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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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# Editor's Column



Bruce A. Ware  
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The *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* comes to you, this issue, displaying its new look. God is prospering our meager but sincere efforts, and we rejoice that the beauty of his design for manhood and womanhood can be mirrored just a bit better by the beauty of the design for the new cover for our Journal. But most important, the contents of this Spring issue again present a rich variety, and much from which to learn and grow in Christ.

David Talley's excellent study of how God's created design (Gen 1-2) was marred by sin (Gen 3) and is restored through Christ's redeeming power as shown in marriage (Eph 5) is full of mature insight and wisdom. As you read this fine piece, you will see afresh some of the glory and beauty of manhood and womanhood, as God's purpose, in part, is to work through our respective roles to help us grow in sanctification, to the honor of the redeeming work of Christ. It is clear that Dr. Talley has spent much time studying and musing over the thesis he commends in this article, and I assure all who read carefully that you will find much profit here for your own lives and relationships with others.

Steven Tracy warns, helpfully, that headship becomes perverted and distorted when it is exercised with harshness and selfishness. Those of us who hold and

commend the complementarian view must keep front and center the responsibility that male headship entails. Whether in marriage or in church leadership, the New Testament commends those men who lead to do so for the benefit and blessing of those under their authority. To fail here is to bring disrepute to the cause of Christ and harm to those we are called to love and serve.

If distortions of male headship can be manifest through abusive relationships, another kind of distortion takes place when passages of Scripture are abused by being made to say something foreign to their intended meanings. Peter Schemm offers a very helpful review of how the supreme text of the egalitarian movement – Galatians 3:28 – has been misunderstood and misapplied by those who advance the feminist agenda. He shows convincingly that the context and clear teaching of this passage is about a glorious truth indeed, for women and men alike (!), but it is a teaching very different from the one purported by egalitarian advocates. Again, careful reading, with your Bibles open, will bring insight and personal gain as the real truth of God's Word is brought home with clarity and forcefulness.

A recent trend to minimize the male gender of Jesus (which some find offensive while they claim to follow him as Lord!) is an issue many of us never dreamt we would need to address. But, alas, the need is upon us. I offer here some reflections on whether the "Father" (recall that the One who sent Jesus is called this) really had to send his "Son" in the form of a male human being. Consider with me 12 reasons why the male identity of Jesus seems clearly not to have been *ad hoc* but part of God's eternal plan and necessary for its accomplishment.

Our own Dorothy Patterson offers a wonderful service to our readers by alerting us to a new book released by InterVarsity Press claiming to offer a *via media* between the complementarian and egalitarian positions. As Dr. Patterson shows convincingly and clearly, Sarah Sumner's *Men and Women in the Church* in fact consistently fails in this respect, offering instead a steady dose of egalitarian arguments and positions, albeit through her own "story" and innovative approaches. I know Dr. Sumner personally, and I could wish that our review here could commend her work to our readers. Unfortunately, unless in another work she demonstrates a significant shift back to Scripture's clear teaching, and embraces the glory of the authority and submission

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relationships within which God has designed for men and women to live, this simply will not be possible. Dr. Patterson's review is direct, but for a book proposing to pull complementarians to the "middle" when in fact they are pulled to the opposite side, we are grateful to the help and insight offered to us here.

Recently, CBMW underwent an organizational restructuring which all involved believe will be of great benefit to this ministry endeavoring to be faithful to God and his word, while being strategic and wise in our witness in the world. With a newly elected Board of Directors, CBMW now also has its first Chairman of the Board in the person of Dr. J. Ligon Duncan, III, Senior Minister of the First Presbyterian Church of Jackson, Mississippi. In light of Dr. Duncan's election to this important post within CBMW, it is a special delight to present a fine sermon he delivered recently on marriage from Genesis 2. Known for his exegetical care and practical application, readers will find encouragement here in knowing and following God's word in marriage, as God designed it to be.

We welcome, in this issue, a new feature of the Journal, i.e., a "Cultural Commentary" which endeavors to discuss some recent cultural development in light of the transcultural and normative Word of God on issues of sexuality and gender. Russell Moore writes columns and news articles regularly for our CBMW website and for the Baptist Press (both can be read online). You'll enjoy this recent commentary where, with great wit and skill, Dr. Moore explores whether complementarians are closer to egalitarians or to liberals. You might be surprised with his answer!

Once again, I commend the hard work, diligence, and skill of Mr. Rob Lister, our Managing Editor, and Mr. Todd L. Miles, our Assistant Managing Editor. We begin our third year of offering to our readers annotated bibliographies of the most significant articles on gender published in the previous year (in our Spring issue) and of books on gender published in the previous year (in our Fall issue). No other resource, to my knowledge, offers such a helpful survey of this literature, and so we express our gratitude for this useful service.

As a theologian, I am painfully aware that the evangelical church today risks massive doctrinal departures from "the faith once for all given to the saints" in a staggering array of areas. Among these, and at the center of Christianity's interface with our culture, are the temptations to compromise on issues of sexuality and gender. We offer this issue of the Journal, then, with the prayer that God would be pleased to use this tool to keep more men and women of God faithful to him and, by his grace, to pull some back from paths of ruin. If so, we will give God all the praise for any and all good accomplished for his kingdom. May God be praised! ■

# Executive Director's Column

## Exposition of the Danvers Statement: Affirmations 8,9, and 10



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### Affirmation 8

**In both men and women a heartfelt sense of call to ministry should never be used to set aside biblical criteria for particular ministries (1 Tim 2:11-15, 3:1-13; Tit 1:5-9). Rather, biblical teaching should remain the authority for testing our subjective discernment of God's will.**

On many occasions, there are those who object to the complementarian position on the basis of their own "call" to ministry. Their contention is that complementarians cannot tell men and women how God has directed their life and that if they feel called to a particular ministry, then that should be the end of the discussion. Affirmation 8 recognizes the sincerity of many of those in this particular category but at the same time, places Scripture as the final authority over and above one's experience. Regardless of a sincere, heartfelt sense of a particular call, one should never do anything that is prohibited by Scripture.

In the local church, each body of believers should ensure that men and women have the opportunity to exercise their spiritual gifts for the edification of the body, including teaching and leadership gifts. However, all things must be done inside the parameters that God's Word establishes for his people. We must submit to the authority of Scripture as we minister to one another. For those who claim that this limits the involvement of women, it should be noted that many opportunities and needs exist for women to teach and lead other women, which would be a faithful application of Titus 2:3-5:

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. (ESV)

### Affirmation 9

**With half the world's population outside the reach of indigenous evangelism; with countless other lost people in those societies that have heard the gospel; with the stresses and miseries of sickness, malnutrition, homelessness, illiteracy, ignorance, aging, addiction, crime, incarceration, neuroses, and loneliness, no man or woman who feels a passion from God to make His grace known in word and deed need ever live without a fulfilling ministry for the glory of Christ and the good of this fallen world (1 Cor 12:7-21).**

Affirmation 9 is a positive statement of immeasurable opportunity for those who genuinely want to serve the Lord. We are all aware of the many afflictions of mankind (certainly not limited to those on this list) and we should be motivated to action by the fact that God has a place of service for all believers. First Corinthians 12:7-21 teaches that there is diversity of gifts in the body of Christ by design. This diversity brings about a certain unity, since each member of the body is set there by God "as He pleased" (12:18). The complementarian position is not preoccupied with restriction, but concerns itself with the participation in the body of Christ of all members, within the confines set out by God himself in his Word. While teaching and having authority over men (1 Tim 2:12) is a responsibility given to men only, this affirmation makes it clear that there are many ministries that do not require this function. No man or woman should feel excluded from ministry since there are so many genuine needs.

### Affirmation 10

**We are convinced that a denial or neglect of these principles will lead to increasingly destructive consequences in our families, our churches, and the culture at large.**

This final affirmation finds elaboration in the rationale for the existence of the ministry of CBMW. The establishment of this ministry centered on confusion in marriages, ambivalence regarding the values of motherhood, the growing claims of legitimacy for illicit and perverse sexual relationships, the upsurge of physical and emotional abuse in the family, and the breakdown in the structure of the local

church. It is our contention that a denial or neglect of the affirmations in the Danvers Statement will lead to an increase in these and many other problems in our homes, churches, and society at large. It is our prayer that believers around the world will embrace the beauty of God's good design and live out and teach the biblical view of men and women, equal in the image of God, different in role and function. ■■

# Gender and Sanctification: From Creation to Transformation

**A Comparative Look at Genesis 1-3, the Creation and Fall of the Man and the Woman, and Ephesians 5, the Sanctification of the Man and the Woman in a Redemptive Marriage Context**

**David Lee Talley**

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This article seeks to understand the relationship between Genesis 1-3, the creation and fall of the man and the woman, and Ephesians 5, the sanctification of the man and the woman in a redemptive marriage context. In order to do this, each passage will be investigated to note any conclusions concerning the role of man and woman. The point of this investigation is to encourage reflection on how the fall continues to impact our relationships and to stir a passionate resolve to let the Spirit of God, the Word of God, and the people of God foster change in our lives.

It is written out of a concern that those who hold theologically to the complementarian view may not necessarily wrestle with the necessary and practical implications of the view. Those who hold theologically to this view, as well as those who wrestle with the necessary and practical implications, will live with a certain level of tension because there should be an awareness that to some degree we are not living out the call of God on our lives with respect to our gender. Our fallen natural tendencies fight against this. To be holy and restore the kind of relationships to which God has called us we must commit ourselves to be a community that takes our theology seriously and wages war against the battles, which the fall brought into our existence.

The effects of the fall on gender are evident in every area of one's life. It affects the fabric of relationships, service in the church, community involvements, the way one interacts with those around him/her, etc. As a result, there must be a strong connection between one's view of gender and one's understanding of sanctification for the body of Christ to "grow

in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." The two are intricately connected, and when one comes to this understanding, it will be realized that one's gender is central to the sanctification process.

## Genesis 1-3

Genesis 1-3 provides foundational teaching regarding the biblical understanding of male and female. It is important to note initially that the primary purpose of these chapters is not to answer the question of "what is male?" or "what is female?" However, the chapters do provide implications concerning these questions. Also, the New Testament, especially Paul, makes reference to various verses from these chapters on occasion as the referent for teaching on male and female.<sup>1</sup> Because Paul understands these chapters in Genesis to provide this foundational teaching, it is reasonable to conclude that the chapters' implications are important to consider with reference to gender.<sup>2</sup>

There are obvious divisions in this narrative section, which actually includes chapter four. For the purposes of this study, the larger sections will be divided as Genesis 1-2, the created purpose, and 3:1-17, the impact of the fall. However, within these two larger sections, several smaller divisions will be utilized to maintain distinctions in the overall narrative. To best work our way through the chapters, we will note the emphases from each of these different divisions and set forth any implications.<sup>3</sup>



## Created Purpose: Genesis 1-2

The first section of this article examines the created purpose of humanity as presented in the first two chapters of Genesis. These chapters assume certain points that need to be drawn out as implications.

The two chapters approach creation from two different perspectives with different purposes. They are intended to be complementary rather than contradictory or separate creation accounts.<sup>4</sup> Genesis 1 views creation from a grand perspective by the awesome, transcendent, Creator God. God is above the world and separate from it. The purpose of this chapter is to show the big picture of creation, so it focuses on the complete seven days and the awesome display of God's power in creation. Genesis 2, however, views creation from a "worldly" perspective by the immanent, personal God. God is relationally involved with the world he creates. The purpose is to focus on the creation of humanity and the distinct role each has in the world that God has created. These two perspectives must be kept in mind as one reads the two chapters so that the complementary nature of the two narratives can be appreciated and properly understood.

### Genesis One: A Focus on the Big Picture

*Genesis 1:26-31.* Four distinct emphases flow from this section: 1) the equality of man/woman (verse 27); 2) man and woman are presented as co-rulers (verses 26 and 28); 3) man and woman together are necessary for multiplication (verse 28); and 4) "man" is the designation for male and female (verses 26-27).<sup>5</sup>

Teaching/Implications: From this grand perspective of creation, man and woman are presented as equal under God, co-laborers together in performing the tasks of their Creator. They come together to have children with both having a necessary part in the process. They rule over the earth and all it contains in a complementary fashion. Together they fulfill a special function as overseers of God's creation, and as they perform these tasks, they receive the blessing of God. God is the one who provides for them as he gives them the fruit of the ground for food. God cares for them. This passage obviously portrays the man and the woman in harmony with little distinction between them. The only noteworthy distinction is that male and female are called "man." As Ray Ortlund, Jr. states, "God's naming of the human race 'man' whispers male headship, which Moses will bring forward boldly in chapter two."<sup>6</sup> But overall, equality with no apparent distinction is the emphasis.

### Genesis Two: A Focus on Humanity

In this passage the focus shifts from the grand perspective of the creation of the world to the more focused distinctions in the creation of humanity. It explains Genesis

1:27, "male and female he created them."

*Genesis 2:4-17.* In this first section of chapter two, the focus is man and the emphases are threefold: 1) man is created first from the dust of the ground and placed into his home (verses 7-9); 2) man is given responsibility to care for the garden (verse 15); and 3) man is given the rules that are to be enforced in the garden (verses 16-17). To add one item before the actual creation of the woman which is taken from the passage that follows, he is given the responsibility to name the animals (verse 19-20; as well as the woman in 2:23 and 3:20).

Teaching/Implications: There is a period of time when there is no woman. Initially, God creates the man and places him in the garden, full of food for him to enjoy. He is to be the sole caretaker of the garden. He is given the rules for living in harmony with his Creator in the garden. Ultimately, he is responsible for caring for and maintaining purity in the garden. He is, and there is no other. As such, God communicates to him his special responsibilities. Later in the story the man, as regent in this garden, provides names for the other created beings, including the woman, demonstrating some level of "ownership" and responsibility, as he rules over/subdues his world. These responsibilities are the clear manifestation of the mandate in chapter one to rule and subdue the earth, only the initial mandate appears to be given to the man alone. He even carries out this mandate with regard to the woman by naming her. He is the one who is initially entrusted with the responsibilities of caring for, ruling over, and maintaining purity in the garden. He is the leader in the world which God creates.

The teaching of this section must not be minimized. Genesis One must be read in light of this chapter. The focus is not male superiority, but rather the responsibility entrusted to the man as a leader in God's creation. He is solely responsible and uniquely equipped to be the ruler in the garden and the world, which God has created. Man could have performed his tasks alone, only it was "not good" for him to be in this state. His task of ruling and subduing would have been incomplete.

*Genesis 2:18-22.* The emphases of this passage are also threefold: 1) it is not good for man to be alone;<sup>7</sup> 2) woman is fashioned from man's rib; and 3) woman is the "corresponding opposite" to man, a "helper suitable" to him.

Teaching/Implications: In the world which God created with all of the goodness in it, it is not good for the man, who functions as ruler in the garden, to be alone. So God creates a woman out of his rib. As such, the woman is uniquely given the responsibility to complete the man as his "corresponding opposite," being a "helper suitable" to him, so he will not be alone in fulfilling his tasks of ruling and subduing. The issue is not one of having another "leader" in the garden but, rather, one of companionship and completing the man.<sup>8</sup> God gives the man the woman to be his helper in carrying out his tasks

in the garden. She is to help him as he leads. He is to lead with her help. This complementary role is the clear teaching of this passage.

The sole emphasis for the woman is that of being “with” the man. Therefore, chapter one’s emphasis on the equality of man and woman must be read in light of the unique roles of male and female outlined in chapter two. The responsibility of oversight lies with the man, but he is to carry out his responsibilities under the authority of the Creator and in the context of relationship with the woman. It is a partnership, but there is clear differentiation of roles. This distinction does not denigrate women, nor does it convey that they are less than adequate in leading. It simply emphasizes that the role of woman is different than that of man. Man is to lead the way and woman is to come alongside of him in his task of leading. Her task is to be a helpmeet. She is created for this and uniquely equipped to fulfill this responsibility. Ultimately, the man and the woman will know joy most deeply as they live out their created purpose: man as leader and woman as completer.

*Genesis 2:23-25.* The single emphasis of this section is that the woman is given to man and they become one flesh.

**Teaching/Implications:** There is a completeness as the man and woman come together, bringing their own unique roles and contributions to the relationship. Man is to care for and provide leadership in the garden in the way that God has commanded, and the woman is to be with him as a completer and a partner in carrying out these tasks. As a result, the man leaves his father and mother and cleaves to his woman. This implies the idea that the woman is not just an “assistant” but rather a cherished partner in the relationship, a valued partner who “comes along side of” the man as an equal. They are now one, but that does not negate the clearly defined roles which are embedded within this commitment.

The idea of “one flesh” must be given proper emphasis, especially in light of the common understanding of chapter one’s emphasis on equality. The term, “equal,” is never used in these two chapters, but “one flesh” is used. Unity of the two distinct roles of the man and the woman is more strongly emphasized than equality. The emphasis is not on two individuals who are equal, leading according to their individual strengths, but rather on two individuals who are “one,” the man leading and the woman complementing. The intent in the garden is not to have a man and a woman co-ruling with equal rights, opportunities, and authority based on perceived strengths, but rather to have a man and a woman co-ruling, with the man as leader and the woman coming alongside of him in his tasks based on the mandate of the Creator. Their “togetherness” is not a 50-50 relationship, comprised of two individuals who maximize their effectiveness by focusing on strengths to determine who takes the lead, but rather a complementary relationship with the man leading and the

woman completing under the authority of God. Again, the man and the woman will know joy most fully as they learn to live in the manner God created them to live.

## The Impact of the Fall: Genesis 3:1-17

The second section of this article examines the effects that the fall has on the man and the woman. Three issues become important for the discussion of gender from this passage: 1) the failure of the man and the woman as portrayed in the passage is distinct because their created purpose is distinct; 2) God has given the man and the woman unique roles, so it is on the basis of these roles that he will interact with them, respective of their gender, after they violate his command; and 3) as a result of violating God’s commands, their punishment, which is commonly one of “difficulty,” will be different in that their created roles are different. God has given the man and the woman unique roles, and it is on the basis of these roles that he will interact with them, respective of their gender, after they violate his command.

*Genesis 3:1-13.* The emphases in this passage are: 1) the serpent’s desire to bring about disobedience through the woman (verse 1-6); 2) the man’s failure to follow the Creator by living obediently to the law of the Creator as given to him, which is evidenced by his following the lead of the woman (verse 6; cf. v 17); 3) the Creator seeks out the man as his representative in the garden after the man and the woman disobey his command (verses 8-9); and 4) blame shifting—the man to the woman (verse 12) and the woman to the serpent (verse 13)—rather than taking responsibility for one’s actions in light of the respective gender differentiated roles.

**Teaching/Implications:** It seems that in the serpent’s “craftiness,” he seeks to penetrate the garden and create a rift between the Creator and his creation through the helpmeet rather than through the one who had been entrusted with the rules of the garden.<sup>9</sup> The man had been entrusted with the law concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and it was his duty as leader to maintain the purity of the garden by ensuring that its inhabitants followed the Word of the Creator. He was the leader, but under the authority of, and therefore responsible to, his Creator. When there is failure, the Creator seeks out the one to whom he had entrusted his Word, the one responsible for the garden and all that it contains. When found, however, the man does not act as the responsible one, but rather shifts the focus to the woman. He abdicates his rule in the garden, both by following the words of the woman, disregarding his role as follower of the Creator and his Word (vertical relationship), and by shifting blame to his helpmeet, disregarding his role as leader of the woman (horizontal relationship).

The woman had been entrusted with the responsibility to follow the man (who was under the authority of the Creator). It was her duty to be the helpmeet to the man as he followed the



Creator. When approached by the serpent, she abdicates (although deceived) her helping role by eating of the fruit, disregarding the word of the Creator given through the man (vertical relationship), and by acting independently, disregarding the leadership of the man (horizontal relationship).

The serpent's successful attempt at upsetting both the vertical relationship between humanity and the Creator as well as the horizontal relationship between the man and the woman is important to note at this point. Redemption and the sanctification process seek to restore a proper order to both of these relationships. In a redemptive context, the man is to lead the woman under the authority of the Creator, and the woman is to follow the man as he leads under the authority of the Creator. Together as "one flesh" they can bring glory to the Creator as they live out their distinct roles in the world where the Creator places them. When the Redeemer sees this, it restores the "very good" of creation (Genesis 1:31). Therefore, Satan still seeks to work in way that upsets these core relationships in the world today.

*Genesis 3:16-19.* In this final passage, the previous implications become even more clear when the Creator issues his judgment independently to the man and to the woman. God approaches the man and the woman differently as he delivers his judgments.<sup>10</sup> He seeks them out as individuals, respective of their gender (i.e., created purpose). He treats the man and the woman in a distinct manner, and in the end they each receive separate punishments, although the specific judgment on each person also affects the other.<sup>11</sup> Wenham states, "The sentences on the man and woman take the form of a disruption of their appointed roles."<sup>12</sup> The narrative sets forth the differences of the man and the woman and brings emphasis to the fact that the "goodness" of the natural fit of these roles will now be convoluted in the punishment. The result for each is the addition of "difficulty."<sup>13</sup>

The woman's appointed role was to be a suitable helper for the man and the mother of his children (cf. 2:18, 23-24). Her judgment then goes against the ease of being a suitable helper to her husband and the ease of bearing children. Westermann states:

[J]ust where the woman finds her fulfillment in life, her honor and her joy, namely in her relationship to her husband and as mother of her children, there too she finds that it is not pure bliss, but pain, burden, humiliation and subordination.<sup>14</sup>

von Rad states, "The woman's punishment struck at the deepest root of her being as wife and mother."<sup>15</sup> The punishment comes at the uniqueness of what it means to be a woman. It brings for her a life which is characterized by

"difficulty." Life is not what it was intended to be.

The resulting issue for the woman becomes one of safety. Her world is no longer safe and her man may fail her. This lack of safety makes responding difficult, and it creates a context where she desires to ensure her own safety. Therefore, it becomes important to the woman to do everything she can to maintain a sense of control in her world. Responding requires a level of vulnerability, which she is not sure is good for her, because it leaves her open to pain and disappointment. This becomes particularly an issue in the relationship with the man with whom she contends for control.<sup>16</sup>

The man's appointed role was to be the caretaker of, and the one who provided leadership in, the garden. He had a unique responsibility to God in that God specifically entrusted him with the commands of the garden. His judgment goes against the ease of providing food from the ground. He is now "afflicted in his basic role as farmer and food-producer (cf. 2:15)."<sup>17</sup> von Rad adds that the curse for the man "strikes at the innermost nerve of his life: his work, his activity, and provision for sustenance"<sup>18</sup> and brings a punishment which "consists in the hardship and skimpiness of his livelihood, which he must now seek for himself."<sup>19</sup>

His judgment is also related to his created purpose and comes against the ease of leading. He is now forced out of the garden and into a world with thorns and thistles and a world that will require sweat. The punishment comes at the uniqueness of what it means to be man. It brings for him a life characterized by "difficulty." Life is not what it was intended to be.

The resulting issue for the man becomes one of competence (in relation to his impact in his world). Will he be able to "rule and subdue" in a world that is out of the garden and full of thorns/thistles and worked by sweat? Will he be able to maintain a safe environment where the dust will not consume him and his helpmeet? Will he be able to protect against more onslaughts from this evil serpent who seeks to lure him and his helpmeet away from the Creator? He is to lead, but the ground and the woman now "fight back," which makes leading difficult. In addition, there is this serpent who may appear again to wreak havoc in his world. He experiences vulnerability as a leader because he is living in a world that fights back, and he is, therefore, susceptible to failure in making an impact. This dilemma, which he faces on a constant basis, seems to be best resolved within the man by abdicating leadership of the whole and focusing on whatever he perceives himself to be effective at making an impact so that the painful consequences of ineffective leadership can be minimized.

It is important to note how the judgments are so dissimilar, yet closely connected to the created purposes. For the man who is "over" God's creation, the natural judgment is for his role of leadership to become difficult, creating a dependency

on God for him to fulfill his created purpose. So the ground brings forth thorns and thistles, now requiring sweat to work, and the woman seeks control, now requiring hard work to lead. For the woman who is “alongside of” the man as his completer and the bearer of his children, the natural judgment is for her role of responding to become difficult, creating a dependency on God for her to fulfill her created purpose. So she contends for leadership with the man, now requiring submission to respond to him, and childbearing becomes difficult, now requiring pain to fulfill this responsibility. Now, to fulfill one’s created purpose requires repentance, turning from that which makes sense or fallen natural tendencies, and dependency on God. This transformation is necessary to being a man or woman of God, and in part it is gender specific. In a sense, the “difficulty” of the judgment is full of grace in that it makes dependency on something/someone outside of oneself necessary for the man and the woman. This creates a desire for “god.” That which each will choose to depend on essentially will become their “god.”

Ultimately, the man’s decision to abdicate his role of leading, as evidenced by his listening to the voice of the woman, and the woman’s decision to abdicate her role of helping, as evidenced by her taking the lead in eating the forbidden fruit in spite of the communication from the man, becomes the present reality of every man and woman. The rebellion in the garden has affected all of humanity. No one can escape. Still today, apart from repentance, the man fails to lead in light of a world which, and a woman who, “fights against” his work in the world. And the woman, apart from repentance, fails to follow in light of a world which, and a man who, is unsafe and may fail her. It is reality.

In these two passages, the judgments of “difficulty” denote the experience of living with something that is contrary to the way it was created to be. When the man and the woman disobeyed, “difficulty” became primary to their existence. The presence of “difficulty” was not intended from the beginning of creation. It creates a vulnerability for both the man and the woman, only it is gender distinct because of the different created purposes for each gender. The essence of vulnerability is unique to gender. The different punishments given to the man and the woman imply a uniqueness to being male and female and encourage further reflection on the fact that God approaches male and female differently. Their created purpose is different and their judgment is different. This creates the context for their sanctification process to be different as well.

