 'Mother'" by Randy Stinson and Christopher W. Cowan (http://www.cbmw.org/article.php?id=99), and Bruce Ware's "Could Our Savior Have Been a Woman? The Relevance of Jesus' Gender for His Incarnational Mission," *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* 8, no. 1 (2003): 31-38 (accessible online).

Kroeger, Catherine Clark. "Does Belief in Women's Equality Lead to an Acceptance of Homosexual Practice?" *Priscilla Papers* 18, no. 2 (2004): 3-10.

Kroeger's article attempts to demonstrate that the Scriptures endorse gender egalitarianism on the one hand and oppose homosexual behavior on the other hand. She acknowledges that the question has come to the fore because some proponents of gender egalitarianism have gone on to affirm homosexual practice as well. Kroeger contends that the key distinctive, however, is whether one stands under the ultimate authority of Scripture or of women's experience. Hence, she suggests that egalitarians who embrace the authority of Scripture will resist homosexuality, even while they affirm the completely undifferentiated participation of women in ministry.

Marshall, Molly T. "Engaging Gender Relations." *Review and Expositor* 101 (2004): 35-39.

Marshall surveys two earlier articles from the *Review and Expositor*, on opposite ends of the "gender debate" spectrum. The first is an article from early in the twentieth century that seemingly fears the effect of the growing women's movement, while the second is an article from the end of the twentieth century that seemingly fears the effect of what will happen if the church fails to embrace the growing women's movement. Marshall's historical assessment is that the church is inevitably moving in a thoroughly egalitarian direction.

Phelan Jr., John E. "Women and the Aims of Jesus." *Priscilla Papers* 18, no. 1 (2004): 7-11.

Phelan's article gives a biblical theology of the advance of the Kingdom of God. Much of his discussion of the OT backdrop and the announcement of the kingdom in the preaching of Jesus is very solid. Phelan repeatedly (and correctly) observes that in the new covenant, "All God's people are priests! All God's people have the Spirit! All God's people are holy!" But his argument breaks down near the end of the article where he overextends this insight to conclude that "any restriction on any of God's people, male or female, is contrary to the kingdom ideal. . . ." By way of response, we should note that the Pastoral Epistles, for instance, make it clear that Spirit-giftedness is not the only criterion for ministry service. Even in the new covenant, there are limitations that affect the ministry service of all people. Just consider the following examples: A divorced man cannot serve as an elder (1 Tim 3:2), no matter how much ability he may have to teach. A fantastic teacher, who has unruly children also cannot serve as an elder (1 Tim 3:4). A heavy drinker cannot serve as a deacon (1 Tim 3:8). And, even women who are gifted to teach (e.g., Titus 2:3-5) may not "teach or exercise authority over a man" (1 Tim 2:12). For his part, Phelan suggests that the "hard passages" must be read in light of the larger limitation-exploding spirit of the kingdom reality.

Spencer, Aida Besancon. "What are the Biblical Roles of Female and Male Followers of Christ?" *Priscilla Papers* 18, no. 2 (2004): 11-16.

Spencer disavows the notion that men and women might be equal in essence but different in roles. In support of this thesis, she marshals many of the traditional egalitarian arguments. She contends that the sequence of creation and the act of Adam's naming do not support the complementarian view, because Gen 1:26-28 indicates that both man and woman are created in the image of God and both receive the mandate of stewardship. Spencer further argues that the Persons of the Trinity actually model mutual submission as well. Hence, "head" in 1 Cor 11:3 should only be understood to mean "source." Once again, however, this kind of reading allows one emphasis (i.e., full personal equality) in the creation narrative to silence the other emphasis (i.e., a designation of male leadership). With respect to the doctrine of the Trinity, it also overlooks a mass of biblical data in support of the eternal, functional subordination of the Son, and it introduces arbitrariness into the Godhead, with the implicit assumption that any of the members of the Godhead could have become incarnate.

Wall, Robert W. "1 Timothy 2:9-15 Reconsidered (Again)." *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 14 (2004): 81-103.

Wall offers a fresh analysis of 1 Tim 2:9-15 that includes some useful observations. Perhaps most helpfully, Wall is very clear in his opposition to interpretations of this passage that seek to undermine its contemporary application by appealing to highly speculative (and unwarranted) background reconstructions about especially unruly Ephesian women. And yet, Wall limits the force of this passage in his own way. He contends that the purpose of the passage is missional, not sociological. In other words, according to Wall, the prohibition in verse 12 was a concession to the social standards of decency in a pagan patriarchal culture, for the purpose of displaying the social effects of the gospel to otherwise skeptical outsiders. Since we now live in a setting, which repudiates patriarchy, the normative missional emphasis must take a different cultural shape in an on-going effort to "adorn the gospel." Wall grounds his interpretation on the "midrashic" exegesis of the creation narrative in verses 13-15. Here, Wall emphasizes that Eve's recognition of her redemption (v. 15) liberates her to live modestly. In all of this, it is interesting that Wall casually dismisses the fairly straightforward grounding of Paul's prohibition (v. 12) on an appeal to the creation order (v. 13).