## Redemption: Ephesians 5:22-33<sup>20</sup>

### Introduction

Now we turn to the role of redemption in the life of the man and the woman specifically as it relates to marriage. Although the main teaching of Ephesians 5 is focused on the

context of marriage, it provides a window into the larger context of the meaning of masculinity and femininity. It can be assumed that God’s call to the husband is intricately related to what it means to be a man, and God’s call to a wife is intricately related to what it means to be a woman. The distinction in marriage roles would naturally be anchored in distinct gender roles. Ephesians 5, therefore, teaches general truths about what it means to be a man or a woman in Christ as it helps in understanding how God intends to “undo” or “push back” the effects of the fall in a redeemed person’s life within the context of the marriage relationship. Individuals are not trapped in the consequences of the judgment levied to the man and the woman in the garden. It is possible for a man or a woman to live differently as a result of the work of God in a person’s life. In fact, one’s adoption into the family of God is to supernaturally lead to such a transformation. However, if one does not recognize the presence of and understand the essence of the failure to be the man or woman God has created him/her to be, there will be little, if any, attempt to change.

If Genesis 1-2 presents the created purpose for humanity with distinctions for male and female and Genesis 3 portrays the consequences of the fall with distinctions for male and female, then it follows that sanctification will have distinctions with respect to male and female.<sup>21</sup> God’s design for male and female will not be lost in redemption. The Old and New Testaments are replete with passages that point to the changes that are to occur as one brings his/her life into loving submission to the Creator in a more generic sense (cf. Deuteronomy 6, Colossians 3, Ephesians 4-6, Galatians 5:16ff), but it also has passages that underscore the sanctification process which is distinct for male and female (cf. Ephesians 5, 1 Peter 3, Titus 2). Therefore, it becomes important for us to understand the implications of this for the Christian life.

A primary passage is Eph 5:22ff, which addresses the roles of the husband and the wife in light of the position each holds as a result of being in Christ (cf. Ephesians 1-3). The passage is located in the latter half of the book of Ephesians which is developed primarily around the “walk” passages. Chapters 4-6 are the direct application (the life which a believer should “practice”) of chapters 1-3 (the “position” which the believer holds). Those “in Christ” are to walk: 1) in a manner worthy of the calling (4:1ff); 2) no longer as the Gentiles also walk (4:17ff); 3) in love (5:1ff); 4) as children of light (5:7ff); and 5) carefully (or wisely, 5:15ff). The commands to husbands and wives are found in the last exhortation to walk carefully. The focus of the exhortation to “walk carefully” is a variety of relationships: husband/wife (5:22-33); children/parents, with a focus on fathers (6:1-4); and slaves/masters (6:5-9). This passage teaches how redemption and the sanctification process is to affect these relationships, including the marriage relationship between a man and a woman. In other words, as the transforming process of

sanctification “pushes back” the effects of the fall in the life of a man or a woman in the context of marriage, it will look different for each gender because the effects of the fall have been distinct for each gender. There is a clear distinction in the commands given to the man and the woman concerning the transformed life in the context of marriage because of these distinctions in gender.

### **Fighting Against the Fallen Natural Tendency**

Before one considers the transformational distinctions, which are to be evident in the life of the man and the woman, it is important to consider the distinct fallen natural tendencies of each gender, which inhibit one’s living “in Christ.” Being obedient to the call of God to be transformed will be difficult for every man and woman because of the presence of these fallen natural tendencies. Every man and woman is fallen and, as a consequence, will battle the natural tendencies that result from the issues which are a consequence of being fallen people, and these fallen natural tendencies will be distinct to gender. The beginning of the battle is to acknowledge the fallen natural tendency for each gender. To remain ignorant of these tendencies and to fail to note their relationship to one’s sanctification will result in the impeding of the sanctification process for an individual.

As a result of being fallen, the man’s main issue is one of competence.<sup>22</sup> That which he was created to be (i.e., the leader and initiator in his world) has been convoluted by the fall (i.e., that which he is called to lead fights back) so he is now vulnerable to failure. Therefore, his fallen natural tendency becomes to preserve the appearance of being competent (i.e., to be viewed as one who makes it happen in his world), minimizing the possibility of being disappointed by his failure, resulting from his insufficiency in dealing with the “fighting back” of his world and his wife. Rather than move with strength and confidence into the world God has called him to lead, he has a fallen tendency to seek to preserve his own life. His focus, contrary to the call of the transformed life, becomes the “I” rather than the “you.” He is concerned with his competence rather than nurturing and leading his woman, as well as others in his world. The central issue, a self-focused perspective (the “I” rather than the “you”), has a distinct implication for the man (i.e., securing competency for self versus nurturing and leading others, namely his woman).

This fallen natural tendency is clear in the response of Adam at the fall in the garden. He lacks the initiation and leadership, which is to characterize a man. This is most evident on two occasions: 1) his silence concerning the eating of the fruit, rather than leading under the authority of God, when Eve was tempted by the serpent (Genesis 3:1-7); and 2) his blame-shifting rather than taking responsibility, when confronted by God after he ate of the fruit (Genesis 3:8-12). This is contrary to what it means to be a godly man, but it is the fallen natural

tendency of one whose heart is turned away from God.

As a result of being fallen, the woman’s main issue is one of safety. That which she was created to be (i.e., the responder to and completer of her man) has been convoluted by the fall as well (i.e., she contends with her man and bearing children is wrought with difficulty), so she is now vulnerable to responding to a man who, or a world which, might fail her, making her world unsafe. Therefore, her fallen natural tendency becomes to preserve her safety, minimizing the possibility of being disappointed by the failure of the one to whom she is called to come alongside. Rather than respond to her world with an unfailing trust in her God and be the helpmeet she is called to be, she has a tendency to preserve her own life. Her focus, contrary to the call of the transformed life, also becomes the “I” rather than the “you.” She is concerned with her safety, rather than responding to and helping her man. Again, the central issue, a self-focused perspective (the “I” rather than the “you”), has a distinct implication for the woman (i.e., securing safety for self versus responding to and helping others, namely her man).

This is also clear in the response of Eve at the fall in the garden. She lacks the responding to and following the man, which is to characterize a woman. This is most evident on two occasions: 1) her independent decision to partake of the fruit rather than submit to the leadership of the man, who was to submit to the leadership of the Creator, when the serpent tempted her (Genesis 3:1-7); and 2) her blame-shifting to the serpent rather than responding to the claims of the man, when confronted by God after she ate of the fruit (Genesis 3:13). This is contrary to what it means to be a godly woman, but it is the fallen natural tendency of one whose heart is turned away from God.

These fallen natural tendencies are the way it is (i.e., every man and woman struggles on some level with their gender specific natural tendency), but not the way it has to be. To live naturally (i.e., to walk in the flesh) will result in these tendencies. To never pay attention to the practical implications of one’s theology of gender will result in these fallen natural tendencies. However, the call of God should ignite one to deal honestly with the implications of the fall in daily living with respect to one’s gender. It should require one to consider how the fall has affected, and continues to affect, the life of a man and a woman on a daily basis.

### **The Call to the Transformed Life**

It is interesting that the repentant life of the transformed man and the transformed woman according to Ephesians 5 is to be a picture of the relationship between Christ and the church (cf. Ephesians 5:22ff). The redeemed man and the redeemed woman each reflect a part of this relationship. How to understand the relationship between Christ and the church and how it functions is not widely debated. Christ is the head, and

the church is to submit to his headship in all things. He is the one to whom every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that he is Lord (Philippians 2:10-11). This relationship between Christ and the church is not questioned, and it is the clear picture of what the marriage relationship is to reflect. It provides a window into understanding the distinct roles of the man and the woman, although its concern is specifically the marriage relationship.

In its simplest form, the wife is to be characterized by submitting, as in the example of the church submitting to Christ. She is to follow her partner. Similarly, the husband is to be characterized by loving, as in the example of Christ loving the church. He is to lead and nourish his partner. It is clear that the concept of “submit” is primary for the woman and that “love” is primary for the man.<sup>23</sup> This distinction is related to what it means to be a man and a woman. These two pictures are loaded with meaning and would take a whole article sufficiently to address. In short, a godly man (specifically as a husband) will be a picture of Christ loving the church, and a godly woman (specifically as a wife) will be a picture of the church submitting to Christ.

However, it must be noted that the two characterizations are distinct and related to the created purpose, impact of the fall, and resultant issues for both genders. The call is for husbands and wives to “push back” the effects of the fall and live differently as a redeemed man and a redeemed woman. Sanctification has a uniqueness to it because gender roles are unique. From the very beginning, God has approached the man and the woman based on their gender, not simply their humanity. Now, in the work of redemption, transformation will effect distinct changes in the man and the woman. In a sense, it is a return to God’s original created purposes for the man and the woman as they live within a fallen context as a redeemed child of God.

However, in light of the discussion above, this teaching can also have a more complex form. In its more complex form, it must be noted that there is a relationship between sanctification in the man and the woman and the teachings of Genesis 1-3. For the man, the call to love can be understood as the call to lovingly stay engaged as the leader in a world where his competency may be vulnerable to failure on a regular basis. The passage clearly communicates that the redeemed life is not about the “I,” in this case the man, but about the other, the “you.” In spite of the vulnerability of his competence, the man is to make it his priority to devote his energies to loving his wife as Christ loves the church. In a sense, he is to fight for her holiness, laying down his life and nourishing/cherishing her for her good, and to cultivate in his world (i.e., his home) a desire to live for the greater purposes of God.<sup>24</sup> He is to risk being a responsible leader, engaging with a woman and a world that fights back. He is not to be consumed with his competence, but rather with his impact in his world, especially in relationship with his wife. The process of sanctification is the putting to

death of the fallen natural tendency in the man and the growing of a supernatural tendency to love like Christ. Transformation will be evidenced by loving the woman as an engaged leader who takes responsibility for his world in a way similar to Christ’s love for the church.

For the woman, the call to submit is to be understood as the call to submit as helpmeet to the man even though he may fail her, even regularly, creating a vulnerability to her own safety. Again, the passage communicates that it is not about the “I,” in this case the woman, but about the other, the “you.” In spite of the vulnerability of her safety, the woman is to make every effort to be a helpmeet who responds to the leadership of her man, not taking over to ensure her safety, and to respect her husband as he seeks to lead, in the same way as the church submits to Christ’s leadership. In a sense, she is to fight for his honor, following him with her life, and letting him lead, even calling him to lead, under the authority of God. She is to risk being a helper, responding to a man who may fail her. The process of sanctification is the putting to death of the fallen natural tendency in the woman and the growing of a supernatural tendency to submit in a way similar to the submission of the church to Christ. Transformation will be evidenced by her submission as a responder and a helpmeet, who comes alongside of her man.

### Living Intentionally for Change

Drawing from my years of counseling and working with people in the Christian community, my concern is that, for the most part, men and women are not seeking wholeheartedly to live biblically (i.e., supernaturally) with reference to the implications of their theology of gender. Instead we are content to live with the presence of our fallen natural tendencies. We claim a certain belief system, but we do not seek to live it out with thoughtfulness which leads to repentance. To live in a transformed manner with respect to one’s gender, evidenced by a focus on the “you” rather than the “I,” requires repentance moment by moment.<sup>25</sup> It is painful in that it goes against our fallen natural tendency as well as requiring hard work. Natural living will not produce this. On some level every man and woman naturally fights against this transformation because each is fallen. One must face honestly the natural tendencies of gender in a fallen state and supernaturally live against it rather than live with an apathetic awareness.

To hold to the theological position of complementarian will require a commitment to daily repentance and a renewed passion to be a God-honoring, Spirit-led individual. My own belief is that the movement toward a more egalitarian position is a result of our own failure to wage war against the effects of the fall in our lives. It is easier to “blur” the distinctions between men and women, rather than engage in the battle required to fight against our own flesh. It is easier to modify a position than deal with the issues that a biblical position will require.



As one seeks to do this, it will create tension in the marriage relationship, because living the transformed life will disrupt the natural tendencies of sin apparent in every relationship. In a sense, the natural tendencies of the man and the woman encourage natural living in the other. At the most basic level, a man may focus on that which makes him feel competent rather than leading with vision and purpose in his world, and a woman may simply take over in her world to ensure her own safety. In the end, the man feels competent because that is his focus and the woman feels safe because that is her focus. The marriage is sound and for all appearances looks healthy, but it is not a godly marriage and thus they both feel empty. It is only by experiencing the transformation of one's gender in the sanctification process, leading to living in the manner God calls a man and a woman to live, that will lead to a depth of joy that one would not think possible this side of heaven.

## Conclusions

With this understanding of Genesis 1-3 and Ephesians 5, we conclude with the chart below.

The issues that arise in one's life will vary from day to day, but one must engage the battle which wages against gender and specifically seek to become godly with reference to gender. This requires an intentionality that many people avoid as they seek to grow in Christ. Marriage is a primary context in which issues of sanctification with respect to gender are apparent, and this requires us to be diligent in our pursuit of transformation. Our created purpose, the impact of the fall, and sanctification are intricately connected. We must take this seriously and not just hold to our view of male and female theologically. It must have practical implications and become a

### *THE MOVEMENT FROM CREATION TO TRANSFORMATION*

Gender	Created Purpose	Impact of the Fall	Fallen Natural Tendency	Transformed Living
Male	1) caretaker of the garden 2) implied leadership in the garden ----- the responsible one initiator/leader	JUDGMENT: Difficulty  His life now "goes against" the ease of providing food from the ground (weeds/sweat) and leading (out of the garden/death).  ISSUE: Competence  *his world and his woman "fight back," which makes initiating and leading difficult	To preserve the appearance of COMPETENCE, minimizing the possibility of being disappointed by failure because of the "fighting back" of his world and his wife.	As a redeemed man, he is not to fight for control, but to love his wife and his "world" as: *Christ loved the church *he loves his own body  A godly man is a picture of Christ loving the church  RISK: He is to risk being a leader, engaging with a world that fights back.
Female	1) suitable helper for man 2) mother of his children ----- the corresponding opposite responder/helper	JUDGMENT: Difficulty  Her life now "goes against" the ease of being a suitable helper (seeks to control) and bearing children (pain). ----- ISSUE: Safety  *her world is unsafe and her man fails her, which makes responding difficult	To preserve her SAFETY, minimizing the possibility of being disappointed by the failure of her leader and her world.	As a redeemed woman, she is not to ensure her safety, but to submit to her husband as: *the church does to Christ  A godly woman is a picture of the Church submitting to Christ  RISK: She is to risk being a helper, responding to a man who may fail her.



major context for growth in our lives.

Furthermore, in formulating a view of gender one must recognize the clear distinctions throughout the message of God's word and hold fast to its teachings. The distinctions must not be "blurred" for the sake of avoiding controversy. God is the author of the distinctions of male and female, and true joy cannot be known apart from realizing these distinctions, which are central to life and the pursuit of God's purposes. To know them and to live them will be to glorify God and his perfect plan.

### **A Concluding Illustration**

To understand the workings of this in the life of a man and a woman in the context of the marriage relationship it is best to provide an illustration of the concepts. Consider this following example:

#### **Profile of the couple:**

**Man**—comes from a strong male-dominant home where vocational ministry is the primary focus; his personality is one of being a "shaker/mover," one who gets things done; multi-tasking is done with ease; he sees life as "you make it happen;" in most areas of life he is a natural leader and people look to him to lead; he is a problem-solver who brings a lot of wisdom and experience to the various situations in which he is involved; he is committed to full-time Christian ministry.

**Woman**—comes from a strong female-dominant home where strong Christian values were set forth and service in the church was highly valued; her personality is one of a support role, looking to others to lead so she can help; she sees life as "life happens to you;" she is content with the simple things in life and has little ambition outside of the home, so she is a happy homemaker; she rarely speaks her mind, but does seek to manipulate others to her point of view; does not like to be overly-challenged but rather focuses on the minimum, trying to maintain a constancy and stability to her home.

#### **Resultant Consequences:**

Essentially, what initially drew this couple together was that they were a perfect fit, in that their sinful strategies are a perfect fit. She longs to latch onto a man who knows what he is doing, one who makes decisions and completes tasks. He enjoys the low-key atmosphere of being with a woman who is unassuming and not driving frantically through life. As they come together, they fill a need in one another's life. She likes the fact that her man is competent so not much is required of her and her world is relatively safe. He likes the fact that his woman is gentle and unassuming so not much is required of him, which lessens his capacity to fail.

As time passes, other needs than those that originally brought them together begin to dominate in the relationship. For the woman, his competency is not nurturing her in the way she desires. He is a terrific husband who accomplishes much for the family, but she longs for a man who will love her, not just take care of any hassle that invades her world. The problem is that his fallen natural tendency is to maintain a sense of competency in his world. He pursues that which gives him a sense of competency. He does not naturally lead in a nurturing way with the best interests of his "world" in mind. He is committed to a hassle-free world where problems are minimized. That is what makes him a good leader in the contexts where he leads. The fact that she may not be happy infuriates him because it reflects on his not "doing a good job." He must work harder to make her happy by making her world better. He does not enjoy her challenges to their relationship or any mention that she needs more. To just sit and become better friends so he can hear her heart, as she desires, does not seem like a productive thing to do. He is actually bored with the "petty" things she wants to discuss. If there is a problem, just fix it. What makes it even more difficult is that she is not very adept at sharing from the depths that she wants her man to pursue. She is guarded, yet demands that he "just know." His own needs begin to dominate, and he initiates less and less with his woman. She is a bottomless pit. He begins to demand that she see life from his point of view, which is actually a demand to let him be the way he is. Essentially, this is a refusal to be transformed.

For the man, her gentleness and unassuming nature is not engaging him in the way he desires. He longs for a woman who will respond to him and his needs, not simply do what she thinks he needs. The problem is that her fallen natural tendency is to do what she can to maintain the constancy/stability of her home. She pursues that which makes her world safe. She does not naturally respond to his leadership and respond to his initiation, doing all she can to encourage his masculinity and follow him as he follows the Lord, being a complement to his "world." She is committed to a good wholesome environment where those in her world are properly cared for. That is what makes her a good mother/wife in her home. The fact that he may not be happy infuriates her because it reflects on her not having a stable, safe home. This just makes her world unsafe, and she dislikes his unhappiness. Her own needs begin to dominate her thinking, and she responds less and less to her man. He is not safe. She begins to demand that he see life from her point of view, which is actually a demand to let her be the way she is. Again, essentially, this is a refusal to be transformed.

What they long for in one another, God calls them to actually give to one another. God's call on the man and the woman in the context of the marriage relationship is for them to relate as a man and a woman in such a manner that joy will result. It is a call back to the created purpose of man and woman. God created man and woman to be a perfect fit if only

the man and the woman live out their created purposes, which is now only fully possible in a redeemed context. The route to this requires repentance concerning the natural tendencies of the fall. The man and the woman in this relationship are confronted with two main options. They can remain in their state of demand and set up some “ground rules” that will make a stable marriage possible. Or they can begin the process of allowing transformation to take place in the core of their being (i.e., allowing for and intentionally pursuing the sanctification of their respective gender). Obviously, the second option is the preferable option.

The man needs to repent of his commitment to a hassle-free world, as a result of his problem-solving abilities, and commit himself to a transformed focus on his wife. He is to live for her sanctification, creating a context where she is being nurtured into a godly woman who responds to life in the way that God has called her to respond, fulfilling her role as a woman. He is to cultivate a context where her heart becomes more free to give. This requires him to understand her fears of an unsafe world and to lead her to embrace her vulnerability while responding to his lead. Her fears are not an attack on his competency. He is to nourish her. To do this will require a daily recognition of his stubborn commitment to ensure his own competency, avoiding failure at all cost, and his failure in his role of initiating/leading, resulting in repentance, as well as a recommitment to live with a focus on nurturing her as his completer.

The woman needs to repent of her commitment to a safe world, as a result of her efforts to provide for those around her that which she thinks they need, and to commit herself to a transformed focus on her husband. She is to live for his sanctification, responding to his leadership even though he may fail her so that he is required to lead as God has called him to lead, fulfilling his role as a man. She is to refuse to take over to ensure her safety, but rather follow him as he leads. This requires her to understand his fears of failing as a leader and to encourage him to embrace his vulnerability and initiate in his world. She is to honor him. To do this will require a daily recognition of her stubborn commitment to ensure her own safety in a manner that disregards his leadership and her failure in her role of responding, resulting in repentance, as well as a re-commitment to live with a focus on responding to him as leader.

Of course, the issues that arise in one’s life will vary from day to day, but one must engage the battle which wages against gender and specifically seek to become godly with reference to gender. This requires an intentionality that many people avoid as they seek to grow in Christ. Marriage is a primary context in which issues of sanctification with respect to gender are apparent, and this requires us to be diligent in our pursuit of transformation. Our created purpose, the impact of the fall, and sanctification are intricately connected. We must

take this seriously and not just hold to our view of male and female theologically. It must have practical implications and become a major context for growth in our lives.

Furthermore, in formulating a view of gender one must recognize the clear distinctions throughout the message of God’s word and hold fast to its teachings. The distinctions must not be “blurred” for the sake of avoiding controversy. God is the author of the distinctions of male and female, and true joy cannot be known apart from realizing these distinctions, which are central to life and the pursuit of God’s purposes. To know them and to live them will be to glorify God and his perfect plan. ■

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 1 Tim 2:13; 1 Cor 11:8-9.

<sup>2</sup> Advocates of gender equality such as Rebecca Groothuis claim that “The first three chapters of Genesis can be approached in two different ways. One is to take the text as it is and to make only the conclusions warranted by the text. The other way (employed by traditionalists) is to read into the text what one expects to find based on one’s interpretations of certain New Testament passages about the roles of women and men.” She states further, “Having already derived a universal principle of male authority and female subordination from culturally relative New Testament texts, they shuttle this principle back to Genesis and attempt to read it between the lines of the creation account.” Rebecca Groothuis, *Good News for Women, A Biblical Picture of Gender Equality* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997) 121-122. It will suffice in my response to state that in the chapter in her book devoted to Genesis 1-3, “In the Beginning,” she misrepresents a fine article by Ray Ortlund, Jr. throughout her chapter (see Ortlund’s article in John Piper and Wayne Grudem eds., *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1991) chapter three, “Male-Female Equality and Male Headship, Genesis 1-3,” 95-112). In fact, the whole book misrepresents the biblical teaching on gender.

From Paul, it is clear that the early chapters of Genesis provide significant teaching for our understanding of gender roles. It is Paul who leads us to reconsider the familiar stories of the early chapters of Genesis for the important implications these chapters set forth, not some egotistical maintaining of a hierarchal, male domination viewpoint.

<sup>3</sup> I am not intending to discuss these chapters with the thoroughness employed by others. See Ray Ortlund, Jr., “Male-Female Equality and Male Headship, Genesis 1-3” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, or Tom Finley’s “The Relationship of Woman and Man in the Old Testament” (pp. 73-90, chapter three) and John Coe’s “Being Faithful to Christ in One’s Gender: Theological Reflections on Masculinity and Femininity (pp. 185-228, chapter nine) in *Women and Men in Ministry: A Complementary Perspective*, eds. Robert Saucy and Judith TenElshof (Chicago: Moody, 2001) 73-90. I am attempting to summarize my own understanding of these chapters, which I believe are widely accepted, in order to make connections with redemptive implications for sanctification as found in Ephesians 5.

<sup>4</sup> Because these two chapters approach creation from such unique perspectives, it is often assumed that they are actually different creation stories. Scholars can oftentimes miss the complementary

nature of these two accounts. The two chapters contain the same story but with different emphases. Understanding these two different emphases is essential to understanding the teaching of the chapters.

<sup>5</sup> I am indebted to Ray Ortlund, Jr. for this observation in the text from “Male-Female Equality and Male Headship, Genesis 1-3,” 97-98.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 98.

<sup>7</sup> For every creative act, God concludes that it is “good” (Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21) or “very good” (Genesis 1:31). In the midst of all of these references, it is an obvious focus when the words “not good” appear in this section.

<sup>8</sup> Some understand her role to be one of subordination. This subordination is indicated in that man is the center of the creation narrative of the woman, the man is called “man” and not the woman, and the man is created first, before the woman. Cf. Stephen B. Clark, *Man and Woman in Christ: An Examination of the Roles of Men and Women in Light of Scripture and the Social Sciences* (Ann Arbor: Servant Books, 1980) 24-26. In a footnote, Clark gives some references for those who would oppose this view in that the man cleaves to the woman denoting some type of subordination and that the woman is the climax of creation being the last entity created.

<sup>9</sup> The fact that the serpent approaches the woman whose role is to be a helpmeet or one who is to follow the lead of another is not accidental. It is an intentional preying on God’s creation by manipulating one whose distinct role was to come alongside of and follow as helpmeet. The deception is clear and clever. The serpent “wisely” takes advantage of the woman’s created purpose. This may even be the intent of the deception addressed in 2 Tim 3:6ff.

<sup>10</sup> The major point here is that God does not deliver a generic judgment to the man and the woman. It is not “you fell, so here is your punishment.” Instead, God approaches the man and woman separately with their distinct roles in mind. The man and the woman fell unique to their gender.

<sup>11</sup> In other words, the impact of the woman’s judgment is felt and experienced by the man and vice versa. The judgments are distinct to gender and experienced most intensely by the respective gender, but the other gender will not be excluded from the impact.

<sup>12</sup> Gordan Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, TX: Word, 1987) 81.

<sup>13</sup> The word for the judgment of the man and the woman is the same in the Hebrew text. The judgment for each is characterized by the Hebrew word עִצְבוֹן “difficulty.” This is usually translated differently in English Bibles. For instance, in the NASB, it is translated as “pain” (Genesis 3:16) for the woman and “toil” (Genesis 3:17) for the man. Hence, their judgment is similar.

<sup>14</sup> Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11: A Commentary*, trans. John J. Scullion (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1974) 263. Cf. John Sailhamer, “Genesis,” In *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol 2, ed. Frank E. Gabelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990) 56.

<sup>15</sup> Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, trans. John H. Marks, Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961) 91.

<sup>16</sup> The woman’s desire to control is obviously a debatable issue, and it would require a lot of discussion to thoroughly argue. I have much respect for many who have written in this area. In my dissertation I spent many pages to communicate the issues and the conclusions I hold based on my exegesis of the biblical text. I will have to defer to my dissertation for my defense of this point and let it suffice.

<sup>17</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 82.

<sup>18</sup> von Rad, *Genesis*, 91.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Col 3:18-19.

<sup>21</sup> Of further interest would be understanding sanctification as personality distinct as well. This is, of course, a topic for another article. However, this issue does impact our understanding of the transformational process of man and woman for each also bears unique personalities. Adding personality to the equation makes the transformational process even more distinct.

<sup>22</sup> I am hard-pressed to know where I am thinking on my own and where Dr. Larry Crabb is being expressed through my work. I received my MA in Counseling under him, and I am indebted to his impact on my life in so many ways. I am certain that the work here on the “issue” for the man and the woman goes back to him in some way, but I am not certain in what context. Its roots are in his “significance” (for the man) and “security” (for the woman) issues that he proposed many years ago.

<sup>23</sup> I find the work of John Coe enlightening and stimulating in Saucy and TenElshof, *Women and Men in Ministry*, chapter 9, “Being Faithful to Christ in One’s Gender: Theological Reflections on Masculinity and Femininity,” 185-228. He has a good discussion of the essence of masculinity and femininity that goes beyond the scope of this work, but it is worth the reading, especially pp. 193ff.

<sup>24</sup> The use of the word “cultivate” denounces any demand that a man’s wife be at a certain place in life. He is to lead with vision and bring his wife and his family to a place where God’s purposes are the supreme desire, or at least to the place where they are confronted with the direction he is setting for the home. This is the process of discipleship, which is to be first and foremost a priority in the home.

<sup>25</sup> There are many good discussions of this topic. A helpful, foundational, yet simple discussion is found in C. John Miller, *Repentance and the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Man* (Fort Washington, PA: Christian Literature Crusade, 1975) especially 19-54. I would also encourage reading Lawrence J. Crabb, Jr., *Understanding People: Deep Longings for Relationship* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), especially chapters 12-13, pp. 193-208.

# 1 Corinthians 11:3: A Corrective to Distortions and Abuses of Male Headship

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In recent years, 1 Cor 11:3 has been used to buttress a complementarian model of sexuality (men and women are spiritual equals, but have different, complementary gender based roles). The relevance of this text to clarify gender role debates is patently clear. Paul gives us an instructional model for male leadership—the man is the head of the woman as God [the Father] is the head of Christ. The eternal functional headship or authority<sup>1</sup> of the Father over the Son, often referred to as functional subordination within the Trinity, has been well developed by others.<sup>2</sup> My concern is rather to build on this theological principle by teasing out some of the implications of functional subordination affirmed in 1 Cor 11:3 to correct misunderstandings and distortions of male headship.

It is often asserted that patriarchy, broadly defined as the legitimization of male authority over females, is the basis for most, if not all social pathologies. For instance, Russ Funk states

Patriarchy is a terrible, violent, vile system that destroys huge pieces of all of us—our individual humanness and humanness in general. Patriarchy creates men who choose to act oppressively and violently, who create huge systems of destruction. . . . Patriarchy is a death system. It is a system based on destruction, violence, and degradation.<sup>3</sup>

It might be tempting to casually dismiss such criticisms, especially given the theological and ethical views of many radical feminists who deny for example, the substitutionary atonement (calling it “divine child abuse”),<sup>4</sup> reject historic Christian orthodoxy in favor of neo-paganism and goddess

worship, and stridently promote lesbianism and abortion.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, we must never soften our commitment to the truth, wherever it may lead us. If feminists have identified legitimate concerns, they must be fiercely addressed. Sadly, while biblical complementarians oppose the abuse of male leadership, they have been extremely slow to address specific issues of male abuse in a detailed fashion.<sup>6</sup>

While patriarchy is not the cause of all the world’s social ills, a corruption of patriarchy very often is a major cause of many ills. Given the nature of human depravity with its tendency to corrupt divine gifts, it should not surprise us to find that male headship is often twisted to generate horrible evil. Donald Bloesch astutely observes: “In opposing militant feminism, however, we must not make the mistake of enthroning patriarchal values that have often held women and children in bondage and oppression.”<sup>7</sup> Similarly, in the context of noting the harmful results of egalitarianism, which he says are anarchy or matriarchy, he issues a sober warning: “a very real danger in the patriarchal family is tyranny in which the husband uses his power to hold his wife and children in servile dependence and submission.”<sup>8</sup>

Widespread abuse of male power is anticipated and condemned in Scripture. Genesis 3:16 sadly predicts that one effect of the fall would be the distortion of biblical sexual roles, with the man seeking to rule harshly and despotically over the woman. “He shall rule over you” is no divine proscription but a tragic predication of sin’s effects on the human race.<sup>9</sup> Scripture declares that in our fallen world, those with power (typically males) will use their power to exploit and abuse those with less



power (typically females and children—Micah 2:9; 3:1-3; Isa 10:1-2; Ezek 22:6-12). In a clarification of greatness in the kingdom, Jesus reminds his disciples that the Gentile political rulers (who were virtually all male) used their authority to dominate harshly those under their care,<sup>10</sup> whereas in the kingdom of God, greatness is expressed through humble servitude (Luke 22:25-26).

## Prevalence of male abuse of power/authority

Can we quantify the biblical predictions of distorted sexual roles by men? Sadly, the evidence is overwhelming that males have repeatedly abused their power and authority over women. For instance, Susan Brownmiller's feminist classic *Against Our Will* marshals over five hundred pages of tragic and largely irrefutable evidence of the prevalence of rape by western men over the past two millennia.<sup>11</sup> World Health Organization research indicates that at least one in five of the world's females have been physically or sexually abused by a man or men at some time in their life, and that violence against women is as serious a cause of death and incapacity among women of reproductive age as cancer.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, the World Health Organization asserts that research results from every country where reliable, large-scale studies have been conducted reveals that 16-52% of women have been assaulted by an intimate partner.

For centuries, Anglo-American common law granted the husband the right as head of the household to beat his wife as long as he did not cause permanent damage.<sup>13</sup> Currently, domestic violence perpetrated by males accounts for more adult female emergency room visits than traffic accidents, muggings, and rape combined, and according to the U.S. surgeon general it is the greatest single cause of injury to American women.<sup>14</sup> The U.S. Department of Justice reports that 30% of women who are murdered, are killed by their husbands, ex-husbands, or boyfriends.<sup>15</sup> Sadly, since the fall, men have repeatedly used their power and authority abusively to dominate women.

## Results of male abuse of power

What happens when God ordained male leadership turns malignant? The tragic result is that God's prescribed order is brought into disrepute. In many cases marriage itself, one of God's greatest gifts to humanity, is impugned and rejected. God ordained gender expression is also distorted through male abuse of power. For instance, many researchers believe that a very high percentage of adult lesbians were sexually molested by men in childhood or adolescence. Many women have tragically (but wrongly) concluded that males are not safe; intimacy can only be found with other females.<sup>16</sup>

## Biblical Solutions

Where in a fallen world do we go for a healthy picture of male headship which challenges both feminism and distorted patriarchy? 1 Corinthians 11:3 challenges feminism by making male leadership a transcultural moral absolute patterned after God himself. 1 Corinthians 11:3 challenges distorted patriarchy by rigorously shaping the boundaries and qualities of male leadership. Biblical headship patterned after the Trinity is the most powerful biblical corrective to the abuse of male power. The Father's headship over the Son involves: loving, sharing, and honoring.

## John 5:18-24—Headship and Equality

The Gospel of John gives rich detail regarding the relationship between the Father and the Son. I will focus on John 5:18-24. This passage begins with Jesus' scandalous claim of sonship with the Father (v. 18). While the very terms "Father" and "Son" may well suggest the functional headship of the Father,<sup>17</sup> this is not the implication that John highlights here. Rather, he notes that Jesus calling God "Father" is a radical proclamation of equality with the Father. In fact, throughout this passage which describes the Father's relationship with the Son, complete ontological equality is repeatedly highlighted. This is an important starting place as we reflect on the nature of male headship, for feminists claim that patriarchy is predicated on assumptions of male superiority. John teaches that headship is based on equality.

## Loving

In John 5:19-20 we see that while the Son does not act independently of the Father ("the Son can do nothing of himself"), this is not based on the Son's inferiority but on the intimate relationship he has with the Father. "For whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner" (v. 19) indicates an "uninterrupted communion" between the Father and the Son which is so intimate that the Son not only will not, but cannot, act independently of the Father.<sup>18</sup> This is further clarified in v. 20, which says "the Father loves ['keeps on loving'] the Son and shows him all things that he himself is doing." The Father's headship over the Son is thus expressed in unbroken intimacy in which the Father continually loves and delights in the Son, and reveals his will to the Son he delights in.<sup>19</sup> *The work of the Father and the Son is the collaboration of intimate equals.* Thus, Gilbert Bilezikian distorts John's model of functional subordination when he states "Christ did not take upon himself the task of world redemption because he was number two in the Trinity and his boss told him to do so or because he was demoted to a subordinate rank so that he could accomplish a job that no one else wanted to touch."<sup>20</sup>

Most complementarians easily recognize Bilezikian's statement for what it is—a gross perversion of a biblical



complementarian model of functional subordination. Biblical complementarians assert that the Father never treats the Son as an inferior who can be bullied, but as an equal who is intimately loved and always shared with. Complementarians are not always as quick, however, to recognize the same perversion in heavy handed male authority in which males treat women as inferiors by making decisions unilaterally, selfishly, and insensitively. Teaching which emphasizes female submission without equally emphasizing the man's responsibility to delight in his wife and share with her as an equal partner distorts male headship. The Father's headship over the Son teaches us that biblical headship makes submission not a matter of mere duty, but a delightful response from a woman who is loved, partnered with, and trusted as an equal.<sup>21</sup>

The importance of defining male headship in terms of loving equality between the man and the woman cannot be over emphasized. As we noted above, physical and sexual abuse by men is shockingly prevalent in our culture. Abusive men often cite male headship/female submissiveness to justify their abuse. Ultimately, this is based on a perverted assumption of male superiority. For example, one standard textbook on group counseling for abusive men states that male superiority/female inferiority is one of the most consistent core beliefs of abusive men. Hence, for most abusive men, any challenge from their wives is seen as insurrection, which justifies violent behavior to bring the wife back into her position of inferiority.<sup>22</sup> One abusive husband explained his belief system at the time he abused his wife: "I [believed] that the man was the head of the household and the final decisions should be his. You know, there has to be a boss. I would make the decisions; my word was the last word. My word was law."<sup>23</sup> Another abusive husband made the following statement to a researcher who asked him why he beat his wife:

Rebellious and stubborn, that's what she is. And I believe firmly in the Bible. So I have the means . . . even hitting . . . You cannot stand the order of creation on its head. Only the man is the Lord of creation, and he cannot allow himself to be dominated by womenfolk. So hitting has been my way of marking—that I'm a man, a masculine man, no softie of a man, no cushytype.<sup>24</sup>

Sadly, these Christian men grotesquely distort biblical headship. Male headship defined as harsh authoritarian domination of an inferior is destructive heresy that may lead to sinful and immoral actions. The Trinity teaches us that *headship and submission are founded within an intimate love relationship among equals, not coercive domination by a superior.*

Does the New Testament explicitly describe headship in marriage in terms of an intimate love relationship between equals? In Eph 5:22-33 this is precisely what we find. While a different analogy is used here (the husband and Christ) than

Paul uses in 1 Cor 11:3, the point in comparing the man's headship over the woman to Christ's headship over the church is to emphasize loving intimacy. Husbands are specifically commanded to exercise their headship by loving their wives "as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her" (Eph 5:25). This is the strongest love declaration imaginable. Truly biblical headship is expressed in sacrificial, loving intimacy. Gender equality in biblical headship is developed in the latter portion of the passage, where Paul calls on husbands to love their wives as their own bodies (5:28). Just as a husband nourishes and cherishes his own body, so he should express his headship over his wife by loving and nourishing her (5:29). Gender equality is further emphasized in 5:31, where Paul cites Gen 2:24 — "and the two shall become one flesh." Biblical headship takes place between a man and a woman who are equally made in God's image. Only equals can experience a "one flesh" relationship. Biblical headship is based on loving intimacy between equals.

## Delegated Authority

In John 5:21-24 we find startling statements about the manner in which the Father delegates authority to the Son. Jesus echoes the ancient Jewish belief that the Father has authority over life and death (cf. 2 Kings 5:7; Job 1:21; Ps 104:27-30) by asserting "the Father raises the dead and gives them life." But Jesus then issues a completely unexpected declaration—"even so the Son gives life to whom He wishes" (v. 21). The assertion that the Messiah would have the authority to raise the dead was unknown in ancient Judaism.<sup>25</sup> In v. 22 Jesus further demolishes the Jewish understanding of the Messiah's authority, by declaring "not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son." In the Old Testament the Lord God is said to be the eschatological judge (Gen 18:25; Joel 3:2; Ps 82:8), but since Christ is ontologically one with the Father, he is given the full authority to judge. Christ explains the basis for the Father giving Him authority to judge in John 5:27—"because He is the Son of Man." The title "Son of Man" is Jesus' favorite self designation, and probably comes from Daniel 7:13-14 which describes a Messiah figure from heaven who is given everlasting "dominion" or authority, and is served by all the nations and peoples.

We clearly see here that the Father's headship over the Son does not preclude the Son having great power and authority. In fact, since the Father and the Son are equals and in intimate relationship, we should not be surprised to find the Father sharing his authority with the Son (cf. Luke 10:22). Sometimes complementarians seem to believe that unless husbands and male elders wield absolutely all authority in the home and in the church, male headship is compromised. This is not what the headship of the Father over the Son teaches us. In fact, the delegation of authority within the Trinity should challenge us to exercise biblical headship by making sure that women are truly being treated as equals by being given authority in various

spheres of life and ministry. Feminists have long argued that male headship necessarily denotes inequality. Christian men who insist on maintaining a monopoly on absolutely all domestic and ecclesiastical authority validate this misconception, and distort the example of headship within the Trinity.

Does this Trinitarian model mitigate against males having final decision-making authority and females responding to male leadership? It does not at all, but rather offers a clarification of male headship. Male headship does not mean that females are not invested with any authority; Christ and the Father demonstrate this. Christ was responsive to the Father's leadership during His incarnation. Repeatedly we read in John's gospel that Christ did the will of the Father and was responsive to the Father's authority (4:34; 6:38; 8:28). Even after Christ's earthly incarnation He is still submissive to the Father's headship, for at the end of the age "the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him" (1 Cor 15:28).

While complementarians by definition believe that God has given the man final domestic and ecclesiastical authority, the woman as the man's equal is given significant and varied authority (the right or power to do something).<sup>26</sup> While it goes beyond the scope of this article to flesh out the full extent of female authority, we should note that in Scripture godly women have authority to proclaim the gospel (Acts 1:8; Phil 4:2-3), prophesy (Isa 8:3; Acts 2:17-18; 21:8-9), run a household (Prov 31:10-31), manage commercial enterprises (Prov 31:10-31), give men corrective accountability (1 Sam 25:18-38; Luke 18:1-8; Acts 18:26), and serve as co-laborers with men in ministry (Judges 4; Rom 16:1-6, 6; Phil 4:2-3).

## Honoring

Jesus scandalized the Jewish leaders in John 5:23 by declaring that the Father has given all judgment to the Son "in order that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father." As is true with the previous two aspects of headship within the Trinity, this third element is also based on complete equality between the Father and the Son. The Greek word translated "even as" is *καθώς*, and means "just as, to the same degree." John is saying that the Father gives the Son authority to judge so that the Son would be honored to the same extent the Father is honored. The boldness of this statement is seen through Isaiah's declaration that God does not share honor with anyone else. "I am the Lord, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another" (Isa 42:8).

While giving honor and worship to idols or created beings is a grievous offense (Deut 7:25-26; Acts 12:20-23; Rev 22:8-9), giving honor to Christ who is one with the Father is entirely appropriate. The Father's headship over Christ is not diminished when Christ receives honor. In fact, this is how his headship is lived out. Other Scripture passages such as Heb 2:9 and Phil 2:9-

11 develop the theme of the Father honoring Christ. In both of these passages the context is Christ's incarnational humiliation and obedience to the redemptive plan of the Father. The Father's response to Christ is to "crown him with glory and honor" (Heb 2:9) and "highly exalt" him (Phil 2:9).

Does Scripture highlight honoring as an element of male headship? Peter makes this an earmark of male headship, for he calls husbands to give their wives honor "as a fellow-heir of the grace of life" (1 Pet 3:7). This is such an essential aspect of male headship that Peter says if husbands do not honor their wives, God may not hear their prayers. Jesus gives us one of the clearest examples of male headship reflected in honoring women. He risked the wrath of the Jewish religious community by lovingly allowing a sinful woman to touch him (Luke 7:36-50), respectfully dialoging with a Samaritan woman in public (John 4:7-27), providentially choosing women to be the first witnesses of his resurrection (Matt 28:1-8), including women among his traveling disciples (Luke 8:1-3), and allowing women to sit at his feet and be taught (Luke 10:38-42). Jesus did these things in a Palestinian Jewish culture in which, generally speaking, women were not to go out into public, men were not to speak to women, women could not give testimony in court, women could not inherit their husband's property, the birth of a daughter was considered a loss, and girls had no official education system in which to be educated.<sup>27</sup>

The importance of headship involving honoring women is seen through the following pronouncements from influential male civic and ecclesiastical leaders.<sup>28</sup> The most influential Greek philosopher, Aristotle, taught that women are by nature inferior to men owing to their defective mental capacities. The Greek biologist Galen drew on Aristotle's low view of women and traced female inferiority back to conception: "the female is more imperfect than the male. . . . Just as man is the most perfect of all animals, so also, within the human species, man is more perfect than women." The medieval Christian jurist, Gratian, in the first enduring systematization of church law makes very similar statements: "woman is not made in God's image. Woman's authority is nil; let her in all things be subject to the rule of man . . . and neither can she teach, nor be a witness, nor give a guarantee, nor sit in judgment." The early church fathers also often struggled to honor women, and disrespected them by relating their inferiority to the fall. Tertullian, who ministered in the late second and early third century warned women "And do you not know that you are Eve? God's sentence hangs still over all your sex and His punishment weights down upon you. You are the devil's gateway; you are she who first violated the forbidden tree . . . with what ease you shattered the image of God."

These statements asserting female inferiority do violence to the Trinitarian model of headship. As the Father's headship is seen in the robust way he honors the Son, so male headship is properly reflected when men honor women, treat

them as full equals, and strategize to bring them greater honor.

A final aspect of male headship, which is subsumed under honoring, is protection. While protection is not explicitly noted in John 5:18-24, it is a logical application of loving and honoring. Furthermore, in eschatological contexts the Father does empower and protect the Son. This is particularly seen in Psalm 2 and 110, which speak of the Father's empowerment of the Son to triumph over his enemies. Is the protection of women explicitly linked to male headship in Scripture? Absolutely, for this is a dominant biblical theme. In our fallen world where power is often abused, God calls his people to protect the vulnerable and create justice for the oppressed (Prov 24:10-11; Is 58:5-10; Ezek 45:8-9). Men are particularly called to protect and care for women and children (Deut 25:5-10; Isa 1:15-17; Jer 22:2-3), for this is how God himself exercises his power and authority (Deut 10:17-19).

Unfortunately, secular society and even the Christian church often fail to protect women, and often blame the woman for physical or sexual violence perpetrated upon her.<sup>29</sup> Feminists rightly criticize the church for failing to protect women. In one research project on domestic violence, 27% of pastors surveyed said that if a woman submits to her husband as God decrees, then the abuse will stop or God will give the woman grace to endure the beatings.<sup>30</sup> In fact, the beatings often do not stop and we should not presume on God's grace to endure avoidable suffering.<sup>31</sup> These pastors have misunderstood the nature of domestic violence, and have seriously distorted the nature of biblical submission. Churches should aggressively confront abusers and pursue all means possible to protect vulnerable women. True masculine headship is reflected in the sensitive care and protection of women.

## Conclusion

While feminists are correct to highlight the widespread abuses of male power and authority, the solution is not to reject God ordained gender roles but to clarify them. 1 Corinthians 11:3 provides the best imaginable corrective to distortions of male authority by defining human male headship in terms of the Father's headship over the Son. The radical implications of this text should not escape us. Based on 1 Cor 11:3, we should consider it just as heretical to imply male superiority over women as we consider Jehovah's Witness teaching heretical which asserts that Christ is inferior to the Father. We should consider it utterly unbiblical for men to dishonor women, as we consider it utterly unbiblical to deny worship to Christ. Just as we would be offended at and oppose the teaching of anyone who would deny that the Father raised Christ from the dead and will eschatologically vindicate him, so we should be deeply offended that anyone would fail to honor and protect women. The most instructive model for male leadership is the headship of the Father over the Son. ■

<sup>1</sup> Wayne Grudem's work on κεφαλή removes all doubt that it means "authority over" not simply "source" or "origin of." Cf. "Does Kephale ('Head') Mean 'Source' or 'Authority Over' in Greek Literature? A Survey of 2,336 Examples, *Trinity Journal* 6 (1985) 38-59; "The Meaning of Kephale ('Head'): A Response to Recent Studies," *Trinity Journal* 11 (1990) 3-72; "The Meaning of Kephale ('Head'): An Evaluation of New Evidence, Real and Alleged," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 44 (2001) 25-65.

<sup>2</sup> 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) 461-476; Robert Letham, "The Man-Woman Debate: Theological Comment," *Westminster Theological Journal* 52 (1990) 65-78; Bruce A. Ware, "Tampering with the Trinity: Does the Father Submit to the Son?" *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* 6 (2001) 4-12.

<sup>3</sup> Russ Funk, *Stopping Rape: A Challenge to Men* (Philadelphia: New Society, 1993) 37. Similarly, Vicky Whipple states "one of the main teachings in conservative churches that contributes to domestic violence is that of male/female submission," *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy* 13 (1987) 254.

<sup>4</sup> "Christianity is an abusive theology that glorifies suffering. Is it any wonder that there is so much abuse in modern society when the predominant image or theology of the culture is of 'divine child abuse'—God the Father demanding and carrying out the suffering and death of his own son?" Joanne Carlson Brown and Rebecca Parker, "For God so Loved the World?" in *Violence Against Women and Children: A Christian Theological Sourcebook*, ed. by Carol J. Adams and Marie M. Fortune (New York: Continuum, 1995) 56.

<sup>5</sup> Mary A. Kassian gives a very helpful overview of the growth of lesbianism and paganism/goddess worship in the feminist movement, *The Feminist Gospel: The Movement to Unite Feminism with the Church* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1992). Cf. Peter Jones, "Androgyny: The Pagan Sexual Ideal," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 43 (2000) 443-469.

<sup>6</sup> For instance, exceedingly few book length treatments of the abuse of male power seen in child abuse, sexual violence, or domestic violence have been written by biblical complementarians, whereas evangelical egalitarians and theologically liberal feminists have written hundreds of such books.

<sup>7</sup> Donald Bloesch, *Is the Bible Sexist?* (Westchester, IL: Crossway, 1982) 104.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.

<sup>9</sup> The Hebrew terms for "desire" and "rule" found in Gen 3:16 are the same terms found in Gen 4:7 regarding sin's desire to overcome Cain who needed to dominate or master it. These lexical observations along with the context of Gen 3:16 which gives unfortunate, negative consequences of the fall, leads me to conclude that "he shall rule over you" reflects not God's desire, but a realistic prediction of the results of sinful struggles for power.

<sup>10</sup> Interestingly, the same Greek word used here for harsh lordship or domination, κυριεύω, is the same word used in Gen 3:16 in the Septuagint to indicate that the man will rule over the woman.

<sup>11</sup> Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1975). While only the most strident feminists would agree with Brownmiller's conclusion that rape is "a conscious process of intimidation by which all men keep all women in a state of fear" (p. 5), her documentation of the widespread abuse of male sexual power must not be dismissed.

<sup>12</sup> "WHO Violence against Women Information Pack," [www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/vaw/infopack.htm](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/vaw/infopack.htm), 2002.