Waters, Kenneth L. "Saved Through Childbearing: Virtues as Children in 1 Timothy 2:11-15." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 123 (2004): 703-735.

Waters argues that 1 Tim 2:11-15 is a fairly elaborate allegory, in which "Adam" stands for the male leaders of the Ephesian congregation, "Eve" stands for the wealthy and less mature female members, and "childbearing" is not meant literally, but as a metaphor for "virtues-bearing." That is, according to Waters, the four virtues mentioned in 2:15 are the birthed children, allegorically speaking. The perceived benefit of this approach is that it harmonizes more readily with the typical Pauline insistence on salvation by faith. Without suggesting that 2:15 is an easy verse to interpret, the problem with Waters's approach is that in making this overly complex case, he overlooks the relatively simple and historical point of male leadership behind Paul's appeal to the creation narrative. Clearly, Waters's suggested backdrop prevents the trans-cultural application of this passage.

Non-Evangelical Authors/Articles

Baber, H. E. "Is Homosexuality Sexuality?" *Theology* 107 (2004): 169-183.

On explicitly utilitarian grounds, Baber argues that "homosexuality does not count as sexuality," and so is morally permissible. While utilitarian benefits may accrue from retaining traditional constraints on heterosexual activity, Baber argues that this is not so in the case of homosexuality. It is interesting, therefore, to find that she does not think the Church should bless same-sex unions or ordain homosexuals. Baber acknowledges that while this may be ironic, the same utilitarian ethic leads her to these apparently conflicting conclusions, for she maintains that such changes in church policy are likely to help only a few but to damage many more.

de Mingo, Alberto. "Saint Paul and Women." *Theology Digest* 51 (2004): 9-18.

de Mingo maintains that the Pauline literature does not prohibit women from any roles in ministry. His case is fairly easy to argue, since he does not accept Pauline authorship of Colossians, Ephesians, or the Pastorals. In accepting 1 Corinthians as authentic, he avoids the difficulty of 1 Cor 14:33-35 by dismissing it as a later insertion. According to de Mingo, the "deutero-Pauline texts" (e.g. the Pastorals) reflect a backlash in the Pauline communities after his death that reasserted the culturally normative subjection of women.

Mack-Canty, Colleen and Sue Wright. "Family Values as Practiced by Feminist Parents: Bridging Third-Wave Feminism and Family Pluralism." *Journal of Family Issues* 25 (2004): 851-880.

The authors contend that contemporary feminist families are raising their children in ways that are commensurate with the broader aims of third-wave feminism. Their findings derive from a set of interviews with twenty self-identified feminist families, including two-parent and single-parent families, as well as gay and lesbian families. Mack-Canty and Wright appear implicitly to endorse this new wave of parenting that challenges "unnecessary parental authority," practices democratic decision making, and undermines the morality of Christian family values. Indeed, they suggest that the children from these feminist homes are better equipped for their adult responsibilities in society.

Martin, Troy W. "Paul's Argument from Nature for the Veil in 1 Corinthians 11:13-15: A Testicle Instead of a Head Covering." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 123 (2004): 75-84.

Martin makes the very unique argument that in the ancient world, a post-pubescent woman's hair was thought to be part of the female genitalia corresponding to the male testicle. This, in turn, is thought to make sense of the requirement of female head-coverings when praying or prophesying, since it would be inappropriate for women to display their genitalia in worship.

Undeclared Authors/Articles

Briggs, Richard S. "Gender and God-Talk: Can We Call God 'Mother'?" *Themelios* 29 (2004): 15-25.

Briggs provides an evaluation of the various levels of conceptual dialogue in

the debate over gender and God-Talk. In his analysis, he traces the standard argumentation of both camps, and suggests that, in many cases, the two sides talk past one another because they are engaging at different levels. He then proposes that dialogue proceed self-consciously on three levels: the biblical, the historical, and the philosophical. According to Briggs, the upper-most level of this debate involves the philosophical assessment of how language (and especially metaphor) works. Those who favor calling God "Mother" often insist that since God-language is metaphorical, we therefore have license to seek new ways of speaking of God. On the other hand, Briggs notes that opponents of "mother language" for God often respond that we are not at liberty to refashion the revealed language (including the revealed metaphors) of Scripture, especially when it indicates that in the "order of being" God's fatherhood has primacy (e.g., Eph 3:14-15). Unfortunately, following some very cogent analysis of the nature of the debate, Briggs finally concludes that since there is no clear right answer to the question, the matter should best be left up to individual preference.

Dowling, Elizabeth. "Rise and Fall: the Changing Status of Peter and Women Disciples in John 21." ***Australian Biblical Review*** **52 (2004): 48-63.**

Dowling argues that in John 21, Peter's status rises all of sudden, whereas the status of women disciples falls all of a sudden. She then contends that the shift in the respective portrayals of Peter and female disciples that John 21 may have been written by a later author with conscientious intentions of supporting male leadership in the early Christian community.