- <sup>13</sup> Riva B. Siegel, "'The Rule of Love': Wife Beating as Prerogative and Privacy," *Yale Law Review* 105 (1996) 2117-2130. A brief, helpful history of domestic violence against women in the western world can be found at "Herstory of Domestic Violence: A Timeline of the Battered Women's Movement," [www.mincava.umn.edu/reports/herstory.asp](http://www.mincava.umn.edu/reports/herstory.asp), 2002.
- <sup>14</sup> *Journal of the American Medical Association* 276 (1992) 3132.
- <sup>15</sup> Catherine Clark Kroeger and Nancy Nason-Clark, *No Place for Abuse* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2001) 166.
- <sup>16</sup> D. K. Peters and P. J. Cantrell found that over 66% of the lesbians surveyed reported forced sexual encounters with men after the age of twelve, compared to a rate of only 28% for heterosexuals, "Factors Distinguishing Samples of Lesbian and Heterosexual Women," *Journal of Homosexuality* 21 (1991) 1-15. Susan Hunt, a complementarian, observes "every single one of my feminist friends was abused by a man who was supposed to be her protector. . . a father, an uncle, a husband. I'm convinced that's true for the vast majority of feminists. . . . Is it any wonder these women don't trust men or that they equate 'submission' with co-dependence, downright mindlessness, or worse, masochism?" *By Design: God's Distinctive Calling for Women* (Franklin, TN: Legacy, 1994) 68. Certainly not all feminists have experienced abuse, but Hunt's point is well taken.
- <sup>17</sup> John MacArthur, "Reexamining the Eternal Sonship of Christ," *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* 6 (2001) 21-23. Donald Macleod also gives a helpful discussion of the historical understanding of Christ's sonship, *The Person of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998) 71-107.
- <sup>18</sup> Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971) 312-313.
- <sup>19</sup> Benjamin B. Warfield draws on Jonathan Edwards and describes the Trinity as a mutual delighting of the Father and the Son in each other, in which their very existence is intertwined so that "the Deity becomes all act, the Divine essence itself flows out and is as it were breathed forth in love and joy" *Biblical and Theological Studies* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1968) 27. John Piper gives an extremely helpful explanation of the Father's delight in the Son in *The Pleasures of God: Meditations on God's Delight in Being God* (Portland: Multnomah Press, 1991) 23-44.
- <sup>20</sup> Gilbert Bilezikian, "Hermeneutical Bungee-Jumping: Subordination in the Godhead," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 40 (1997) 59.
- <sup>21</sup> Macleod notes that the Son's servanthood in the incarnation occurred "not by the Father's bare decree [duty], but of his own volition and by mutual consent, his incarnation reflecting not only the Father's love for the church, but his own" (77-78).
- <sup>22</sup> Mary N. Russell, *Confronting Abusive Beliefs: Group Treatment for Abusive Men* (Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage Publications, 1995) 41-43. Similarly, Alsdurf and Alsdurf found that 55% of the abused wives they interviewed said their husbands had said the beatings would stop if they would be more submissive as wives (*Battered into Submission*, 84). While some complementarians will be skeptical of studies done by egalitarians or secular feminists they perceive are seeking primarily to promote their own agenda, complementarian counselors and psychologists who work with abusers and abuse victims have drawn similar conclusions about how frequently abusive evangelical men use the doctrine of male headship to justify abuse. My own wife, who has been a family counselor for over twelve years, reports that from her extensive counseling experience, when professing evangelical men are domestic abusers, more often than not they use distortions of headship to justify their behavior.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid, 41.
- <sup>24</sup> Eva Lundgren, "I Am Endowed with All the Power in Heaven and on Earth: When Men Become Men through 'Christian' Abuse," *Studia Theologica* 48 (1994) 37.
- <sup>25</sup> C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St. John*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978) 260.
- <sup>26</sup> This is the definition of ἑξουσία, used in John 5:27 to indicate "authority."
- <sup>27</sup> Tal Ilan, *Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Palestine* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995) 128-129, 127, 163-166, 167, 44, 204.
- <sup>28</sup> The following quotes and references are drawn from Julia O'Faolain and Lauro Martines, eds., *Not in God's Image: Women in History from the Greeks to the Victorians* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973) 118, 120, 130, 132.
- <sup>29</sup> Anne L. Horton and Judith A. Williamson argue that abuse victims, perpetrators, and their family members seek out pastors and religious leaders more than all other helping professionals combined, and yet pastors often fail to protect abused women and children, *Abuse and Religion: When Praying Isn't Enough* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1988).
- <sup>30</sup> Alsdurf and Alsdurf, 156.
- <sup>31</sup> Enduring avoidable physical persecution is not commended biblically. There are numerous biblical accounts of godly individuals who avoided physical persecution by their God ordained authorities whenever it was possible. For instance, David (1 Sam 18:11; 19:10; 23:14), Joseph (Matt 2:13), Jesus (John 7:1; 8:59), and Paul (Acts 9:22-25; 14:5-6; 17:8-10) all fled from avoidable assaults. David in particular fled from Saul for several years, and yet he was very respectful and submissive to Saul's authority (1 Sam 24:4-6; 26:8-11).



# Galatians 3:28 — Prooftext or Context?

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*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.* Galatians 3:28

No single verse of Scripture has attracted as much attention during the modern gender role debate as Galatians 3:28.<sup>1</sup> The declaration by the Apostle Paul that “there is neither . . . male nor female . . . in Christ,” though not directly addressing the role of women in the home and in the church, nevertheless, has played a critical role in the development of the issue.<sup>2</sup> Egalitarian and complementarian scholars claim to be in general agreement about the main point of this verse—all believers are united in Christ. The question concerns what else this verse might entail. Clearly salvation does not eliminate all of our human differences. As Christians we retain racial, social, and gender distinctions. In what sense, then, is it true that in Christ there is neither male nor female? Does Gal 3:28 negate gender specific roles?

Egalitarians answer the latter question affirmatively, seeing the text as “the foundation for a new social order in the church.”<sup>3</sup> The result of this new social order is that there are no longer gender-based ministry distinctions in the home or the church. Complementarians, however, do not find such a proof text for eliminating gender roles here in the midst of Paul’s argument for justification by faith alone (Gal 3-4). As S. Lewis Johnson has put it,

Never could the Apostle Paul have envisioned the place of Galatians 3:28 in contemporary evangelical literature. . . . While traditionally commentators have discussed Paul’s words in the

context of the Biblical doctrine of justification by faith, that has become a secondary matter. One can understand this to some extent, since the vigorous debate over sex roles has, in effect, lifted it from its exegetical underpinnings and set it as a lonely text, a kind of proof text, in the midst of a swirling theological debate. This is not without justification, but it also is not without peril. I am referring to the human tendency to forget sound hermeneutics and find things that are not really in the text.<sup>4</sup>

In an effort to understand the text as it was intended, this article argues that Gal 3:28 does not abolish gender specific roles for men and women. Rather, Paul simply has in mind that all believers, no matter what their racial, social, or gender status, share the same spiritual status in their union with Christ. Further, if one chooses to speak in terms of “equality in Christ,” based on Gal 3:28, it must be done carefully and with precision. It is only properly understood as equality “in Christ,” or as equal status “before God,” not gender equality in role or function.<sup>5</sup>

## **Egalitarian View: Galatians 3:28 as the *Magna Carta* of Humanity**

Though egalitarians may interpret some of the details of Gal 3:28 differently, there are at least two recurring elements found in most of their treatments of this important text. The first element is what the text means and the second is how the text is used to interpret other gender related passages in the



New Testament. These two elements can be summarized with the terms *declaration* and *interpretation*.

### What the Text Means: Declaration

What is it, according to egalitarians, that Paul has declared so boldly in Gal 3:28? Exactly what does it mean that “in Christ” there is neither “male nor female?” Paul K. Jewett speaks of this passage as the “*Magna Carta* of Humanity,” the great charter of Christian equality between male and female.<sup>6</sup> Klyne Snodgrass has called it “the most socially explosive text in the Bible.”<sup>7</sup> Others identify this particular text as the “Emancipation Proclamation for Women.”<sup>8</sup> By these statements egalitarians mean that Gal 3:28 contains a Christian revolutionary principle for fundamental human rights. For them, the profound truth of this text is that in Christ women have been liberated from the slavery and servitude of patriarchy.

Galatians 3:28, then, is seen as the definitive theological starting point for gender equality in the New Testament. The gospel so unites all Christians that there are no longer ethnic (Jew nor Greek), socio-economic (slave nor free), or gender distinctions (male nor female) in Christ. Women may now move “beyond the curse.”<sup>9</sup> The old distinctions have become irrelevant.<sup>10</sup> The sinful post-Edenic order of male-female hierarchy has been abolished. The result of this unity in Christ is that in both the home and the church there are no longer gender-based ministry distinctions.

Arguing for this view, David Scholer says that Gal 3:28 is “the fundamental Pauline theological basis for the inclusion of women and men as equal and mutual partners in all of the ministries of the church.”<sup>11</sup> In *Good News for Women*, Rebecca Groothuis agrees saying, “Of all the texts that support biblical equality, Gal 3:26-28 is probably the most important.”<sup>12</sup> The organization Christians for Biblical Equality demonstrates the importance of this verse in its purpose or vision statement:

Christians for Biblical Equality . . . believe that the Bible, properly interpreted, teaches the fundamental equality of believers of all racial and ethnic groups and all economic classes, based on the teachings of scripture as reflected in Galatians 3:28: *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*<sup>13</sup>

In sum, egalitarians believe that Gal 3:28 declares that in Christ there is not only equality as to one’s status before God but also the elimination of male-female role distinctions, and thus, undifferentiated role interchangeability in both the home and the church.<sup>14</sup> Because male and female are equal in Christ, they are both “equal to serve” without any gender-based scriptural qualifications.<sup>15</sup>

### How the Text Is Used: Interpretation

Egalitarians claim that Gal 3:28 is not only the definitive statement on gender equality but also the interpretive key that unlocks the more difficult gender passages in the rest of the New Testament. According to Grenz and Kjesbo, egalitarians see this verse as having “hermeneutical priority.”<sup>16</sup> It has first place in the process of interpretation. The verse has been identified by Grant Osborne as the “*crux interpretum* of equality.”<sup>17</sup> That is, it is the theological and hermeneutical paradigm for all gender passages in the New Testament.<sup>18</sup>

Here is how this process of interpreting “difficult passages”—those passages that appear to limit the role of women in ministry—works. Since Gal 3:28 contains the universal principle of gender equality based on the revolutionary significance of the gospel, it must be given priority over other gender passages.<sup>19</sup> That which is universal in scope interprets (or unlocks) the correct meaning of that which is culturally specific (e.g., 1 Cor 11:3-16; 14:34-35; 1 Tim 2:11-15).<sup>20</sup> Thus, when Paul instructs women not “to teach or to have authority over” men (1 Tim 2:12), the proper understanding of that verse must be seen through Gal 3:28 and not vice versa. What the Apostle forbids in 1 Timothy 2, according to this view, is only directed toward a particular historical problem (perhaps false teaching or teaching in a domineering way in Ephesus) and is not a normative prohibition against women as pastors.<sup>21</sup> Paul means something like this, “I do not permit these women to teach because they are not teaching the truth.” Whatever the incidental or particular limitations are that the New Testament puts on the ministry of women, they are just that—incidental limitations. The theological truth conveyed in Gal 3:28, however, is that which is abiding and permanent.

But is this really what Paul meant when he personally penned this letter under the inspiration of the Spirit of God (Gal 6:11)? The next three sections of this article are offered as an attempt to show that an egalitarian reading of Gal 3:28 is not at all what the Apostle had in mind. The two recurring elements introduced above, declaration and interpretation, seem to be more a product of egalitarian commitments than from a solid biblical hermeneutic.

### The Novelty of the Egalitarian Interpretation: A Brief Survey of Galatians 3:28 in Church History

It is not insignificant that the egalitarian interpretation of Gal 3:28 is a novel interpretation. There ought to be some concern about viewing Gal 3:28 as egalitarians do since there is little, if any, precedence in the history of interpretation to do so. S. Lewis Johnson has briefly surveyed how Gal 3:28 has been handled throughout church history, and though he is careful to qualify his work as not being comprehensive,

nevertheless, he states,

The text did not loom large in that world, and while acknowledging my limited knowledge of that time, I have not yet found one extensive treatment of the text. I can only conclude that the early church regarded Galatians 3:28 as a text that was pellucidly clear.<sup>22</sup>

The clear teaching of the text is about a believer's status in Christ. Johnson finds no evidence among the major teachers in the history of the church for a modern egalitarian understanding of Gal 3:28.

Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Hippolytus, Gregory of Nyssa, and John Chrysostom each handle Gal 3:28 in the context of salvation, and yet none of them speaks in terms of abolishing gender roles based on this text.<sup>23</sup> One of Augustine's few references to this text is for the purpose of emphasizing the unity that all have in Christ. According to Johnson, "he says nothing of how this status relates to function in the church."<sup>24</sup> Martin Luther's treatment of the text, in Johnson's words, affirms that "all believers have the same status in Christ, but in other spheres, such as the family, a submission within the equality all have in Christ is Biblical."<sup>25</sup> John Calvin refers to Gal 3:28 many times, the sum of which, says Johnson, is that though all have liberty in Christ, liberty is not without its limits. In other words, freedom in Christ truly exists, yet there are "limits and restrictions of a different order."<sup>26</sup> Concluding his brief survey, Johnson claims that apparently the major teachers in the history of the church did not think that "Galatians 3:28 abolished the male-female role distinction in marriage or the church."<sup>27</sup>

## The Pauline Understanding of Galatians 3:28

In order to understand Gal 3:28 correctly one must set the purpose of this single verse in the larger context of Paul's entire letter to the churches of Galatia. This requires a grasp of both the purpose of the letter as a whole as well as the broader argument surrounding the verse found in Galatians 3-4. As Rick Hove has well stated, "Paul did not begin his discussion with 3:28, nor did he pen this verse as a solitary proverbial saying. Rather, the meaning of 'there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus' is largely determined by its context."<sup>28</sup>

### The Book of Galatians

The theme of Galatians is justification by grace through faith. Certain Jewish Christians (Judaizers) had replaced the gospel of God's grace with a "different gospel" (1:6)—observance of the law, demanding that Gentile Christians observe the rite of circumcision. The Apostle Paul writes to

correct this problem with a bold statement on salvation by grace through faith. Many commentators see three parts to the Epistle.<sup>29</sup> First, Paul writes to defend the uniqueness of the gospel based on his apostleship (Gal 1-2); second, he develops the theological argument for salvation by grace and not works (Gal 3-4); and third, with a more pastoral emphasis, Paul argues for the freedom that comes through life in the Spirit (Gal 5-6).

### The Broader Context: Galatians 3-4

Paul's theological argument for salvation by grace through faith is a firm rebuke to those who believed they "received the Spirit by the works of the law" (3:2). In fact, the law never saved anyone. Abraham, "the consummate Jewish example of righteousness, serves as a weighty example of one who was justified by faith, not by obedience to the law."<sup>30</sup> As Abraham was made righteous by faith so Gentiles are made righteous by faith (3:8). Through Christ's death the way of salvation has been opened for Jews and Gentiles alike to become children of Abraham "and receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (3:14).

There are three important theological themes around which chapters 3-4 are built: promise/inheritance, law, and faith. In 3:6-25 Paul sketches the course of redemptive history from Abraham (3:6-14) through Moses (3:15-22) to Christ (3:22-25), that is, "from promise through law to faith."<sup>31</sup> Faith, found in verses 25-26, however, is the hinge on which Paul's theological argument turns. As Timothy George notes, "'Faith' in fact, is the key word linking together the two halves of Paul's theological exposition."<sup>32</sup> In 3:25 Paul concludes his explanation of the purpose of the law saying, "But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor." He then adds, in 3:26, "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus."

From 3:26 to 4:31, as he previously introduced promise, law, and faith, Paul sketches the course backwards, as it were, from faith through law to promise. The movement is from faith, a work of the Spirit (3:27-4:7), through law, the bondage of this world (4:8-11), to promise, this time exemplified through Abraham's two sons, Isaac and Ishmael (4:21-31).<sup>33</sup> Whatever Gal 3:28 means, it can only be properly interpreted in light of these three great theological themes: promise, law, and faith.

### The Immediate Context: Galatians 3:26-27, 29

The content of these particular verses shows that the passage is framed by two important clauses, "you are all sons of God" (3:26a), and "you are Abraham's seed" (3:29).<sup>34</sup> Both clauses speak in terms of the promise/inheritance language mentioned above. Those who are true sons of Father Abraham are really sons of Abba Father. And as sons, they are joint heirs of God through Christ (4:7).

**Verse 26: For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.**

Verse 26 makes four important points to the Galatian readers.<sup>35</sup> First, they all have the same status before God. Second, their status is identified as sons of God. It is indeed a blessing from God to be adopted by God. Third, the basis of this new relationship (new status) is the object of their faith, Christ Jesus. It is only possible because God sent forth his Son in the fullness of time. Fourth, the means for this new relationship is faith in Christ Jesus. In sum, this verse explains the new status of believers as sons of God and the means by which every believer attains that status, through faith in Christ.

**Verse 27: For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.**

It is unnecessary to develop a theology of baptism for the purposes of this article.<sup>36</sup> As long as one avoids finding baptismal regeneration in the text, the other two main approaches end in the same place. Whether Paul is speaking of the baptism of the Spirit into the body of Christ (Rom 6:3; 1 Cor 12:13) or water immersion as a testimony of regeneration, or both, since both are in fact biblical realities, the result is that believers find themselves in Christ and “have put on Christ.” Just as *all* believers are sons of God (3:26), so *all* (“as many of you as”) have put on Christ. The metaphor, to “put on Christ,” may or may not refer to the converts’ stripping off old clothes and putting on fresh ones as part of the physical act of baptism.<sup>37</sup> It is clear, though, that in Paul’s other writings, the metaphor to put off the old way of life and put on the new is frequently employed (Rom 6-8; 13:11-14; Eph 6:11-14; Col 3:10). The baptism imagery symbolizes this great exchange. Paul is saying that all those who have put on Christ are dressed in the same way—they are clothed in his righteousness and not their own. There is no believer for whom this is not the case, “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (3:28).

**Verse 29: And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.**

Thomas Schreiner summarizes well the significance of this verse, saying, “Incorporation into Christ is the means by which people become the seed of Abraham since Jesus is the true seed of Abraham.”<sup>38</sup> Here Paul argues that those who are “sons of God through faith” (3:26) are, as a result of faith, also sons of Abraham, “Abraham’s seed” (3:29). As he said in 3:7, “those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.” Paul speaks in terms of the singular seed to make clear the connection between the promised seed, who is Christ (3:16), and those who by virtue of being in Christ are heirs according to the promise. The point in relation to 3:28 is that those who would

otherwise not be sons according to the promise—Greeks, slaves, females—all inherit the blessings of sonship in the same way and to the same degree.

**Galatians 3:28 neither Jew nor Greek, . . . neither slave nor free, . . . neither male nor female****An Obvious Pattern**

There is an obviously poetic pattern to Paul’s statement. His triple negation intends to make an important point and the combination of the three couplets no doubt accentuates his argument.<sup>39</sup> The final phrase in the verse, “for you are all one in Christ Jesus,” interprets each couplet. Simply put, it is because *all* are “one in Christ” that there is neither Jew nor Greek, etc. But is this all Paul intends? Why does he choose this particular pattern? Is there a source from which he is quoting that might assist in the process of interpretation? If so, what else is Paul saying?

**Two Debated Sources**

In an effort to explain why Paul has used these three particular pairs in Gal 3:28, scholars have searched both biblical and extra-biblical literature for an answer. Two main sources are commonly identified as standing behind Gal 3:28. The first possible source is a pre-Pauline baptismal formula.<sup>40</sup> This formula, or confession, would be stated during the baptismal ceremony. Presumably, it would begin in verse 27 and end with verse 28. Parallel formulas are found in 1 Cor 12:13 and Col 3:11. Paul also makes some reference to the same three pairs of Gal 3:28 in 1 Cor 7, although the formula does not appear to be in view.<sup>41</sup>

Some egalitarians find this proposal convincing.<sup>42</sup> If it is the case that Gal 3:28 points to a pre-Pauline formula, then obviously that confession was already circulating independently throughout the Christian community. And, as Cottrell puts it, “that would pave the way for detaching these pairs from their immediate literary context in Galatians and viewing them as part of a more general formula or general principle with a very broad application.”<sup>43</sup> In other words, when seen in this light Gal 3:28 speaks not just of one’s relationship before God but to all cultural and social relationships. As Myrtle Langley puts it, understanding the baptism formula this way defines “not only the religious, but also the social, cultural and political consequences of being ‘one in Christ.’”<sup>44</sup>

Although it may be the case that a baptismal formula is behind Gal 3:28, there are at least two reasons for caution. First, it is not at all clear that such a formula was pre-Pauline. It may, in fact, be based on Paul’s own teaching and practice.<sup>45</sup> Second, even granting the possibility that Gal 3:28 is connected

to a baptismal formula (pre-Pauline or otherwise), one must still interpret the verse in its immediate context. And there is no compelling reason to treat the phrase “male and female” any differently than the other two couplets. Each of the couplets must be interpreted in light of the larger argument Paul makes in Gal 3-4.

The second source that is said to stand behind Gal 3:28 is an ancient prayer of Jewish men. The prayer is made up of three “blessings” or “benedictions” that appear in the Jewish cycle of morning prayers: “Blessed be He [God] that He did not make me a Gentile; blessed be He that He did not make me a boor [i.e., an ignorant peasant or a slave]; blessed be He that He did not make me a woman.”<sup>46</sup> The connection with the three pairs of Gal 3:28 is obvious. Thus, if Paul has this prayer in mind, the argument runs, then he must be consciously opposing a demeaning view of women that was present in a chauvinistic Jewish culture.<sup>47</sup>

There are at least three problems with understanding Gal 3:28 in this way.<sup>48</sup> First, the earliest dating on a source for this prayer is the mid-second century (attributed to Rabbi Judah Ben Elai)—about one hundred years after Paul writes this letter.<sup>49</sup> Thus, as Cottrell says, “it is pure speculation” to think that this was a Jewish prayer that Paul would have grown up praying.<sup>50</sup> Second, it is difficult to imagine why Paul would choose the negative example of ancient Jewish men in order to positively illustrate the passing on of the great patriarch Abraham’s faith. Again, the proper interpretation of Gal 3:28 is more likely to be framed by the broad context of promise/inheritance, law, and faith. The same can be said of the immediate context, Gal 3:26-27, 29. Third, if the prayer was indeed a first century prayer of Jewish men, was it necessarily as offensive in a first century context as it seems to be in today’s context? Perhaps not. As Bruce suggests, “the reason for the threefold thanksgiving was not any positive disparagement of Gentiles, slaves or women as persons but the fact that they were disqualified from several religious privileges which were open to free Jewish males.”<sup>51</sup>

In light of the concerns regarding both of these debated sources, the baptismal formula and an ancient prayer, it seems best to look more directly to the text of Galatians itself for the meaning of Gal 3:28. Whatever the verse means, it is best explained in terms of promise/inheritance, law, and faith—the three interdependent theological themes of Galatians 3-4.

### A Contextual Understanding: The Metaphor of Inheritance

There is little question as to whether the Epistle as a whole has something to do with the law of Moses. Paul has obviously written to clarify the relationship between the law and the gospel. The apparent influence of the Judaizers is the historical occasion that Gal 3-4 addresses. “No one is justified

by the law. . . for ‘the just shall live by faith’” (Gal 3:11). The question, then, is: What point might Paul be making about the law in Gal 3:28?

Several suggestions have been made in an effort to explain Gal 3:28 in relation to the law. However, the most convincing proposal seems to be what Cottrell calls “the metaphor of inheritance.”<sup>52</sup> Reiterating that what is at stake in the book of Galatians is how one enters into and sustains a right relationship with God, Cottrell asks, “What is there about the context—salvation and the Law of Moses—that leads Paul to mention these three (pairs) in particular?”<sup>53</sup> Cottrell points out that the question is not *whether* any of these can be saved, but *how* they receive salvation. Under the Old Testament law, Greeks, slaves, and females did not enjoy the right of land and property inheritance directly. In the New Covenant, however, salvation is described with the metaphor of inheritance as that which anyone may personally receive. Inheritance, then, is not simply incidental to Paul’s argument regarding salvation by grace through faith—it is fundamentally descriptive of salvation. The blessing of salvation, or inheritance, comes through Abraham to the Gentiles (Gal 3:14), is not based on the law (Gal 3:18), and makes those who receive it heirs according to the promise (Gal 3:29). But *how* can a Gentile, a slave, or a woman become a rightful heir?

Under the law of Moses, only Jews, not Gentiles, were rightful heirs to the land of promise (Gen 12:1-3; 15:7; Exod 32:13; Deut 2:31). Another qualification for inheritance was one’s free status. Slaves did not ordinarily qualify as heirs. This is the basis for Paul’s argument in Gal 4:1-7. The final limitation on inheritance under the law was that normally only sons (male), not daughters (female), inherited the father’s estate (Num 27:1-11; Deut 25:5-10; Prov 13:22;). Simply put, the pattern for inheritance under the law was Jewish free males.<sup>54</sup> In the New Covenant, however, something far better than an earthly estate is in view; “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:28). Paul’s point in Gal 3:28 is that everyone who receives the inheritance of salvation receives it the same way and experiences the same justifying results—union with Christ. According to Paul, anyone may become a rightful heir through faith in Christ Jesus (Gal 3:26). Jesus Christ, as heir of all things (Heb 1:2), gives the blessing of sonship to all who believe. “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:26).

### Responding to Galatians 3:28 as the *Magna Carta* of Humanity

So far it has been argued that an egalitarian reading of Gal 3:28 as the *Magna Carta* of humanity is unacceptable because not only is it a novel reading of the text, it is not at all what the Apostle Paul intended. It remains to ask the question: In what sense may one speak of “equality in Christ” based on



this text? Put another way: Is Gal 3:28 the *definitive* statement on gender equality in the New Testament? Several responses are in order.

First, Gal 3:28 cannot be the definitive statement on gender equality in the New Testament when the main idea of the verse has little to do with gender roles let alone their abolishment. The context of the verse does not allow it. The preceding section shows that Paul's intended meaning centers not on gender roles or their abolishment, but rather on how salvation is described, via the metaphor of inheritance, as that which anyone may personally receive.

Second, one must account for the absence of the word "equality" in Gal 3:28. The main idea of the verse is not equality in Christ but union in and with Christ. It is clear that unity in Christ does not automatically remove all racial, economic, and gender distinctions. Certainly, there are some social consequences that result in union with Christ. As Schreiner says, "The union of Jew and Gentile in Christ influences dramatically table fellowship (Rom 14:1-15:13; 1 Cor 8:1-11:1; Gal 2:11-14). One cannot place soteriology and social relations in hermetically sealed compartments so that the one never touches on the other."<sup>55</sup> And yet, while there are some social consequences that result in union with Christ, the decisive question is: "How does Paul himself articulate the social consequences?"<sup>56</sup> Schreiner continues,

Paul himself never understood Galatians 3:28 to cancel out all distinctions. He continued to believe that there were differences between Jews and Greeks; otherwise the whole argument in Romans 9-11 is superfluous. He continued to believe that there were differences between slaves and masters; otherwise, his advice to both is contradictory (Eph 6:5-9; Col 3:22-4:1). He continued to believe there were differences between males and females. Otherwise, his indictment of homosexuality is inconsistent (Rom 1:26-27), his commands to husbands and wives incomprehensible (Eph 5:22-33; Col 3:18-19) and his restrictions on women a relapse from his better days (1 Cor 11:2-16; 14:33b-36; 1 Tim 2:9-15). The value and worth of all human beings is proclaimed by Paul, but this verse must not be served up so that it fits with modern ideologies. We must hear Paul's own word—be it ever so foreign to us.<sup>57</sup>

Third, even if one grants that equality is in the text implicitly, in the sense that if we are all "in Christ" we are all equal, then it can be understood properly only as a "spiritual equality" that describes equal access to God and an equal standing before God, not an equality of roles. There is nothing in the text of Gal 3:28 or its surrounding verses that argues for

male and female role interchangeability. In short, Gal 3:28 is a soteriological statement, not a gender-role statement. It makes very clear that all Christians have equal standing before God.

Fourth, if Gal 3:28 is not the definitive theological statement on gender equality, then neither should it serve as the interpretive key for all other gender passages in the New Testament. Köstenberger rightly warns, "An interpretation that starts with the assumption that Gal 3:28 relates directly to contemporary gender issues will have difficulty entering into Paul's argument in the context of the passage."<sup>58</sup> If the broader gender issue is not allowed contextually, then certainly it cannot be legitimately identified as that which has hermeneutical priority.

In conclusion, a proper understanding of Gal 3:28 is required in order to avoid minimizing the message of the gospel. Paul's point in this particular verse is that all people are justified the same way, by grace through faith, with the same results. Those who find more than this in Gal 3:28 have either mishandled the text or have depended too heavily on sources outside of the text and are in danger of minimizing the glorious message of the gospel of grace.<sup>59</sup> Further, the irony of the debate that has centered around Gal 3:28 is that egalitarians have argued for maximizing the ministry of women based on this text. Both complementarian and egalitarian women are wise enough to know that in order to maximize one's ministry, whether male or female, one must serve in obedience to the Word of God rightly divided. ■

<sup>1</sup> Some of the more important early treatments are: Grant R. Osborne, "Hermeneutics and Women in the Church," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 20/4 (1977) 337-52; Ben Witherington, III, "Rite and Rights for Women—Galatians 3:28," *New Testament Studies* 27/5 (1981) 593-604; and Klyne R. Snodgrass, "Galatians 3:28—Conundrum or Solution?" in *Women, Authority, and the Bible*, ed. Alvera Mickelsen (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1986) 161-81.

<sup>2</sup> Robert L. Saucy and Judith K. Tenelshof, *Women and Men in Ministry: A Complementary Perspective* (Chicago: Moody, 2001) 139. Recently, it has been pointed out by James Beck and Craig Blomberg that some egalitarian scholars are placing less of an emphasis on Gal 3:28 in their writings. See James R. Beck and Craig L. Blomberg, eds., *Two Views on Women in Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001) 166. However, most egalitarians, it seems safe to say, still depend largely on the theological and hermeneutical significance of Gal 3:28.

<sup>3</sup> Stanley J. Grenz and Denise Muir Kjesbo, *Women in the Church: A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1995) 101.

<sup>4</sup> S. Lewis Johnson, Jr., "Role Distinctions in the Church: Galatians 3:28," in John Piper and Wayne Grudem, eds., *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1991) 154.

<sup>5</sup> Grenz and Kjesbo summarize the complementarian and egalitarian



approaches to Gal 3:28 with the terms “position” and “practice.” Their position/practice paradigm, however, is misleading. They say, “Complementarians generally limit the implications of Paul’s declaration of equality in Christ to our *position* as redeemed persons. They see Galatians 3:28 as a statement of our soteriological position, but not of our soteriological function.” On the other hand, “Egalitarians . . . assert that equality of soteriological *position* in Christ must receive an appropriate outworking in the *practice* of the church (and in society as well)” (Grenz and Kjesbo, 100-01). The problem with Grenz and Kjesbo’s position/practice paradigm is that it suggests that complementarians do not affirm *any* practical or functional changes as a result of salvation—as if complementarians were arguing that Christian men and women are not expected to treat each other differently after salvation. It can hardly be described as limiting the implications of salvation to affirm, as complementarians do, that a proper understanding of Gal 3:28 and the biblical pattern of male headship are in perfect harmony.

<sup>6</sup> Paul K. Jewett, *Man as Male and Female: A Study in Sexual Relationships from a Theological Point of View* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975) 142.

<sup>7</sup> Klyne R. Snodgrass, “The Ordination of Women—Thirteen Years Later: Do We Really Value the Ministry of Women?” *Covenant Quarterly* 48/3 (1990) 34.

<sup>8</sup> See Witherington, 602, n. 1.

<sup>9</sup> See Aida Besançon Spencer, *Beyond the Curse: Women Called to Ministry* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1985) 64-71.

<sup>10</sup> Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, *Good News for Women: A Biblical Picture of Gender Equality* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997) 26.

<sup>11</sup> David M. Scholer, “Galatians 3:28 and the Ministry of Women in the Church,” in *Theology, News and Notes* (Pasadena: Fuller Theological Seminary, June 1998) 19-22; cited here from Richard Hove, *Equality in Christ: Galatians 3:28 and the Gender Dispute* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1999) 17.

<sup>12</sup> Groothuis, 25.

<sup>13</sup> Christians for Biblical Equality website: <http://www.cbeinternational.org/>. Accessed 5 Feb 2002.

<sup>14</sup> Jack Cottrell, *Gender Roles and the Bible: Creation, the Fall, and Redemption* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1994) 221. See also Mary Kassian, *The Feminist Gospel: The Movement to Unite Feminism with the Church* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1992) 208.

<sup>15</sup> See Gretchen Gaebelein Hull, *Equal to Serve* (Tarrytown, NY: Revell, 1991).

<sup>16</sup> Grenz and Kjesbo, 106.

<sup>17</sup> Osborne, 348.

<sup>18</sup> For a helpful introduction to the use of Gal 3:28 as a “paradigm passage” for egalitarians, see Andreas J. Köstenberger, “Gender Passages in the NT: Hermeneutical Fallacies Critiqued,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 56 (1994) 259-83.

<sup>19</sup> Richard Longenecker, “Authority, Hierarchy and Leadership Patterns in the Bible,” in *Women, Authority, and the Bible*, ed. Alvera Mickelsen (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1986) 83.

<sup>20</sup> See Köstenberger, 274, n. 59.

<sup>21</sup> See Richard Clark Kroeger and Catherine Clark Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2:11-15 in Light of Ancient Evidence* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992) 80-82; and Linda L. Belleville, “Women in Ministry,” in Beck and Blomberg 127. Cf. Andreas J. Köstenberger, Thomas R. Schreiner, and H. Scott Baldwin, *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9-15* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), which is perhaps the most thorough complementarian treatment to date on 1 Tim 2:9-15.

<sup>22</sup> Johnson, 155.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 155-56.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 156.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid,

<sup>26</sup> Ibid,

<sup>27</sup> Ibid,

<sup>28</sup> Hove, 23.

<sup>29</sup> See R. Alan Cole, *The Letter of Paul to the Galatians*, TNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989); James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, BNTC (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993); Timothy George, *Galatians*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1994); Donald Guthrie, *Galatians*, NCB (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973); William Hendriksen, *Exposition of Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968); Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953).

<sup>30</sup> Hove, 41.

<sup>31</sup> George, 272. I am indebted to Timothy George for this theological and exegetical insight that I believe captures well each concept in relation to the others.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid,

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 271-72.

<sup>34</sup> Hove, 51-52. See Hove’s work for a structural diagram of this passage that shows the significance of the two clauses around which Gal 3:26-29 is built.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 57-58.

<sup>36</sup> George has one of the more thorough and helpful treatments of verse 27 among recent commentators. See George, 275-82.

<sup>37</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) 186.

<sup>38</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *Paul, Apostle of God’s Glory in Christ: A Pauline Theology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001) 161.

<sup>39</sup> There is a shift in the conjunction found in the third couplet (from *oude* to *kai*). Some argue that the shift to “and” points to a deliberate move by Paul to quote Gen 1:27 from the Septuagint, “male *and* female.” This may be the case and may even be helpful for complementarians to bolster the argument as this couplet is uniquely rooted in the created order. However, while it is an important question to be taken up by translators, it is not determinative for a proper interpretation of the text. See Hove, 66-69.

<sup>40</sup> Bruce, 187.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 188.

<sup>42</sup> See Cottrell, 241.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid,

<sup>44</sup> Myrtle S. Langley, “One Baptism, One Ministry: The Ordination of Women and Unity in Christ,” *Transformation* 6/2 (April/June 1989) 27.

<sup>45</sup> Bruce, 187.

<sup>46</sup> The prayer is quoted here as it appears in Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, WBC (Dallas: Word, 1990) 157. According to Longenecker, the prayer is “credited to R. Judah ben Elai (c. 150 A.D.) in *t. Ber.* 7.18 and *j. Ber.* 13b, but to R. Meier (his contemporary) in *b. Menah.* 43b.”

<sup>47</sup> Ibid,

<sup>48</sup> I am following Cottrell on the first and third points. Especially helpful is his treatment on whether or not there is even a legitimate parallel between the prayer and Gal 3:28. He does not think there is. Cottrell, 238-40.

<sup>49</sup> This assumes an early date for Galatians. However, even a later date only moves the letter a few years closer to the end of the first century.

<sup>50</sup> Cottrell, 239.

<sup>51</sup> Bruce, 187.

<sup>52</sup> Cottrell, 272. See Cottrell, 268-72 for other suggestions in relation to the law of Moses.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 273.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 283.

<sup>55</sup> Schreiner, 402.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid,

<sup>57</sup> Ibid,

<sup>58</sup> Köstenberger, 277.

<sup>59</sup> Hove, 145-47.

# Could Our Savior Have Been a Woman?

## The Relevance of Jesus' Gender for His Incarnational Mission

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### Introduction

- 1) Jesus Christ of Nazareth was fully God.
- 2) Jesus Christ of Nazareth was fully human.
- 3) Jesus Christ of Nazareth was a male human being.

All three of these statements are judged to be true in the orthodox tradition, and each is borne out by abundant biblical testimony. The first two of these are often stated together as necessarily true for the incarnation and substitutionary atonement to occur. Anselm's classic treatment, *Cur Deus Homo*, spells out why an atoning sacrifice would have required Jesus to be both divine and human – divine, to be of sufficient value to pay fully and finally for the sin of the world and satisfy the offence against the honor of God; human, to die as a fit substitute in our place. But, the question of whether Jesus had to be a *male* human being has seldom been discussed, until recently. Was his male gender a merely arbitrary feature of the incarnational design? Did the Father throw dice or draw straws in choosing to send the Messiah as a male human being? Or, was the male gender of Jesus essential to the reality of his incarnational identity and to the accomplishment of his incarnational mission? That is, did Jesus have to be male, or could our Savior have been a woman?

A couple of recent developments raise this question to a level of higher poignancy. I have in mind, first, the publication in 1995 of *The New Testament and Psalms: An Inclusive Version*,<sup>1</sup> in which the male gender of Jesus was decided not to

have any "christological significance, or significance for salvation."<sup>2</sup> As the editors explain,

When in the Gospels the historical person, Jesus, is referred to as "son," the word is retained. But when Jesus is called "Son of God" or "Son of the Blessed One," and the maleness of the historical person Jesus is not relevant, but the "Son's" intimate relation to the "Father" is being spoken about (see Mt 11.25-27), the formal equivalent "Child" is used for "Son," and gender-specific pronouns referring to the "Child" are avoided. Thus readers are enabled to identify themselves with Jesus' *humanity*.

If the fact that Jesus was a man, and not a woman, has no christological significance in the New Testament, then neither does the fact that Jesus was a *son* and not a *daughter*. If Jesus is identified as "Son," believers of both sexes become "sons" of God, but if Jesus is called "Child," believers of both sexes can understand themselves as "children of God."<sup>3</sup>

And a few pages later, they assert:

A "son" is a male offspring, and the historical person Jesus was, of course, a man. But that Jesus was a male person was not thought in the early church to have christological significance, or significance for salvation. It was not Jesus'

maleness that was believed to save males, but Jesus' humanness that was believed to save human beings. As was said by many theologians in the early church, what was not assumed (by Jesus) was not saved. . . .

If the fact that Jesus was a "son" and not a "daughter" has no theological significance, then we are justified in rendering the Greek *huios* (usually "son") as "Child" or "Child of God" instead of "Son" when it occurs in a christological sense. In this version gender-specific pronouns are not used when referring to the "Child," thus enabling all readers to identify themselves with Jesus' *humanity*. When Jesus is identified as "Son," believers, as heirs, become "sons"; but when Jesus is identified as "Child," believers become "children of God"—both women and men.<sup>4</sup>

A second reason for raising the question of whether our Savior could have been a woman is the rendering of Jesus' gender in certain passages in the *Today's New International Version* (hereafter TNIV) released last year from the International Bible Society and Zondervan.

For example, consider Hebrews 2:17 in the NIV and TNIV, respectively:

NIV: For this reason he had to be made like his **brothers** in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.

TNIV: For this reason he had to be made like his **brothers and sisters** in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.

One might have expected the TNIV to translate it rather, "For this reason he had to be made like human beings in every way . . ." At least this would focus on the generic "flesh and blood" from 2:14. But, to turn "brothers" into "brothers and sisters" leads inevitably to confusion and possible misunderstanding.<sup>5</sup> What was Jesus' gender, anyway? one wonders. Just how was he somehow like his "sisters in every way"? To speak specifically of the gender of "sisters" and say that Christ was "like" them "in every way" at least leads one to wonder whether the male gender of Jesus was at all significant in the incarnation and atonement. Although Jesus was a man (we know from other texts), from this passage we might be prompted to ask, Might our Savior just as well have been a woman?

Or consider 1 Cor 15:21-22:

NIV: 21) For since death came through a **man**, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a **man**. 22) For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

TNIV: 21) For since death came through a **human being**, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a **human being**. 22) For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

Clearly what the TNIV has said here is true. But, the change from "man" to "human being" does lead one to wonder whether there is any significance to the male gender of either Adam or of Christ. Could Adam, *qua* head of the race, been a woman? This seems like an odd question, does it not, since Adam had a wife, who clearly might instead have been seen as the head of the human race — after all, she sinned first! But, since it was Adam, not the woman, who Paul points to here, and since Adam was male, is it best to eliminate the male term in reference to him? And so of Christ. Is it best to drop out of view the male gender of Christ, the second Adam? Again, a reader of the TNIV might wonder, from this verse, whether it matters that Jesus came as a male Messiah. Could our Savior have been, instead, a woman?

Consider one more reference, this being 1 Timothy 2:5:

NIV: For there is one God and one mediator between God and **men**, the **man** Christ Jesus.

TNIV: For there is one God and one mediator between God and **human beings**, Christ Jesus, **himself human**.

It should be acknowledged at the outset here, that the dynamic equivalent translation insertion of the pronoun "himself" of Christ Jesus helps in retaining a sense of the male identity of Jesus, the Christ. Still, instead of indicating of Christ, the mediator, that he is a man, who would obviously also be understood as human (as in the NIV), here Christ is generically and explicitly human, whose human nature comes in the form of a male human, as implied by the insertion of "himself" (TNIV). Again, though, we wonder whether it is merely accidental (in the Aristotelian meaning, as non-essential) and not necessary that Christ was in fact a male human being. If it is the "human" identity of Jesus alone that matters in his being our mediator, then might the question arise, Could our Savior, then, have been a woman?

What significance is attached to the historical fact that the incarnate Son of God, the eternal Word who took on human flesh, came into this world as a man (i.e., as a male human being)? Does Scripture give us reason to think that his



male gender does or does not have theological and soteriological importance? Is it necessary that the Savior who would come be born, live, and die as a man, or could our Savior have been a woman?

## Theological Necessity of the Male Gender of our Savior

Consider with me a number of reasons (twelve, to be exact) for concluding that the male gender of Jesus was essential both to the reality of his incarnational identity and to the accomplishment of his incarnational mission.

First and most basic, Jesus Christ's pre-incarnate existence and identity is clearly revealed to be that of the *eternal Son* of the Father. As Jesus says in John 6:37-38, "All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. I have *come down from heaven*, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me,"<sup>6</sup> i.e., the will of his Father in heaven. And in John 6:44 Jesus continues, "No one can come to me unless the *Father who sent me* draws him . . ." Clearly, Jesus understands that he has come down from heaven, that he has been sent to earth to fulfill the mission for which he was sent, and that it is the Father (in heaven) who sent the Son (from heaven to earth) to do this work. As Augustine has put this point,

For the Son is from the Father, not the Father from the Son. In the light of this we can now perceive that the Son is not just said to have been sent because the Word became flesh, but that *he was sent in order for the Word to become flesh*, and by this bodily presence to do all that was written. That is, we should understand that it was not just the man who the Word became that was sent, but that *the Word was sent to become man*. For he was not sent in virtue of some disparity of power or substance or anything in him that was not equal to the Father, but in virtue of the Son being from the Father, not the Father being from the Son.<sup>7</sup>

The Son, then, is the eternal Son of the Father; and the Father is the eternal Father of the Son. This relationship stands apart from the created order and the incarnation itself, while it is also true that this relationship accounts, in part, for the created order (i.e., the Father creates through the Son, e.g., Col 1:12-16) and the incarnation (i.e., the Word of John's prologue displays the "glory of the Father," e.g., John 1:14).

Now, as it is true that God is not in essence male, so also is it true that neither the eternal Father nor the eternal Son is male; neither the divine essence, nor the eternal Persons of the God-head are gendered, literally and really. So, why is the First Person of the Trinity the eternal "Father," and the Second

Person, the eternal "Son"? Must this not be the language God has chosen to indicate the type of eternal relationship that exists between the first and second Persons? If the "Son" is sent by the "Father," and if the "Son" comes to do the will of the "Father," does it not stand to reason that God wishes by this language to indicate something of the authority and submission that exists within the relationships of the members of the immanent trinity? Furthermore, while that point alone (i.e., of authority and submission) might have been communicated with "Mother" and "Daughter," the choice for "Father" and "Son" also indicates something of the "Father's" role over all of creation, and the "Son's" role in creation and, more particularly, in the incarnational mission. The First Person of the Godhead chooses to name himself "Father" (and not "Mother") to indicate the respect and honor that is due him, as he anticipates in the created order the role that he will give to earthly fathers as the leaders or the heads of their homes (e.g., Mal 1:6; cf. Jer 49:13, 18; Ezek 35:9; and Obad 10). Likewise, he gives to the Second Person who stands under his authority the name of "Son," both as the appropriate name in relation to him as eternal "Father," but also as most appropriate in depicting the "Son" who will come to save, and then be the Groom-Head over his bride, the Church (e.g., Eph 5:22-33; Rev 19:7; 21:2, 9). That Christ, then, in his pre-incarnate state is the eternal Son of the eternal Father stands as strong theological basis for believing that the incarnate One, viz., the human nature that is conjoined but not confused with the divine nature of the Second Person of the Trinity, must, then, himself be a male human being. The eternal "Son" must be joined with a human son (and *not* daughter), so that the incarnate Christ may express to the world both his relation to the Father, i.e., as the Son of the Father, and his relation to the Church, i.e., as the Savior, Lord, Head, and Groom of the Church.

It seems altogether misguided, then, to suggest, as does Mimi Haddad, President of Christians for Biblical Equality (CBE) that had God sent the second Person of the Trinity to a matriarchal culture, Christ might have come as a woman. At a conference recently, Haddad commented:

[W]hat if God decided to send Messiah to a matriarchal culture? Would then our Messiah come as a female? Would that be possible? Would that do violence to Messiah and the role of Messiah? . . . Because of the fall, the way gender seemed to go after sin entered the world where power went more or less to the masculine branch of image bearers, because there was that power brokering on the behalf of male gender, I think then you ended up with patriarchal cultures and Christ came as male. . . .<sup>8</sup>

Three brief comments are in order. 1) Is it reasonable to look at the way God made man and woman respectively, and conclude from this that women might just as well have been

the power brokers throughout the cultures of the world? Clearly, God made men stronger and bigger, as a gender, and he made women able to give birth to, feed, and nurture children. By these fundamental God-designed differences, shall we think that God considered that the dominant “power” of the sexes might have gone the other way? 2) Apart from her interpretation of what happened in the fall, this does not change the fact that the Second Person of the Trinity was eternally under the authority of the First Person, and this is true regardless of what you call them. Authority and submission inhere in the Trinity itself, and this same authority and submission relationship is reflected in the created order. So, if God chooses to invest in males a kind of headship (i.e., authority) in the community of faith and in the home, then God will declare his own identity to us in ways fitting that design. He will choose masculine terminology as his self-descriptors, because a fundamental patriarchalism (i.e., male headship) was by his own design. What we see, then, from Haddad’s comment is the connection between rejecting male-headship as part of the created design of God for the human race, and the natural extension of then questioning the legitimacy of masculine God-language generally, and along with this questioning the necessity of the male identity of the Messiah, in particular. 3) How troubling, I would think, for Haddad’s egalitarianism for God to choose to accommodate himself to *sinful patriarchalism* (as she sees it), or, if women had taken power after the fall, to *sinful matriarchalism*, by sending the Savior in the gender of the *illicit power grabbing gender*. Might we not expect an egalitarian God, rather, to send the Savior in the gender of weakness to overcome this illicit power and to demonstrate the hierarchy to be sinful and wrong? So to repeat the main point again, Jesus Christ’s pre-incarnate existence and identity is clearly revealed to be that of the *eternal Son* of the Father, and so his becoming incarnate was only appropriate in the form of a man.

Second, our Savior must have been a man, since he came as the Second Adam, the Man who stands as Head over his new and redeemed race. It is remarkable, as noted above, that although the woman sinned first in the garden (Gen 3:6), God went first to the man (Gen 3:9), and clearly he holds the man primarily responsible for the sin of the human race (Rom 5:12-19; 1 Cor 15:21-22). Notice particularly in Rom 5:12-21 the emphasis on “*one man’s trespass*” (5:15), “*one man’s sin*” and “*one trespass*” (5:16), “*one man’s trespass*” and “*one man*” (5:17), “*one trespass*” (5:18), and “*one man’s disobedience*” (5:19). The woman is conspicuously absent from the discussion. Although she sinned first, God created man as the responsible leader in this relationship (cf. 1 Cor 11:7-9; 1 Tim 2:13-15), and God holds him morally culpable for the sin, by his “one” act of disobedience, that spreads to the whole human race (Rom 5:12).

And so, the logic of 1 Cor 15:21-22 is clear. As Adam was head over his race, bringing it bondage and death, so now

Christ is head over his race, bringing it liberation and resurrection life. In light of the background of the sin in the garden, where God holds the first Adam (*qua* male) in particular responsible for sin, it is clear now that Christ the second Adam (yes, *male* human being, as Adam was the male human of the pair in the garden) brings reclamation and restoration to what the first Adam had destroyed. So it is that by a *man* came death, and by a *man* has come also the resurrection of the dead. Yes, both first and second Adams are *human*. But also essential to a proper biblical understanding is that both are *male* human beings, not female.

Third, the Abrahamic covenant requires that the Savior who would come, as the promised descendant of Abraham, would be a man. Admittedly, it is not clear from the original covenant, given to Abraham in Genesis 12, that the fulfillment would come through Abraham’s male, and not female, offspring. No gender specificity is indicated; rather, all we read is that God would make of Abraham a great nation, and that through him all the families of the earth would be blessed (Gen 12:2-3). Likewise, the repetition of the covenant in Genesis 15 lacks gender specificity,<sup>9</sup> continuing the same language of Genesis 12 of “offspring” who will come from Abraham numbering as many as the stars (Gen 15:3-5). Granted, one might conjecture that the promise to Abraham would be fulfilled through a son, not a daughter, since God has already established a pattern of highlighting the male line (e.g., Adam, Noah, now Abraham), and since Abraham himself proposed Eliezer of Damascus (a male) as the promised heir. Nonetheless, no specific gender reference is yet given.

The repetition of the covenant in Genesis 17, however, makes clear that it is a son, and a son born to Abraham and Sarah in their old age, who will be the promised heir, the one through whom God’s covenant pledge will begin to be fulfilled. That Sarah (not Hagar) would be the mother of the son of promise, God specifies in Gen 17:16, “I will bless her [Sarah], and moreover, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.” Sarah was the chosen instrument through whom the son of promise would come, and through her son, kings (male leaders of nations) would then arise. When Abraham protests God’s stated plan, owing to Sarah’s advanced age, and so pleads with God to accept Ishmael, God again repeats the promise and plan, “God said, ‘No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him’” (Gen 17:19).

As the genealogies of Jesus Christ in Matthew 1 and Luke 3 indicate, the Abrahamic covenant was fulfilled through the succession of sons born from Abraham down to Jesus himself. And surely Paul echoes this same understanding in Galatians 3 when he speaks of the “offspring,” not “offsprings” of Abraham, who is none other than Christ (Gal 3:16). As Paul

summarizes this point, “in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith” (Gal 3:14). And so it is clear that both in the giving of the Abrahamic covenant and in its fulfillment in Christ, it is essential that the one who come as the ultimate promised heir (the singular “offspring,” as Paul indicates) would be born in the line of Abraham, and this one must be a “son” of Abraham, i.e., a male offspring.

Fourth, the Davidic covenant explicitly requires that the One who will reign forever on the throne of David be a Son of David. God’s promise to David recorded in 2 Samuel 7:12-13 reads: “When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.” Here there is no ambiguity; the promised heir of the throne of David, who will one day reign forever, will be a son of David, i.e., a male descendent who will be king on David’s throne.

Both Ezekiel 34:23-24 and 37:24-28 indicate the ongoing longing and expectation that “David” (i.e., a Son of David fulfilling the Davidic covenant) will come as Israel’s king and reign over a land of peace and righteousness. And again here, as with the Abrahamic covenant, the genealogies of Matthew 1 and Luke 3 indicate a line of sons leading from David down to the birth of Jesus Christ. The angel Gabriel made clear to Mary, that her son, Jesus, would be this long awaited “David,” establishing his throne forever, for he tells Mary, “And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end” (Luke 1:31-33). Clearly here also, then, we see that the Savior to come, the long-awaited Son of David, must be a male offspring from David himself.

Fifth, the new covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34 requires that the Savior who comes will actually accomplish the forgiveness of sins it promises, and to do this, the Savior must be male. Jeremiah 31:34 gives, as the basis of its promise of a new covenant with the house of Israel and house of Judah, this pledge, “For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” But one must inquire how Israel’s sin will be removed forever and for all of God’s people. Anticipating the argument from Hebrews, that the sacrifice of bulls and goats cannot actually and efficaciously take away sin, how then would God lead his people to think that this forgiveness, in such a full and final way, can occur? Surely, the answer is found in the Suffering Servant that Isaiah presents, who would bear our griefs and sorrows and have laid on him the iniquity of us all (Isa 53:4-6). But clearly, this One who will “make an offering for sin” (53:10) and bear “the sin of many” (53:12) is

none other than “man of sorrows” who is despised and rejected by others (53:3). The One who will provide the basis for the realization of new covenant forgiveness is this man.

Luke’s account of the last supper of Jesus with his disciples confirms this understanding. Here, Jesus, the man of sorrows (the anguish of Gethsemane was just hours away), took the cup and handed it to his disciples, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood” (Luke 22:21; cf. 1 Cor 11:25). And so we see, this man Jesus, by his broken body and shed blood, is the One through whom the new covenant is inaugurated and its promised forgiveness realized. Our Savior, then, must be this man of sorrows.

Sixth, the Savior who would come must come as prophet like unto Moses, as predicted by Moses and fulfilled in Jesus Christ. In Deuteronomy 18:15, Moses declares, “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen.” Clearly, then, this One who comes as a prophet like Moses must be male. Even though some of Israel’s prophetic voices were female, most were male, yet this prophet, the One like unto Moses, must be a man.

The apostle Peter understands this promise from the Lord through Moses to be fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Speaking in Solomon’s portico shortly after the healing of a lame beggar, Peter accounts for this miracle by appeal to the power of Christ, experienced by faith in him. And Christ, says Peter, is the One spoken of by the mouth of the holy prophets, for “Moses said,” explains Peter, “‘The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you’” (Acts 3:22). The prophet like unto Moses, then, promised by Moses himself and fulfilled in Christ, must have been a man.

Seventh, our new and permanent High Priest, whose office is secured as sins are atoned for and full pardon is pleaded on our behalf before the Father, must be a man. While there were some prophetesses (i.e., female prophets) in Israel, there simply were no female priests. Aaron and his sons, not daughters, were the priests of Israel. And so, one would expect that the final and permanent High Priest, who makes atonement once for all, would be a man. And so it is.

The High Priest, Jesus, however, comes not in the Aaronic or Levitical line of priests but in the order of Melchizedek, explains Hebrews. And, as chapter 7 of Hebrews ends its argument, it is made explicit that this Priest is the Son spoken of in chapter one. Concerning Christ, we read: “He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself. For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who

has been made perfect forever” (Heb 7:27-28). The Son, then, is our eternal High Priest, who pleads his own offering for sin done once for all. Our Savior, then, as High and Eternal Priest, must have been a man.

Eighth, not only did our Savior come as the last and greatest prophet, like unto Moses, and as the High and Eternal Priest, but he came also as the glorious King of Kings, reigning over the nations in splendor and righteousness. But, if our Savior is to be King, he must come as a man.

Isaiah 9:6-7 records familiar words about the prophesied coming of this King, “For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonder Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.” From this text alone it is clear that this King will be male. He is the “son” given, and he is called “Everlasting Father” and “Prince of Peace.” He sits on the “throne of David” where he reigns forevermore.

Consider also Hebrews’ use of Psalm 45:6-7 in announcing Christ’s reign as king, “But of the Son he says, ‘Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom’” (Heb 1:8). Clearly, this King, as God’s Son, is male. And Jesus himself surely did not try to disabuse his disciples of thinking of him in kingly ways; just the opposite, he announced “the kingdom of heaven” as attached to his coming (Matt 4:17) and proclaimed himself as ruler of a future kingly realm: “Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel’” (Matt 19:28). And, in response to the question at his trial, “are you the Christ, the Son of God?” Jesus replied, “You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven” (Matt 26:64). Finally, the “King of kings and Lord of lords” who comes on the white horse, with eyes like a flame of fire and a sword coming from his mouth, conquers and reigns as King over all that stands against God (Rev 19:11-21). Clearly, the Savior who comes as King comes only and necessarily as a man.

Ninth, the incarnate mission and ministry of Jesus required that he come as a man. Yes, Jesus was the great and final Prophet (cf. Heb 1:1), Priest (Heb 7-10), and King (Luke 1:32-33; Col 1:13), and for all these reasons he must have come as a man. But furthermore, the very ministry Jesus conducted, calling out twelve male disciples, travelling with them over years of itinerant ministry, presenting himself broadly as a teacher of Israel, and challenging the religious

leaders of the day, required that he be a man. It simply is inconceivable that, given the type of ministry the Father led his Son to perform, that this could have been accomplished were the incarnate Savior, instead, a woman.

While this point is true, it could be used wrongly, in my judgment. Upon considering this point (viz., that the ministry and mission of Jesus could not have been conducted in Israel as it was were the incarnate one a woman), some might wish to conclude that this, ultimately, is *the reason* Jesus came as a man. After all, the social conditions were such that a woman as rabbi of Israel, rebuking the Pharisees, leading the disciples, etc., would have been fully unacceptable. Therefore, some might say, for these social and pragmatic reasons *only*, Jesus had to be a man.

Allow me three brief replies. 1) We have already considered eight previous reasons that the Savior who would come must be male and three reasons yet follow. Clearly, this is not the only (nor by any means the most important) reason our Savior had to be a man. 2) Is it reasonable to think that God would shrink back from challenging the socially unacceptable if he judged this would be best to do? Are we to think that the social conditions of Israel dictated to God the design and plan of the very incarnation itself? And 3) while it is true that those in Israel would expect, for example, the teacher of Israel to be a man, just why did they think this way? Was not the patriarchal system of Israel commanded by God himself? Was not the lineage of leadership in Israel established by God as being through sons in the line of David? Therefore, it seems entirely false to conclude that God’s hand was somehow forced or even twisted by a culture’s patriarchal mindset of which he fundamentally disapproved. Rather, God designed male leadership and sent his Son as a man, functioning and ministering within the very overall patriarchal structure God himself established. Therefore, for social and cultural reasons, many of which were themselves established by God, our Savior had to be a man.

Tenth, the Savior to come must have been a man, because the risen Christ is now presented to the Church, not only as her Lord and King, but also as her Bridegroom. And, of course, in so doing, this echoes Yahweh’s relationship to Israel. As the prophecy of Hosea illustrates beautifully, God intends his people to understand their relationship to him as that of a wife to her husband. Idolatry is depicted as adultery. And so God, as husband, requires fidelity and loyalty to him alone.

Similarly, the Church is portrayed as the bride of Christ. The Revelation of Jesus Christ to John ends with several depictions of the Church as the “bride” or “wife” of the Lamb (Rev 18:23; 19:7; 21:2, 9; 22:17), and it is clear that by these, we are to understand Christ as the protector and purifier, while the Church gives herself fully to him in obedience and love. All this depicts what marriage itself has meant from the beginning, according to Paul in Ephesians 5 (cf. 2 Cor 11:2). When a wife



submits to her husband as the church submits to Christ, and when a husband loves his wife as Christ loves the Church, both reflect the two sides of the relationship of the Church and Christ. Oh, what harm the false teaching of mutual submission in marriage produces. The parallel between a husband and his wife, with Christ and the Church, simply will not allow the symmetrical kind of authority advocated by the voices favoring mutual submission. As Lord, King, Head, and Husband, Christ is fully and solely in charge over the Church. As he made clear to us, we show our love for him when we do his commandments (John 14:15; 15:21, 23). There simply can be no mutual submission in terms of lines of authority between Christ and the Church, lest we dishonor Christ's Headship and rightful Lordship over us. So too, the marriage relationship sees the husband in the role of Christ, and the wife in the role of the Church; authority is exercised from the former, submission by the latter. From this analogy, then, it is clear, that the Savior who would come to become the Bridegroom of the Church must have been a man.

Eleventh, it is necessary that our Savior be a man if he is to come as the "Son of God." As we noted in our first point above, Jesus' role as "Son" indicates both his eternal relationship as pre-incarnate and eternal Son of the eternal Father, and as the incarnate One whose very life is brought about miraculously as he is born of a virgin. In answer to Mary's question, how she could bear this son, being a virgin, the angel tells Mary, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). The eternal Son of the Father takes on human flesh by the power of the Most High, so the eternal Son now is born as the Son of God. It simply is inconceivable that this Savior could be born a woman. His Sonship in eternity is matched by Sonship in the incarnation, meaning that Jesus, our Savior, must be born as a son (i.e., male).

Twelfth and last, it is necessary that our Savior be a man if he is to come as the "Son of Man." Jesus' preferred self-designation, clearly, was "Son of Man." This term occurs 84 times in the Gospels, every one of which is from the lips of Jesus himself, and nowhere do we find another naming him "Son of Man." His identity was wrapped up, in many ways, with the meaning of this term. And, without question, Jesus understood the background of this term in Daniel 7:13-14, for he refers to this OT text as true of himself in Matthew 24:30; 25:31; and 26:64. The Son of Man who is presented before the Ancient of Days and is given "dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him" (Dan 7:14); and this is none other than Jesus himself. And Jesus, knowing this incredible truth, amazes us even further when he uses "Son of Man" in other situations, as when he said, "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). Here, the royal and glorious Son of Man comes in humility and

servitude, but he does so also knowing the day will come when his dominion will be exercised over all the earth (Matt 26:64). So, both as the Son of Man who serves and suffers and as the Son of Man who rules and reigns, Jesus, the Son of Man, must have come to be our Savior as a man.

## Conclusion

So, here they are, twelve reasons why our Savior could not have been a woman and must have been a man:

1. Jesus Christ's pre-incarnate existence and identity is clearly revealed to be that of the *eternal Son* of the Father.
2. Jesus came as the Second Adam, the Man who stands as Head over his new and redeemed race.
3. The Abrahamic covenant requires that the Savior who would come, as the promised descendant of Abraham, would be a man.
4. The Davidic covenant (2 Samuel 7) explicitly requires that the One who will reign forever on the throne of David be a Son of David, and hence a man.
5. The new covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34 requires that the Savior who comes will actually accomplish the forgiveness of sins it promises, and to do this, the Savior must be a man.
6. The Savior who would come must come as prophet like unto Moses, as predicted by Moses and fulfilled in Jesus Christ, and so he must be a man.
7. Our new and permanent High Priest, whose office is secured as sins are atoned for and full pardon is pleaded on our behalf before the Father, must be a man.
8. Christ came also as the glorious King of Kings, reigning over the nations in splendor and righteousness, and to be this King, he must be a man.
9. The incarnate mission and ministry of Jesus required that he come as a man.
10. Because the risen Christ is now presented to the Church, not only as her Lord and King, but also as her Bridegroom, the Savior to come must have been a man.
11. Because our Savior came as the "Son of God" it is necessary that he come as a man.
12. Because our Savior came as the "Son of Man" it is necessary that he come as a man.

What implications follow from this evidence of the necessity of our Savior being, not a woman, but a man? Consider these three points in closing.

First, it is good for both men and women that our Savior came, not as a woman, but as a man. Redeemed women, as well as men, must acknowledge that their Savior was deliberately and intentionally, by God's wise plan and design, a

man not a woman. In our day, with its love affair with egalitarianism of many kinds, it may be more appealing for some to consider their Savior in generic human terms and remove from their consciousness, or at least from categories of theological significance, the fact that Jesus Christ of Nazareth was male. Perhaps his being male had as much significance as the fact that in all likelihood he also had dark eyes. In other words, while this may be true, of what importance is the observation? Now it should be clear that Jesus' being male was in fact theologically, Christologically, and soteriologically significant, despite what others have asserted. For reasons ranging from the nature of the Trinity itself, to his role as the second Adam, the seed of Abraham, the Son of David, the Son of Man, and the Son of God, Jesus simply had to be a man. And since his being male was by theological necessity, we should assent to it being good for all of us, men and women alike, that he was in fact a man.

If some Christian women (or men) find this difficult to accept, I recommend two considerations. 1) Consider that this is God's eternal plan, devised in infinite wisdom for the well-being of those whom Christ has come to redeem. Knowing God's character as we do, or at least as we should, can we be at peace in our hearts and accept as good what God says is good? 2) Consider that redeemed men are hereby placed in a somewhat awkward position by this same truth, in that they must understand their own identities as comprising part of the *Bride* of Christ. How difficult it is for men to think of themselves as a Bride! But, again, as we understand what this means (e.g., 2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:25-27), we see how good it is that Christ, the Bridegroom, has called us – men and women alike – to be his Bride, to care and provide for, to purify and perfect, this one who is the object of his tender and everlasting love. In short, it is good for men and women that our Savior came, not as a woman, but as a man.

Second, Jesus' male identity underscores the male-headship that God built into human relationships. How can we miss something so obvious as this: Jesus' role as King over Israel, Lord of the Church, Bridegroom and Husband for his Bride, the Church – these all indicate the roles of male-headship attaching to his being a man, not a woman. To put the point differently, how are we to maintain an egalitarian view of male-female relationships and maintain the theological necessity of Christ's coming, not as a woman but as a man? On the one hand, to *deny* the theological necessity of Christ's male identity would be unimaginably destructive to biblical theology and undermining of the very atoning work by which we are saved. But, on the other hand, to *affirm* the theological necessity of Christ's male identity entails an undergirding of male headship. So, how shall egalitarians give an accounting of their understanding of Christ's male identity and their own egalitarian commitments?

Third, women need not fear that since Christ did not

come as a woman he cannot understand them, because in coming as a man, he came as a human being and so understands the human natures common to men and women alike. Much – perhaps too much – is made today of differences between men and women, and I don't deny that much of this discussion is true. However, we must never forget the common human identity we all share, and with that, the common kinds of fears, hopes, longings, aspirations, anxieties, weaknesses, limitations, etc. that we share as human beings. Christ the man shared our (common) human nature, so that men and women alike can have full confidence that he understands our plight (e.g., Heb 2:18; 4:15-16). So, while Scripture clearly indicates Christ came as a man, and while our translations must continue to render accurately the masculine references to Christ everywhere these are found, we also realize that his coming as a man was therefore also as a human. As a man, he partook of our nature to live a human life and bear our sins. Christ the man, yes. But, Christ in the human nature of every man and woman, also, yes. ■■

<sup>1</sup> Victor R. Gold, Thomas L. Hoyt, Jr., Sharon H. Ringe, Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite, Burton H. Throckmorton, Jr., and Barbara A. Withers, eds., *The New Testament and Psalms: An Inclusive Version* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, xvii.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, xiii (emphasis in original).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, xvii-xviii (emphasis in original).

<sup>5</sup> I agree with Wayne Grudem's comment on this text: "Did Jesus have to become like his sisters 'in every way' in order to become a 'high priest in service to God'? All the Old Testament priests were men, and surely the high priest was a man. This text does not quite proclaim an androgynous Jesus (who was both male and female), but it surely leaves open a wide door for misunderstanding, and almost invites misunderstanding" ("A Brief Summary of Concerns About the TNIV," *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 7.2 [Fall 2002] 7).

<sup>6</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all citations are from the English Standard Version. Emphases are added.

<sup>7</sup> St. Augustine, *The Trinity*, trans. Edmund Hill, vol. 5 of *The Works of St. Augustine* (Brooklyn, NY: New City Press, 1991) IV. 27 (italics added).

<sup>8</sup> Mimi Haddad, as transcribed from the tape of a talk she gave, October 16, 2002 at a Soularize Conference in Minneapolis, MN.

<sup>9</sup> The ESV translation of Gen 15:4, "... your very own son shall be your heir," anticipates the promise to Abraham from Genesis 17, for Gen 15:4 literally is, "one from your own loins."

# Sarah Sumner's *Men and Women in the Church:* A Review Article<sup>1</sup>

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*Men and Women in the Church* by Sarah Sumner, associate professor of ministry and theology at Azusa Pacific University, unfolds as the journey of a woman tracing a dream from her earliest childhood. Her purpose in writing this book is to attempt to present the positions of complementarianism and egalitarianism and point out her perceived inconsistencies with each in order to bring some clarity to the subject of men and women's roles in the church. Unfortunately, Sumner's work brings more confusion than clarity.

Sumner's first chapter gives the reader a look at her presuppositions. On one hand, every genuine evangelical can heartily affirm some of these:

- She values her relationship with God as the center of life (13).
- She believes that she holds a high view of Scripture.
- She loves and honors her parents (14).
- She sees the importance of laity in the work of the kingdom (15).

On the other hand, there are a number of concerns regarding her theological and hermeneutical methods, since Sumner seems to make decisions and affirm positions using guidelines gleaned with the underlying priority of experience, which has frequently characterized biblical interpretation within egalitarianism:

- Sumner was energized by her discovery that a woman is teaching the Bible to "people" and another woman is planting churches (15). Immediately Sumner seems drawn to what these women were doing with success. Obviously to affirm a task because others are doing it, and even if doing it with success, is a jump from the moorings of biblical principles to the whims of personal experiences.
- As a fourth-grade girl, Sumner copied sermons to be delivered by her layman father "three or four" times. This task felt "natural" to Sumner (15) and thus seemed to be for her a catalyst drawing her to a ministry of preaching—again experience over biblical mandate.
- Sumner, as a child, caricatured her pastor's wife and expressed her own distaste for "planning skating parties and potluck dinners." Her "heart's desire was to do something more [than planning for skating parties and potluck dinners], but I didn't know how to picture a woman doing more" (16).
- Sumner embraces role models for what they do rather than who they are (16).<sup>2</sup>
- Sumner seems comfortable in sanctifying a task—whatever it may be—with seemingly whatever credibility is necessary regardless of the compromises involved (16, 18).

Despite her stated goal of bringing complementarians and egalitarians together, I fear Sumner's account of her spiritual journey is yet another volume that projects confusion rather than clarity into the ongoing gender debate among evangelicals. While purporting to have found the bridge to bring two opposite views into harmony, she comes down squarely on one side with some *Sumnertarian* touches of innovative and novel interpretations of Scripture. I would be surprised to find egalitarians (whether "biblical" or "evangelical" feminists) who would directly contradict Sumner's interpretations, but I find even fewer positions with which I as a complementarian am comfortable.

## Egalitarianism vs. Complementarianism *per Sumner*

Egalitarians would be pleased that Sumner represents their position with Rebecca Groothuis, but complementarians might be surprised that Sumner was not able to name a woman who is speaking and writing from a complementarian perspective as her parallel example (since there are a number of female complementarians whose credentials would match those of Rebecca Groothuis or her husband Doug). One might conclude that Sumner wanted to see egalitarianism as pro-female, with the corresponding impression that complementarianism excludes women.

Egalitarians would be pleased to see Rebecca Groothuis identified as a "strict inerrantist"; whereas complementarians might be wondering why Wayne Grudem is described merely as one who "upholds the doctrine of inerrancy in the sense that he believes all Scripture is authoritative and true and inerrant in the original manuscripts" (37). Egalitarians would be delighted to see testimony that "conservative Christian scholars" are members of Christians for Biblical Equality and that they "have a [sic] built a biblical case for women in leadership" (38).

On the other hand, as a complementarian and a Southern Baptist I read with interest that Wayne Grudem and John Piper "copioneered" and "cofounded" the Council for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, as if CBMW had been established as a "male" organization. Grudem and Piper did "coedit" the Council's initial publication, which contained essays from three women, and have been very much a part of this organization as have some women, including this reviewer. I note in the minutes for a 1987 meeting of CBMW that the chairman for the founding council was Dr. Wayne House.

In an early draft of a chapter of this manuscript sent to me by Sumner, she casually throws in the statement, "The leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention are also complementarian." In this published copy she revised her statement as "Though Piper and Grudem have been extremely influential in Southern Baptist circles, neither of them is Southern Baptist" (38). At the time

CBMW was founded, I was the only Southern Baptist on the Council, but that information doesn't support Sumner's picture. As an aside, I, and countless other female and male complementarians, can make a biblical case for and do support women in leadership. We also accept the simple biblical boundaries defining that leadership.

Sumner even assigns to complementarian professors the view of "limited roles for women in church leadership." Why not be explicit and say they believe that women should not "teach men or have authority over men" in the church (1 Tim 2:12), the words of Scripture and a clear statement of the complementarian position.

Sumner's use of egalitarian sources, such as the article by Bruce Waltke, underscores the fact that her volume is positioned as an egalitarian work despite the author's stated efforts to the contrary. While this review does not allow interaction with Waltke's article, one cannot help but note that Waltke takes a great leap in his discussion when he suggests that the woman of Proverbs 31 moves to a business of property acquisition and agricultural enterprises as a result of spinning her own thread (86)!

Sumner wants to distance herself from egalitarianism, but she is a perfect fit. For example, she goes into a lengthy litany of many ways women are valued in the kingdom of Christ but then declares her problem as one of limiting the use of the spiritual gifts of women in the presence of the full congregation. For one committed to biblical authority (as opposed to "spiritual" authority), the course is clear. The congregation is important, but ultimately what enables you to distinguish between those who get it right and those who get it wrong is Scripture. What does Scripture say?

Scripture is preserved from contradiction within its content because the Holy Spirit inspired its words, which means it is inerrant or without error. Jesus promised the illuminating ministry of the Holy Spirit to those believers who sought truth (John 14:26; 15:13). Scripture then is sufficient to lead you the right way.

The process of careful inspiration, if it means anything, affirms that interpreters cannot support two contradictory interpretations from the same Bible. Egalitarianism and complementarianism are not the same; in fact they are not compatible. Even one who embraces *Sumnertarianism* must choose to embrace egalitarianism or complementarianism; she cannot open her heart to a combination of both views. And limitations should not be surprising, for there was limitation even in the perfect Garden of Eden (Gen 1:16-17). Aristotle's law of noncontradiction and of the excluded middle applies here, and Sumner needs to observe these basic principles of both logic and clear communication.



Finally, egalitarians may be disappointed that Sumner said, “I am not a member of CBE” (38), but I can assure you that I, and perhaps some other complementarians, am disappointed that she does not also state clearly, “I am not a member of Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood.” Of course, Sumner would not endorse the CBMW confessional statement, while espousing the views expressed in this volume.

Sumner consistently puts complementarianism in a bad light. Even in allusions to church history, she is guilty of using an anachronistic pen that colors the limited vignettes she presents in such a way as to support her positions. For example, she criticizes Tertullian for his caution to women against learning with “over-boldness” (42). Sumner quotes Tertullian as saying, “For how credible would it seem, that he who has not permitted a woman even to learn with over-boldness, should give a female the power of teaching and of baptizing!” (41-42).

What does “over-boldness” actually mean? The Oxford Dictionary defines “boldness” as meaning “presumptuous, forward, and immodest,” and the use of “over” would intensify these qualities. In fact, “over” would at least suggest more than is necessary. But Sumner presents Tertullian’s admonition as being a prohibition for women to learn with “zeal” (defined in Oxford’s dictionary as “heartily and persistent endeavor”)—quite a different connotation. Her twisting of words and casuistry seems to give the reader a completely different view of Tertullian’s statement.

## Endorsements of Integrity or Entitlements of Expedience

Sumner has introduced a new and innovative use of endorsements (a concept defined in most dictionaries as “confirmation or ratification or approving testimony”).<sup>3</sup> If Sumner had used the names of the myriad of complementarian professors she mentioned to endorse herself as a bright and capable woman pursuing theology, I could be impressed; and I would imagine that those who affirmed her enthusiasm and interest in theological studies would be honored to use any means to encourage Sumner to pursue excellence in theological studies. However, for Sumner and IVP to place endorsements from prominent complementarians on the backcover of a volume affirming views diametrically the antithesis of the positions these men have clearly written in their own published works, in my opinion, goes beyond chutzpah.

Some may erroneously assume that these gracious statements and the good names of these complementarian scholars affirm Sumner’s conclusions. In my opinion, that would be a mistake. At the very least this exogenous use of a professor’s encouragement to a promising student should not be allowed to tear down the principles and truths to which the

professor is committed. One can encourage research and affirm a project without agreeing with the conclusions. I would encourage serious readers to look at what men like Harold O. J. Brown and Carl F. H. Henry have written with their own pens rather than relying on any natural assumptions that their endorsements extend to the authenticity of Sumner’s conclusions.

Sumner, in my view, has used people inappropriately, especially the distinguished theologian Carl F. H. Henry. Sumner’s use of private conversations with Henry without his verification is disappointing. Does Sumner remember conversations happening a decade ago in great detail? Did she record the conversations? Has she used these conversations with recent permission from Dr. Henry, familiarizing him with the full context in which his words, as she remembered them, are used? It is inappropriate to insinuate that this great theologian would contradict himself or reverse himself (presumably because of his great confidence in Sarah Sumner). Do readers believe Henry’s opposition is only to abortion, lesbianism, and goddess worship? Letters from Henry to Sumner may exist; lists may exist—although both, per Sumner’s recollection, seems to contain words in contradiction to what Henry has believed and taught and written (51). However, respect ought to demand publication of primary documentation *with* Henry’s permission. At the very least Sumner should acknowledge that the gracious encouragement of a gentlemanly theologian for a woman to excel in study is quite different from his approval of her position—especially when he himself has written to the contrary.

No one would identify Carl Henry as an egalitarian. Nor would I or anyone acquainted with Henry and his theological positions dare to suggest that he would affirm or endorse two contradictory positions. *Sumnertarianism* is certainly the antithesis of the complementarianism espoused by Henry over the years:

Paul declares the sexes equal in their relation to God (Gal 3:28). Women, he teaches, are to be subject not to men in general but to their own husbands in particular (Eph 5:22); this subjection, moreover, he considers to be voluntary and “as unto the Lord.”<sup>4</sup>

Any implication moreover that Paul’s ethical admonitions concerning women had their basis only in culture-relative considerations is patently false.<sup>5</sup>

I have friendships with many egalitarians; some have spoken to me about my work in affirming ways. However, I do not feel comfortable in voicing these affirmations in public ways that might appear to lend the support of these egalitarians to my positions. Such would be inappropriate for me and could be embarrassing for them (20-21).

## Misunderstanding Baptists

Sumner's references to denominations sometimes border on irresponsibility. For example, what "conservative Baptist church" is asking her to preach? Which body of "Baptists" is she identifying? How is she defining "conservative" (21)?

Sumner accuses Southern Baptists of "practical egalitarianism" as opposed to public complementarianism because they, i.e., the denomination, "invited two women to participate at the decision-making table to help determine the future of their entire denomination." Here she refers to the appointment of Mary Mohler and me to the committee appointed to add an article on the family to the Baptist Faith and Message, the doctrinal statement of the Southern Baptist Convention. Such a rash and unsubstantiated statement reveals Sumner's lack of understanding of Baptist church polity as well as her ignorance of how women functioned in their service on the Baptist Faith and Message committee.

First, regarding Baptist polity, it is widely accepted that Baptist confessions have not been determined by small groups of men and women. Committees do research, make proposals, and answer questions; but the official adoption of all Southern Baptist confessional statements has been done by the *body* of messengers from member churches in annual assembly.

Mary Mohler and I were asked to serve on the aforementioned Baptist Faith and Message committee. We were not surprised that women were asked to serve on a committee studying what the Bible teaches about the home and family (199-200). Neither of us would have accepted an assignment to teach men or rule over men, but we were honored to assist in the research and discussion as well as in the drafting of a proposed article for the convention on such an important topic.

I am the woman interviewed by David Wegener. In "Southern Baptists Lead the Way," the article cited by Sumner (199), she has clearly chosen to enhance the published interview done by Wegener with her own slant. In the interview cited, I did not say, "*He* [referring to my husband] also let her know that *she* [emphasis Sumner's] would be the one to take care of it [reference to the dog I did not feel we should get]." Sumner goes even further in stating ". . . the wife was assigned against her will to care for her husband's dog" (200).

My husband *never* said that I had to take care of the dog. His plan was quite the opposite; he wanted to pay someone to care for the dog during his absences. However, once my husband decided that we should receive and keep the dog, I willingly chose to help my husband because that is what biblical submission is all about! The biblical concept of "helper" is not one that suggests doing what you want to do or

what you *feel* is right to do but rather doing what needs to be done for the one you are helping.

Sumner says "They bought the dog." The dog was *given* to us by friends in West Texas. The "grand-dog" is indeed my choice of words, but this beloved dog (the "it" in Sumner's reference) did not live "somewhere else"; the dog that died was part of our household and had been for several years. Sumner continues taking words out of context, putting words in my mouth and even using quotation marks in the process! I can only surmise that she may have done the same with Carl Henry and others when she uses quotes in ways that seem in contradistinction to what individuals say in their own writings.

In another misrepresentation of Baptist life, Sumner boasts about confusion and contradiction among Southern Baptists:

Even Southern Baptist Theological Seminary invited her [Anne Lotz] to preach in chapel to a group of graduate students who are regularly being taught that it's wrong for a woman to proclaim the gospel publicly to men (50).

The confusion is in Sumner's mind. This misinformation was corrected for Sumner in her personal conversation with me almost two years before this volume was released. She not only ignored the correction, but also she did not check the information with Mrs. Lotz or SBTS President, Dr. R. Albert Mohler, Jr.

Here are the facts directly from Southern Seminary. Anne Lotz was invited to an event hosted by evangelist Jerry Grace meeting on the campus of SBTS in 1993 or 1994. The group met in the Music Room, which is located behind the chapel. The invitation to Lotz did not come from SBTS or anyone associated with the Seminary, nor did she speak in the seminary chapel service. The seminary has a center named for Dr. Billy Graham and a longstanding association with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. I suspect Mrs. Lotz will be more upset than anyone at SBTS that her good name has been used to suggest a lack of integrity or "double speak" on the part of this seminary and its officials.

## Emotions Do Come Into Play

Actually Sumner's personal story "softened my heart," making me more sensitive to what she perceives to be "the severity of women's experience" in the church (23). I've not had her experience of hearing women plead "to hand out a bulletin" or lament that they can't be "greater." However, I have heard many express the sentiments; "I just want . . ." and "why can't I . . ." and how can I "get a job" and "make money" with an MDiv. I am reminded again that until the hearts of

women are turned toward the Word of God and away from their own personal desires, toward the narrow path with its divinely appointed boundaries and away from questioning what God has clearly said, toward dying to self and laying aside rights and away from pursuing what seems right because it is successful, they will be distracted from the main God-appointed task before all believers—i.e., *obedience*, whatever the cost (even if that cost means forfeiting your giftedness in the way you “feel” you ought or “want” to use it). To be selfish is not necessarily synonymous with boundaries and prohibitions; to be loving is not always doing what is in *your* heart to do and encouraging others to do the same.

“Joint” decision-making is not an egalitarian tenet (202); rather it is a natural outgrowth of servant leadership (a husband approaches his headship with a servant’s heart, Eph 5:25-33) and gracious submission (a wife willingly submits to her husband’s headship, 1 Pet 3:1-7). Good leaders guide in the decision-making process, but they also take responsibility for final decisions. In complementarian marriages, as my own, husbands and wives gather data, discuss options, and decide together the best choice. Biblical submission is a safeguard to enable couples committed to biblical paradigms to make decisions *even* when they ultimately cannot agree.

Contrary to Sumner’s supposition, I, as a “complementarian-minded” woman, do not find submission easy (203); I just believe it is right! Nor do I see submission as “obedience” in the sense of mindless acquiescence; I choose to “line up under” (a good meaning for the Greek *hupotasso*, “submit”) my husband in the home because in so doing I am also lining up under the mandate of the Lord to whom I ultimately submit.

My husband is indeed my peer; our lives are intricately entwined in ministry as well as marriage, *but* he is also my leader not because of his “mentality,” as Sumner suggests, but because of his assignment from God and my willingness to help him complete that assignment in a complementary way (201). I concur with Sumner that “walking” must be in line with “talking”—at least if the talking is a clear commitment to what God is saying without trying to redefine words or rewrite clear biblical principles. I am a “helper”—a peer and a partner who chooses to function in this God-ordained way of offering support and assistance to my God-ordained leader. Others would have to judge my productivity, but I can attest to my joy and fulfillment in the process.

Sumner has indeed introduced *herself* and *her* theology, and that is what this book is all about! What I see as missing from Sumner’s passionate personal pilgrimage is perspective. God’s Word, and not “her rendition,” should be most important and must be the substance. A theology (or “a word from God”) of womanhood should be a tapestry arising out of the threads of Scripture and not out of the life of Sarah Sumner or any

other woman. However, the problem arises as in Sumner’s own words she “introduces a theology of women woven into the narrative of my story. It expresses my rendition of a complex issue that is weighing heavily upon the church” (32).

## The Issue—a Bur Under Her Saddle

Sumner suggests two choices for women—“to flee or to fight.” She would, I assume, put complementarian women in the fleeing force and egalitarians in the fighting females. She, of course, takes the high road with a third alternative—“to go forward”—an excellent motto for the *Sumnertarianism* she presents; but for some her charge forward is lacking in focus. Sumner uses Esther as an example, praising her for “violating the norms of her culture” as her chief claim to fame and victory. Sumner even subtly hints that Esther is foreshadowing Christ (25-6). Absent in Sumner’s discussion is the fact embraced by many complementarian commentators and theologians throughout the generations of biblical interpretation—i.e., that “obedience” is the key for Esther. God worked through Esther and her cousin Mordecai. Esther went forward with the task God gave her *because* she was obedient even when what she was asked to do seemed illogical and foolish.

Sumner summarizes by asking “Do I have courage to violate cultural protocol? Do I have the will to disregard the voices of dissent?” (26). Missing from her litany of questions is this one: Do I have the courage to be obedient to the biblical boundaries even when they seem to be against the world and against my own best interests? Esther humbled herself before the king. Unlike Vashti before her, Esther demonstrated to all her respect for Ahasuerus, her husband and monarch.

Sumner has omitted an important option for evangelical women who don’t want “to flee” or “to fight” or even “to go forward” without purpose or restraint. Some evangelical women want another choice: to submit or, put another way, to follow the Lord by obeying his mandates. Later Sumner describes her own focus as being “on Christ and truth and grace,” but sadly absent from that focus is *obedience*. Only the humbling of yourself in obedience saves you from the feminist paradigm Sumner accurately describes as “women and equality and power” (28).

Flee, flight, flow—no! Follow him—that is a worthy passion! Yes, look to Jesus and be impressed with his “healing on the Sabbath” and eating “with sinners”—he did go against culture. But most impressive is the *obedience* of Jesus, even to the cross. Sumner’s point is well taken—look at the example of Jesus; but her focus and conclusion seem skewed. The focus must not be on Jesus’ “violation of cultural protocol” but upon His obedience to the Father, which he did even to laying down His own life (Phil. 2:6-8). God does not “protect me with his Word,” as per Sumner (19); rather I believe that my obedience

to his Word puts me under his protection.

The conclusion for today would be to note that holding biblical boundaries is indeed going against culture. Political correctness and the spirit of this age are united in suggesting that women and men should do what they want and what they are gifted to do and what they *feel* called to do. They are enlightened with education and empowered with experience to reach any goal they *feel* is worthy. Sumner fails to insure that the rigor of disciplined exegesis, which is a reminder of old boundaries, reigns over the relevance of distinctive experiences, which may yield new opportunities.

From her personal introduction Sumner moves to emotional venting and hypothetical ranting on what women can and cannot do. She strays considerably from biblical boundaries (which complementarians would generally note in church order as only two functional prohibitions, each of which is consistent with the rest of Scripture); she lays no theological foundation through *clear* biblical exegesis, and her efforts to explain the text do not even appear until a third of the way through the manuscript.

## From “Men Bashing” to “Church Bashing”

Many accusatory statements are interwoven in the manuscript. “It’s painful for the church to consider our sins against women. It’s hard to come to terms with what we’ve done and what we’re doing” (30). In a sense, Sumner is more into “church bashing” than “men bashing.” Again her focus goes far afield from concern for sins against Christ, i.e., disobedience.

A continual harangue against the “church” is uncomely and demeaning to the Bride of Christ. Sumner continues the church focus on “relationships” with encouragement to women to focus on “their ministry calling” and a reminder to them of their choice “to walk an unconventional path.” She dwells upon chastising Christians who feel uncomfortable “when a woman in the church begins to attain an excessive rolefulness . . . to squirm when a woman accepts a visible position of public leadership” (30). An emotional outburst like this is puzzling to women who work within mainstream evangelicalism and find women using their giftedness and exercising their leadership and influence in countless ways, while still embracing a commitment to work within biblical guidelines.

For example, consider a few Southern Baptist women who are complementarian students or graduates of Southeastern Seminary: Heather King is the director of Women’s Programs at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and has served on the Baptist Faith & Message Study Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention; Susie Hawkins

also served on that pivotal committee, and she directs the SBC Annuity Board ministry for widows; Ashley Smith is a pastor’s wife and women’s speaker for Embracing Womanhood; Joy White is Director of the Women’s Programs at SEBTS; Cathy and Karen and Maureen and Kelly and scores of others<sup>6</sup> are posted in international assignments as singles or with their husbands. These women all exercise individual giftedness, use leadership appropriately, are equipped to do biblical exposition, and have extended influence; they do teach and they do share the gospel. They are leaders; most have had personal ministry to a man at some point, but without apology they are involved in woman-to-woman ministries and are committed to biblical boundaries. The theological positions they hold are not the result of classroom propaganda or parental indoctrination or popular political correctness but arise out of their own personal wrestling with the Word of God. Their program of study equipped them with the tools to do biblical exegesis and with a menu from the marketplace of ideas, as well as with a clear understanding of the role of Scripture and the leading of the Holy Spirit as complementary forces to keep them on the path of obedience.

## Too Careless to be Taken Seriously

Sumner frequently makes broad sweeping statements that cannot be substantiated. For example, “Both complementarians and egalitarians are conservative Protestants” (39). That there are complementarians and egalitarians *among* conservative Protestants and Southern Baptists can be substantiated. However, there are also some prominent Roman Catholics who espouse these respective positions and have written significant monographs to support their positions.<sup>7</sup>

Sumner moves from careless statements to easily misunderstood prognostications: “. . . We have been assured that the Spirit Himself will be faithful to prevent us from such error. Unfortunately, that assumption is mistaken” (39). While interpreters may certainly err, Sumner’s words seem to call into question the integrity of the “Spirit of truth” (John 14:16-17). The Holy Spirit not only inspired the writing of Scripture, but He guides the interpreter down the path of understanding Scripture (John 16:13; 14:26).

In Sumner’s allusions to the Church Fathers for support of her presupposition that church tradition consistently presents women as “by nature lower than men” (40), Sumner’s limited research leaves the reader without the tools to assess what was actually taught and believed during the Patristic period. This reviewer has only done limited research in Patristic literature;<sup>8</sup> however, Charles Ryrie has worked extensively in this literature and presents observations worthy of consideration. Ryrie noted that the Fathers commented on the church’s responsibility to care for its widows more frequently than



anything else, that references to deaconesses do not appear, that the work of Christian women in keeping their homes and training of their children were most highly praised.<sup>9</sup>

What to some appears to be amazing inferiority of women may merely be the expression of differences between the assignments given to women and to men. Chrysostom clearly recognized the subordination of the woman—but for her good and not her hurt.<sup>10</sup> Even feminists caution that to expect modern feministic views from men like Tertullian is anachronistic, and to label him a “misogynist” is intolerant in the context of the concerns of his day,<sup>11</sup> especially without an exhaustive study of his writings. Despite derogatory statements about women and the restriction of their sphere of activity, the Church Fathers also wrote letters in praise of women.<sup>12</sup> They were united in acknowledging the home as the primary place for women, and I believe they held the home and the women who presided over those homes in high esteem because of the role they played in nurturing the next generation.

Sumner ought to beware of pitting complementarianism against the Church Fathers as a group. A much broader examination of their writings within their respective ancient settings is needed to consider what their interaction might be with modern-day complementarians. Even if you take these men Sumner quoted as being representative of the Church Fathers and quoted fairly, you still don’t have *all* that the Church Fathers have said about women. And finally, *all* they *all* say pales in importance when placed alongside Scripture.

Sumner’s statement “. . . the church fathers were prejudicial against women, *and we know it . . .*” (45, emphasis mine) is reckless, especially based on so few examples. Looking carefully at her sources in context indicates biased selection. Some excellent exegetical work from the Church Fathers is now available (e.g. Oden’s *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*). Even the mixing of eastern and western evidence can produce a false historical reconstruction unless carefully set forth.

Sumner says, “It is unwise to enshrine Tertullian as a leading authority on the proper role of women in the church” (45). Who has done this? Sumner accuses Wienrich of this conclusion merely because he cites Tertullian as a “representative voice.” Sumner rejects the option of Weinrich’s accepting the strengths of a man like Tertullian and rejecting his weaknesses. Perhaps her issue is more with Wienrich’s biblical conclusions than with Tertullian’s words.

## Enhancing Scripture

“One model” for the family is attacked because the tent isn’t large enough to accommodate modern ideology. Sumner

misses completely the clear principle of identity as male and female in Christ. Of course, both women and men imitate Christ, but Philippians 2 defines submission in relationship to Christ, while 1 Peter 3 specifically addresses submission on the part of wives. On the other hand, one would not question that a husband “submits” to the divine assignment that is his when he assumes his responsibilities to his wife and is admonished to be willing even to lay down his life for her (Eph 5:25). The family is God’s first institution and is the metaphor God chose to reveal himself through very clear vignettes on relationships within marriage. The New Testament is clear in describing the nuance of meaning found in submission on the part of a wife (1 Pet 3:1-7).

Priscilla is cited as a case of a woman serving in a teaching position in the church. She was indeed a prominent woman in the early church, but the text under consideration refers to “the church that is in their house” (Rom 16:5). The text does not say Aquilla and Priscilla “planted a church,” as Sumner states, nor does it suggest Priscilla taught the Bible “even to her pastors and leaders,” as Sumner says Priscilla “presumably” did (52). Why not stay with what the text clearly says about Priscilla: “a fellow worker,” who, with her husband, risked her life for Paul; hosted congregations of believers in their home; explained the way more accurately to Apollos—again with her husband.

No one would deny that there are exceptional women, and men, whom God chooses to use in “an atypical way” (52). Interestingly, “atypical” methodology does not arbitrarily mean methods “antithetical” to biblical doctrines or principles. An “exceptional” woman does not have to be an “anomaly.” Irregularity does not demand contradiction. Contrary to Sumner’s conclusion, biblical paradigms are not subject to change or modification to accommodate “exceptional” women. Such women are found throughout the biblical record, in every era of church history, and certainly in a myriad of kingdom roles in this generation.

Sumner suggests these steps for finding the “new” paradigm she advocates (57):

1. account for biblical data as well or better than the last one [presumably Sumner means the last interpretation of a text embraced by a reader]
2. magnify unresolved problems
3. provide additional solutions

Strangely missing from her paradigm is simply discovering what Scripture says and then doing it! There are still many women, and among them some theologians, who are going to hold the biblical paradigm and not be looking for something better.



Sumner writes that Priscilla “corrected an outstanding Bible teacher” (64). The biblical text says that Priscilla *and* her husband Aquilla “explained to him [Apollos] the way of God more accurately” (Acts 18:26). (Note: In the phrase *ακριβέστερον αὐτῷ ἐξέθεντο*, the lexicon’s choice of “explain, set forth” in 18:26 as a meaning for the aorist middle indicative verb<sup>13</sup> certainly makes more sense in context than Sumner’s “correct”.)

Sumner seems to have an obsession with classifying ideas contrary to her own as “sin.” For example, in her lengthy discussion of prejudices, she seems to equate the process of recognizing differences between men and women as prejudice (23, 74-79). Her homily on prejudices could well be illustrated in her treatment of complementarianism as opposed to egalitarianism, with which she has much more affinity. She laces her discussion with undocumented private conversations and personal emotions.

Sumner offered an interesting account of her “For Men Only” ministry. She began, “I’ll teach you things your wife doesn’t know” and assured the men they would not be nagged or elbowed or scowled at (implying these reactions would come from their poorly tutored wives). She further notes that the men didn’t want her to leave the room during small group discussions, “I think it’s because they needed . . . someone to fill the position of the ‘expert’ in the room” (95-96).

Sumner actually summarizes well. “It would take a miracle for biblically incompetent men to feel excited about gathering with a group of biblically competent women. And yet most men are delighted to follow a woman leader as long as she honors them as men” (97). “Many Christian men remain *ignorant* of the Word while many Christian women remain *unchallengeable* by the Word” (103). What point is Sumner making? Is she to be the guru for evangelical men? Is she training a core group of women to go out to churches and fill the role of resident guru for men? To assume she’ll find men in great numbers sitting at her feet to learn Scripture the rest of her life may be a stretch even for Sumner!

Sumner shows a lack of familiarity with the biblical text in her attack on John Piper’s definition of manhood and its responsibilities. Piper never claims to *quote* Scripture in his definition, but obviously his description of manhood is distinctive because it is fashioned out of a careful study of Scripture (See Gen 2:15-17; Eph 5:21-33; Col 3:18-19; 1 Tim 5:8; 1 Pet 3:7) so that the substance of his definition comes out of the text (85). The enunciation of a biblical principle is found in Piper’s words—“a sense of benevolent responsibility to lead, provide for and protect women” (85).

Sumner, on the other hand, offers her own definition of masculinity—that “bodily characteristic that makes men less vulnerable than women”—and femininity—that “bodily

characteristic that makes women more vulnerable than men” (185). Again, she demonstrates her determination to allow her own experience to hold sway over Scripture. Sumner is an egalitarian (although seemingly wanting to be called something else). Even in her working definitions, she does not affirm manhood and womanhood as being distinct one from the other.

Sumner’s discussion on women as warriors is confusing at best. Spiritual warfare is one topic and combat on the battlefield is another. No one would dispute that all believers are involved in battles. There is no way I would take the time to read a volume like this one, much less give time for research and study of its novel theories and what I believe to be misinterpretations of my own position, if I did not believe there is an ongoing battle for the hearts of women. To elevate feelings and experience over obedience—even when to obey is to accept a “hard” as well as “good” word from God—is a devastating blow to biblical womanhood. Yes, women must “contend for the faith”; they must determine that God’s way is first and right however it differs from cultural settings; they must accept biblical principles that are clearly and singularly presented in Scripture; and they must persevere when femininity is taunted even by one whose gender they share.

Contra to Sumner and to Waltke, whose article she sites, I believe the portrait of biblical womanhood set apart in acrostic form in Proverbs 31 describes a “woman of strength” (Heb. *chayil* certainly includes that range of meaning). But I am just as convinced that strength can be in “delicate” hands, harnessed by what Peter describes as a “gentle and quiet spirit,” which makes the strength become stronger and more effective, if you please. Actually the words describing the *spiritual* armor in Ephesians comes from the Holy Spirit through the pen of Paul, not as a distinct command from the mouth of Jesus, as Sumner intimates (108).

Sumner should also use caution in holding up to ridicule a woman who chooses to reserve her sword (the Word of God) to be used with women (108-109). As in the case of Priscilla, any woman may have an occasion for sharing spiritual wisdom with a man, but to take her primary “battle” to the field of woman-to-woman mentoring is wise indeed according to Paul (Titus 2:3-5). Reading egalitarians like Sumner always raises the interesting question: What do they have against women? Since they seem to be genuinely nonplussed unless they can have an audience of men, they must believe that women are inferior. In the early pages of her book, Sumner confesses the sin of valuing men over women (74-75). Maybe she needs not just to confess the sin but also to forsake the sin.

Deborah does receive commendation—but not for “leading ten thousand men into a battle” (109). The text indicates that Barak was the commander on the battlefield. Deborah accompanied Barak at his request and doubtless offered him and his forces encouragement. Sumner can make

a much better case for Jael's commendation as "most blessed of all women" based on the action of this humble homemaker in her own tent. Jael did not participate in the battle on the field, but she did what she could in her own home (Judges 4:6-10). What basis does Sumner have to assert that "the Lord . . . orchestrated the story so that women would accomplish His victory"? Again, the actual details in the text would serve her better: God did indeed honor the women as well as the men.

In a section on biblical metaphors, Sumner rightly defines metaphor, and she is uncomfortable with taking inclusive language to the point of calling God, "Mother", but she obviously chafes under the use of male pronouns (117-119). No complementarian I know would identify God as a "masculine" being; but quite obviously, God chose to use masculine language to reveal himself, and he selected a male earthly tabernacle for himself. God does *not* reveal himself comparatively as a woman (Sumner's assertion, 120), but he describes some of his *actions* to be like those of a woman (Luke 15:8-10). There is a difference!

## "Pop" Theology

Sumner proudly announces "boss verse" (128) as her own coined term—a bit humorous coming from one who wants no "bosses"—at least not in her home or her church! What Sumner considers unique or innovative may be interpreted by some as "pop" theology. In this innovation, Sumner attempts to mold the idea of *locus classicus* or *sedes doctrinae* ("chair doctrine") into a manipulating tool, especially in gender passages. She describes her "boss verse" as a "guiding hermeneutic," suggesting that such verse(s) should take priority over others. In hermeneutics, however, the object is not finding a verse(s) to control all passages as much as finding the correct interpretation of a particular passage in light of other related texts.

Continuing her innovative "boss verse" methodology, Sumner boldly asserts in chapter 13, "Whichever is the first line functions hermeneutically as the 'boss verse'" (154). For starters, one line is not always a "verse"—in fact, rarely so. Second, word order in Greek or Hebrew is quite different from that of English. Third, early manuscripts were not divided into chapters or verses. Again her egalitarian agenda—in this case, promoting her own variety of "mutual submission"—has driven her efforts at exegesis. Often, she ignores verb tense and other grammatical factors.

As a complementarian, I would certainly take issue with 1 Tim 2:12 as the *locus classicus* for defining the role of women in the church. 1 Tim 2:9-15 must be considered in its entirety, and alongside parallel passages like Titus 2:3-5, and 1 Cor 11:3-15 and 14:34-35. By putting these focal passages

together, you can get a consistent (without contradiction) picture of what Scripture teaches on this important subject.

Sumner's disorganized interaction with Wayne Grudem is marked by what could be interpreted as her own arrogance. She continues, "Grudem would also have to think . . ." (151). She would be wise to let Grudem think and speak for himself. Her frantic attempts to suggest that complementarians are pitted one against another misses the point that the issue is not who believes what but what is believed and how what is believed lines up against the standard of Scripture.

What complementarians can Sumner cite who suggest that the household code paragraph in Ephesians 5 begins in verse 22? (157). Most complementarians are careful to include verse 21 because it contains the participial phrase that sets the tone for what is to follow. In fact, the verb to be understood in verse 22 (which verse has no verb and thus as a fragment would make no sense) is found in verse 21! Of course, it would be "unscholarly" to suggest that the paragraph begins with verse 22 since that would be grammatically and theologically incorrect. Sumner would do well to document carefully any such accusation of incompetence lobbed against complementarians or egalitarians.

What a monstrosity Sumner creates with a headless woman waiting for a bodiless man to create a visual union but with no strings attached and no outworking for the "metaphor." She reduces functions of each to movement of body parts as with marionettes. She continually mixes metaphors (167), which destroys the meaning and usefulness of both.

Sumner's weakness in exegesis and simplistic rendering of timeless principles destroys any legitimate timely interpretation. For example, Sumner suggests "Reading the Bible is no different from reading any other book" (124) and then turns around, thankfully, and adds that one must "rely on the Holy Spirit for help" (124).

Sumner's discussion on κεφαλῇ is limited, incomplete, and without linguistic documentation. She makes no attempt for careful interaction with Grudem's study of κεφαλῇ, which is available even for the English reader and with which serious egalitarian exegetes with any credibility must interact (150-151). Finally, her limited treatment of κεφαλῇ, combined with her continuing obsession with "boss," only serves to trivialize the Trinitarian relationship between the Father, Son, and Spirit (145).

Sumner moves to the edge of the cliff when she says, "Christ was crucified because of vulnerability. In heaven it was impossible to kill him, but on earth Christ became vulnerable to death" (125). Christ was not killed or murdered because he was without protection on earth. He was, is, and forever will be God with all the powers thereof whether he is on earth or in heaven!

The atonement happened because Jesus laid down his life, not because he was vulnerable (John 10:17-18).

To judge Sumner's exegetical forays, any reader with language skills should begin by translating and reading the particular passage addressed. I have found that Sumner takes considerable liberty with the text: participles are translated as infinitives or imperatives; often words are, at best, defined with dynamic equivalents, and even projected lexical evidence is largely without documentation. Readers without language skills should simply read Sumner's volume alongside the text of Scripture and in consultation with sound biblical commentaries.

## A Tragic Loss

Has Sumner become uncomfortable with her womanhood? "Womanhood has become a liability" (79). Can any gift of God become a liability? ". . . I have tacitly thought of myself as a 'special type' of woman, the kind that can keep up with men" (78). Even women may feel a bit bashed by *Sumnertarianism*. A woman still has the option of being the best woman she can be without comparing herself to other women or to men. "Socially . . . women . . . less dignified than men"—this concept is new to me since in my limited world women generally have been more associated with dignity in dress, speech, etc., than have men.

Sumner introduced her concept that women have a tendency to "hold back" (see 27, 73-74, 79, 104). Could this be her reference to a woman's demeanor—the gentle and quiet spirit discussed in 1 Pet 3:1-7—the submissiveness in attitude to which women are consistently called in Scripture? Certainly there are many restraints in the Christian life. Women and men also have their respectively unique restraints established by the creation order. To presume that success in any endeavor is allowed by God and *therefore* acceptable to God is dangerous indeed. The biblical paradigm is holding us *to* divine boundaries and *back* from our own willfulness.

Sumner dismisses the commonly accepted premise—not to mention biblical paradigm—that mothers are "the primary caregivers of the kids" as merely a conclusion based upon a "cultural bias" (105). Contra Sumner's ideas, maternity is at the center of a woman's nature, and it is not the same as fatherhood. The responsibility of fatherhood cannot replace the duties of motherhood. Rather each assignment complements the other. A father cannot provide for his family's basic needs and spend the same number of hours with the children a mother can spend if she chooses to focus her primary energies and foremost investment of time into nurturing the lives of her children.

## Conclusion

When Sumner claims legalism as insensitivity to the "spirit of the law," she ignores the obvious. For me as a complementarian, to line up with Scripture concerning men and women in the church goes beyond the "letter of the law." The "spirit" of a passage, for example, calls me to be sensitive not only to the words of Scripture ("letter" of the law) but also to the application and outworking of those words and the principles they fashion (the "spirit" of the law). I do not teach men in the church based on 1 Timothy 2, but I choose not to teach pastoral ministry in the seminary because of the "spirit" of that same passage.

In any case, one can document that complementarians in their writings closely identify themselves with biblical exegesis coming from the Church Fathers onward, but that respect for biblical exegesis in the Patristic period in no way suggests that complementarians hold their positions because of the "traditions" of men who have gone before them—however noteworthy men like the honored Fathers of the Church might be. Rather they hold their positions because of the truth of Scripture.

I am not aware of any tenet commonly embraced by complementarians that elevates "tradition" to a place that is indistinguishable from Scripture. Nor am I aware of complementarians who would throw out Scripture just because "tradition" affirms it. Nothing trumps Scripture. The Bible alone ultimately determines faith and practice.

"Tradition" is defined as "the entire process by which normative truths are passed on from one generation to another."<sup>14</sup> Tradition can be oral or written, closed or flowing; but no religious community from the first century until today is void of tradition. Tradition is also found in Scripture. Obviously, it is quite careless and flippant to link a particular church "tradition," such as what some call Romanism, to all complementarians.

For some, what is objectionable in Scripture merely becomes "tradition" so that it can be discarded in the formulation of new ideas despite the efforts of many centuries of careful exegesis and disciplined application in the development and growth of the post-apostolic church, which has protected and held in trust those biblical principles. The rediscovery and reimplementation of apostolic teaching and biblical patterns is appropriate indeed, but to disregard textual evidence at will or to revise teaching and redefine biblical terms or to refashion the examples of women and men profiled in Scripture is not acceptable to anyone who is determined to let the New Testament documents speak for themselves. You cannot affirm two diametrically opposed positions as right, and you may go even further afield to say both are right, but neither position is mine! Certainly to say something becomes truth

because I claim it to be so is in vogue in this postmodern age. But being in vogue does not mean you are in sync with Scripture.

Sarah Sumner is a bright young woman. I believe she loves the Bible and wants to make her contribution to the kingdom. She wants to develop new ideas, and she wants to share her own testimony in hopes of helping someone. But good intentions have never been enough to get a job done. Beyond the framing of difficult questions and studying the Word of God and desiring to bring people together, Sarah Sumner has much more ground to cover.

Sumner starts with something that she feels ought to be, an injustice she attributes to the church that must be righted. The elevation of an experiential hermeneutic, the preponderance of the struggle for reconciling perceived giftedness with practical ministries in logical and culturally relevant ways, the determination to elevate calling over clear biblical directives—these are dangerous tools in the hand of anyone who attempts the sacred task of exposition. Sumner does have some facts, but to that she has added many opinions and a large degree of conjecture, mingled with deep emotional feelings on a subject that has obviously weighed heavily upon her heart and mind.

To interact in summary with Sumner's volume, let me offer these considerations:

- This book is not a serious exegetical theology intent on discovering and accurately discussing the history of ecclesiastical thought and practice. Rather it is a passionate, and sometimes rather arrogant, testimony of experience or desired experience desperately in search for some corroborating proof text from the Bible or shred of support from an early theologian of the church. Failing that, the author resorts to what is sometimes wild-eyed invention such as, for example, her creation of "boss theology."
- To say that one is neither complementarian nor egalitarian when, in fact, the entire monograph bashes complementarianism and enthrones egalitarianism is at best disingenuous. At worst, the author deceives herself. Because of the carelessness, poor scholarship, and self-centeredness of the volume, egalitarians may be hesitant to invoke the book, but Sumner's conclusions certainly provide no *via media* for the present impasse. To the contrary, complementarians will reject her methodology and her conclusions and will find her exegesis problematic.
- The burden of proof remains on Sumner to show that complementarianism is a mixture of Bible and tradition. This case she has failed to make. Neither

did she make a believable case for egalitarianism as being a mixture of feminism and the Bible. Her failure to make a credible intellectual case for the latter, however, certainly did not prevent her from modeling the position.

- Interaction with alternative positions is always best accomplished by accurately representing those positions. Sumner's consistent misrepresentation of complementarians renders the book unworthy of a chair at the table in this debate. One hardly knows what to think about her constant misrepresentations. If the misrepresentations are deliberate, then something more than scholarly mistake is involved. If the misrepresentations are simply uninformed, then IVP has killed 332 pages worth of perfectly good trees simply to parade out yet another bashing of complementarians.
- This volume replete with philosophical *non sequiturs* also abounds in false antitheses. The suggestion that the Scriptures nowhere suggest pursuit of "biblical manhood" or "biblical womanhood" but rather command that believers simply be like Christ is a case in point. She is right that we are to be like Christ, but the Bible also presents ideas for manhood, womanhood, childhood, servanthood, etc. In short, her exegesis is often Procrustean—lop it off or stretch it out, whichever is needed. No standard is necessary
- Sumner's assertion that there are no problem verses in the Bible might make someone wonder if she has read the Bible much. Gleason Archer and others who have written monographs on difficult texts will be surprised to find that their time was squandered and their efforts unnecessary. However, it is comforting to know that after 1900 years of disagreement about passages like the "spirits in prison," one can soon anticipate a *Sumnertarian* definitive explanation of these non-problematic texts. While this has little to do with her thesis, it does demonstrate the loose and unsupported opinions that render the book ineffective.

A book review does not allow the point-by-point rebuttal needed for Sumner's novel interpretation. She dismisses clear lexical evidence and bypasses the host of hermeneutical principles that have been used by exegetes from the first century until now. One gets the impression that Sarah Sumner looks down upon a world of biblical scholarship spanning the centuries, as though she were the first to get it right.

The Bible is a wonderfully affirming book for women, containing magnificent testimony of the contributions of the distaff. Further, the Bible abounds with instruction for godly women in their relationships to God, to church, to husbands, to



children, and to others. Sarah Sumner obviously believes that all this is important and is worth the effort at theologizing. Unfortunately, a reading of *Men and Women in the Church* provides one more example of parading a personal agenda as Sumner unfolds a deep desire to be recognized by her peers as a theologian who is informing the understanding of the biblical materials. Unfortunately, the book is not even a profitable example of agenda-based hermeneutics. The author must be commended for her interest and effort. But complementarians will find this book fanciful at best and with Adolf Schlatter will still want to stand “under the Word.”

<sup>1</sup> Sarah Sumner, *Men and Women in the Church: Building Consensus on Christian Leadership* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003).

<sup>2</sup> Many readers, as I, would be surprised to see any endorsement of Joyce Landorf as a role model because of the personal and public choices she made concerning her home and family.

<sup>3</sup> Lesley Brown, ed., *The New Shorter Oxford Dictionary on Historical Principles: A-M*, Vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993) 819.

<sup>4</sup> Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority*, Vol. 4 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1999) 516.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>6</sup> Last names cannot be used for security reasons.

<sup>7</sup> See Stephen Clark’s *Man and Woman in Christ* (Ann Arbor: Servant Books, 1980).

<sup>8</sup> See Dorothy Kelley Patterson, “Aspects of a Biblical Theology of Womanhood” (Ph.D. diss., University of South Africa, 1997) 23-30. To add balance to Sumner’s statement, consider Philo’s praise of Sarah. See L. J. Archer, *Her Price is beyond Rubies: the Jewish Woman in Graeco-Roman Palestine* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield, 1990) 302-303.

<sup>9</sup> C. C. Ryrie, *The Role of Women in the Church*, reprint (Chicago: Moody, 1970) 100-101.

<sup>10</sup> P. Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene fathers of the Christian Church*, Vol. 13 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969) 539.

<sup>11</sup> E. Carnelley, “Tertullian and Feminism,” *Theology* (January 1989) 31-32.

<sup>12</sup> E. A. Clark, *Women in the Early Church* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1983) 204.

<sup>13</sup> William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957) 245.

<sup>14</sup> J. Van Engen, “Tradition,” *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001) 1211.

# Genesis 2:18-25

## The Ordinance of Marriage

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I would invite you to turn with me to Genesis, chapter 2. We have, for the last few weeks, been looking at the creation ordinances as they are recorded in chapters 1 and 2. We have outlined those ordinances in four parts. We have said that there are many legitimate ways to number the creation ordinances. Sometimes you hear three names. John Murray finds seven in his great book, *Principles of Conduct*. We have numbered them for the sake of convenience here, one through four. First of all, in Gen 1:28 the ordinance of procreation. Then again, in Gen 1:28, the ordinance of labor. Then in Gen 2:3, we see the ordinance of the Sabbath. Finally, in Gen 2:24 especially, but throughout this passage, we see the ordinance of marriage.

Last week we looked at the original relationship between God and Adam and Eve in paradise and said that that relationship, which our Confession refers to as both a Covenant of Works and a Covenant of Life, was filled with both privileges and obligations. Those privileges are apparent as you scan Gen 2:4-14. You look at the description in the first verses of that section of the original state of the creation, and then you look at the perfection of the world in which man was placed, and the blessings which God heaped upon man, and you see the privileges with which God endowed man in that original relationship.

Then in the second half of that passage, especially in verses 15 through 17, you see some of the obligations set forth

that God gave to Adam. In paradise, God entered into a special relationship with Adam. He spells out the nature of that relationship. There are certain things that Adam is required to do and certain positive obligations entailed in his being in this relationship with God, and there are certain things which he is to refrain from doing; in particular, the eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. We talked a little about the importance of that Covenant of Creation or that Covenant of Life, or that Covenant of Works.

### Genesis 2:18-25

I want to turn our attention now to the fourth, and last of the creation ordinances, that is, marriage.

As we have done in the last few weeks, I just want to concentrate on one thing in the passage, and that is the ordinance of marriage, which is like the other creation ordinances, a tremendous blessing and a tremendous responsibility. As you look at chapter 2, you see God heaping blessings upon Adam. The culminating blessing, which He gives to Adam in paradise, is Eve. It is marriage; it is that relationship which He grants to Adam in the creation and the provision of Eve. Let me remind you of a few of the things that God has done in Genesis 2 to show His special love, His special goodness, His special provision for Adam in the garden.

First of all, look at verse 9. In that verse we are told that God made all kinds of trees, which were pleasing to the eye or pleasing to the sight. In that passage we are reminded that God shares with Adam His divine capacity of appreciation. He made

trees that were not only functional, they not only provided necessary things for man in the way of fruit, but he made trees that were aesthetically pleasing. He not only made things that worked well, but they were beautiful at the same time. They were pleasing to the sight. He conveys to man the ability to appreciate those things which are aesthetically pleasing in his creation. By the way, you see there the divine origin of all human aesthetics. There is a whole philosophy of beauty that has been developed over the years and it has its origins in what God has provided in the garden. As God has the ability to appreciate beauty, now he has conveyed upon man the privilege of entering into that appreciation of beauty.

Look again at verse 15. There we see that God gave man significant labor and responsibility as He placed him in the garden to work it and to care for it. Adam was not to lounge around in paradise and eat grapes. Adam was to labor. He was to labor without toil. He was to labor without being foiled in his labor by thorns and thistles and by predators attacking his garden, but he was to have meaningful work. All of us, especially those of us who love the work that we do, know how blessed meaningful labor is. One of the most frustrating experiences in most of our lives is to desire to serve and to work and not to be able to find the right place in which to serve and to work. It robs us of a sense that we are contributing significantly to our family and to the community and to the congregation. So to have meaningful labor is a blessing which God gives to Adam.

Then again, look at verse 19. God provides, thirdly, an opportunity for Adam to exercise his responsibility of dominion in such a way that he is able to bring to bear his impressive intellectual abilities in the naming of the animals. You see, it is not just that God brings the animals to Adam and shows thereby Adam's dominion over those animals. It is not just that Adam's naming of the animals shows his dominion over them, though both of those things are true. It is that Adam assigns appropriate names to all the animals that God brings to him. This is an intellectual feat of epic proportions. We must remember that we cannot even conceive how powerful was the intellect of Adam. Man's intellect did not increase by the fall, it decreased, and that is why the early Christians used to say that Aristotle was but the rubbish of fallen Adam. Adam's intellectual powers were impressive beyond imagination. To each of these animals he applies the perfect and suitable name for them as God brings them to him for the act of naming. God gives to Adam the opportunity not only to express his dominion over the created order, but also to use his powerful intellect in the doing of it. Again, another blessing of God to Adam.

But the final and crowning blessing we find in verse 18 and in verses 21 through 23. There, God knowing man's need for intimacy and for companionship with a peer, creates woman. Marriage is viewed as the crowning blessing of God's goodness to man in the original creation. Let me say in passing before we

look at the passage in more detail, that it is not surprising, is it, that since this is the crowning blessing of God's creation to Adam that that is precisely the arena that Satan attacks when he comes to tempt Eve and Adam in the fall. It should not surprise us today that that is still Satan's first base of attack against those who are in the estate of marriage; to attack them at precisely the point of God's greatest blessing in order to bring them down. So let us look tonight at what God says about the ordinance of marriage in verses 18 through 25.

The first thing we see in this passage is that God Himself, in His good providence, recognized the social needs of man even in paradise. Even in paradise perfect Adam had need for companionship. Look at verse 18. We learn this principle there: "Then the Lord God said it is not good for the man to be alone. I will make him a helper suitable for him."

You see, everything in the world was good. But even with everything in the world pronounced good by God, God announces that it is not good for man to be alone. The very good which was pronounced in Genesis 1 did not occur until the creation of woman. God, having created everything perfectly, looks at man without companion and He says this is not good. This must be remedied. So solitary fellowship with God, even in paradise, is not God's plan for mankind. That ignores the basic human need for companionship. God senses the need that man has for companionship and He sets out to provide for that need.

Now let me remind you of a few things that we learn even from this. The New Testament, and our Lord Jesus Himself, draws its teaching on marriage and on appropriate relations between men and women from this passage. When the Pharisees argue over what the Law of Moses says about male and female relations, and about relations between husbands and wives and about divorce and remarriage, the Lord Jesus always takes them right back to Genesis 2 because the foundations for marriage are found in this passage. It is very interesting that in our own culture today, both the issue of appropriate male-female role relations and the issue of the relationship between husbands and wives in marriage, and the issue of divorce and remarriage are hot issues even in the church. Let me suggest to you there is some wonderful literature out on the market on this. But if you are wrestling with personal issues in this area, family issues or desiring to help others, I would commend to you a book which has recently been prepared. It is called *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, by John Piper and Wayne Grudem. Our own Jim Hurley sits on the Council for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. We have a number of other folks associated with our congregation who have had a significant part in this project. It is a wonderful volume which treats a whole range of issues with regard to marriage and male-female role relations giving a Christian and compassionate response to some of the fluff that is out there on the market, even in the Christian community.

Now I want you to note here, that God in the second half of verse 18 says that He is going to provide a helper suitable for him; that God will provide a helper suitable for him. Watch that phrase, because that phrase is going to occur again in verse 20: "A helper suitable." That phrase beautifully captures woman's role and dignity simultaneously. She is a helper, but she is a helper suitable. She is perfectly correspondent and so the phrase stresses both her role and her dignity. I want to add here that helper does not just mean junior assistant flunky. The word *helper* is *the same word* which is used of the Lord God over and over in the Old Testament when it says things like, *the Lord is my help*. When we sing "O God, our help in ages past", we are singing the same term which is used of woman here. She is a picture of God coming to the aid and rescue of man. Remember that, dear ladies, when you are having to work with very intractable husbands, with very little appreciation for your labor, that you are a picture to your husband of God's divine aide to him. What an awesome position of responsibility and authority that is.

This passage clearly focuses, by the way, on companionship as the basic need which woman will fulfill in the life of man. Not procreation, though that is important, but companionship is the fundamental motive for marriage in the divine order as it is revealed here in Genesis, chapter 2. This is such a radically different view from the Roman Catholic view of marriage. The Roman Catholic view of marriage is that marriage is primarily for procreation, not primarily for companionship. By the way, that is reflected in the ideas and the teachings of some of the greatest of the Catholic fathers, Catholic fathers that we admire and esteem greatly, like Jerome and Augustine. Calvin usually quotes Jerome and Augustine very, very favorably. But boy, he gives them a rough ride in his commentary on this passage. You remember, Augustine is the one who said that, 'If God had created marriage for companionship, He would have made it between two men, not between a man and a woman.' It was his view that men and women really could not have good mutual companionship, and so he said if God had intended companionship, that marriage is the vehicle for companionship, he would have created two men. That was his view of the way the sexes are related, and the way that women were unable to provide that appropriate and needful companionship for men. Calvin and the Reformers and the Puritans after them, were vigorously opposed to the idea that marriage was somehow second best, that celibacy was the best model, that it was higher, that it was more holy, that marriage was second best and that the ultimate purpose of marriage was procreation. No, the Puritans following Genesis 2, make it clear that companionship is the basic, the fundamental motive for marriage.

Notice again in verses 19 and 20, we learn a second thing about this ordinance. There we learn that God simultaneously made Adam aware of his need for companionship and allowed Adam to express his dominion in

the naming of the animals. In verses 19 and 20, God has brought all the animals to Adam for the purpose of naming. The naming of the animals demonstrates that man is the monarch of all that he surveys under God. Naming and Adam's dominion are connected. As he gives names, it shows that he has headship and authority and dominion over those in the animal world.

We use naming in the same way. Those who win wars get to name the battles. Napoleon did not get to name Waterloo. Wellington got to name Waterloo. In fact, Wellington's allies did not even get to name Waterloo. Otto Von Blucher, the Prince of Bismarck who was the German leader of the Prussian army who helped Wellington greatly, who arguably won the battle for him, suggested that they name that battle La Belle Alliance, the good alliance. Wellington said, "No, we are going to call it Waterloo because the English will not like that French name." And so they named the battle Waterloo, even though it was actually fought several miles from Waterloo and there were some towns that were much closer. But when you win the war, you get to name the battles. You know there was recently a group of people from another part of the states who engaged in conflict with the peace-loving people of the south and they got to name the battles after the war. You know we had a battle that we thought was called Manassas and they call it Bull Run. When you win the war, you get to name the battles. Well, that act of naming is an act of sovereignty. Think of New Amsterdam, that city which is now New York. When the English took over, it was renamed. The Dutch had controlled that area before, and the English renamed it when they took over. We even see this in the Bible. When God shows His closeness of relationship to Jacob and the change in Jacob's nature, He renames him Israel, showing not only God's lordship over Jacob but His blessing upon him. So naming functions like this often in the Bible. It shows dominion and authority.

Now this action of naming male and female paired animals over and over reminds Adam that he himself is without a suitable counterpart. There is no one out there in all creation who is suitable for him. In fact, that very action of having to name the animals is almost like a divine nudge to say, "Look, Adam, there is nobody out there like you. You need companionship." That is, by the way, a hint that men sometimes still need today. At any rate, in this passage the phrase 'a helper suitable' indicates a perfect fit. There was not found a helper suitable. There was not found a perfect fit, a support, an honored mutual companion for Adam. So God set out to provide one. As I said before, even today men sometimes need to be reminded of their need for companionship. It is a trend in our culture to see young folks, both men and women, marrying later and later in life. They are often times setting out to establish themselves in a career, especially if they are in a professional career like law or medicine. The schooling and the demands of debt and the burdens of work sometimes push



those marriages later and later in life. Many times people get into a pattern of living where they sort of obtain a form of anesthetized self-sufficiency and they stop thinking about marriage and they wake up at about forty-five and they say, "Gee, I really want to get married and have a family, but it is kind of crunch time now." They need to be nudged, they need to be reminded of the importance of family and of companionship lest they allow a career to provide them temporary, artificial satisfaction, and then suddenly they wake up one day and they realize that it is not really fulfilling the deepest needs of their lives. A pastor friend of mine in another city, who had a large congregation and who had lots of young folks who were in law and medicine and other professions that were very demanding in the early days of their career, used to constantly remind the young men that they needed to be thinking about getting married. If he passed them in the hallway, he would stop and put his hand around them and he would say, "You know what rhymes with life?" And the guy would say, "No." "Wife, get one." Sometimes he would do that in the middle of a sermon. He would be in a series on Jeremiah, and suddenly he would say, "You know what rhymes with life?" And they would be trying to figure out, "How does that fit with what Jeremiah is saying here?" "Wife, get one." He would really press those young men on to take the initiative and find a wife. The young ladies of that congregation appreciated it, I guess.

The third thing we see in this passage is in verses 21 through 23. God himself makes provision for this need. God does not say, "Adam, you need a companion. Go out and find one." God himself makes provision for this need and man gratefully acknowledges the perfection of God's gift.

Notice in this passage several things. First of all, man is first formed from the ground. Then Eve is formed from him. Paul stresses that this is very significant for the relationships between man and woman, and especially between husbands and wives when he points this out in 1 Tim 2:13. It is also pointed out not only in Genesis 2, but also in 1 Cor 11:8-9, that woman was made for man, for a help to him, to be a suitable helper to him.

Notice also that it is stressed in 1 Cor 11:7, that Eve is the crown and glory of Adam. She is the glory of Adam, and man stands in need of her. In 1 Cor 11:11-12 we find this out.

Notice also that Adam sleeps while woman is made so he can never take credit for her creation. There are no suggestions, "Lord, make her like this." No, he is asleep while God brings woman into being and of course, Adam names her woman showing again the authority that the Lord has given to him. But also showing the mutuality, because the name that he gives her indicates that she is just like he is. He is *ish*, she is *isha*: man and woman. There is a compatibility. There is a mutuality about them. So at the same time, this shows the

structure of authority that God has worked into the world order. It also shows her equality and compatibility with him.

Now there's a beautiful Christological application of woman being created while man slept. Andrew Bonar, in his commentary on Genesis points this out. The early church fathers often times pointed to Adam's sleep and woman's creation during Adam's sleep and compared it to the death of Christ and the creation of the Church. Listen to what Bonar says: "There must be sleep in the first Adam before God can take out of him the ordained spouse. And there must be death in the second Adam before God can take out of Him the chosen bride." I am not sure about the exegesis, but the theology of it is wonderful, so I share that with you tonight. There is also a beautiful quote of Matthew Henry regarding woman being created from man's side. He says this: "The woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam, not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him; under his arm to be protected and near his heart to be beloved." Derek Kidner says of this passage: "The woman is presented wholly as man's partner and counterpart. Nothing yet is said of her child bearing. She is valued for herself alone." That is very important today when families face infertility, because fertility does not make a woman valuable to her husband in and of itself. She, in and of herself, is valuable to her husband regardless of whatever procreative blessings the Lord showers on that family. We pray for many, for all, and yet it is not the qualification that makes her valuable.

Look at verses 23 and 24. We see a fourth thing about this marriage ordinance. There in these verses we see that God, in this special creative and providential act establishes the foundation of marriage. For this reason, we read, "A man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife and they shall become one flesh." This provision of Eve to Adam, according to both Moses and Christ, is the foundation of all marriage. You can look at Mark, chapter 10, verses 6-9, for instance. This is precisely where Jesus goes to explain the foundations of marriage. For what reason? Because God made woman for man, out of man and, therefore, it is to be the closest of all relations. It is the greatest of the creational blessings and the parameters which God placed around marriage are to be the foundation for this relationship in all of life, both before and after the fall. We have to understand what marriage is and how blessed it is before we can begin to reassert it today. Marriage is in trouble in our society. There are all sorts of pressures. A lot of the pressure comes from expectations and selfishness. When a young couple gets together and the young woman sees in the man the answer to all her needs, and the man sees in the woman the answer to all his needs, and they go into the marriage thinking that the other one is going to fulfill all their needs, rather than going into the marriage self-sacrificially in a spirit of self-denial, determining to serve the other, the very expectations in marriage often times

cause a marriage to collapse.

There are, of course, other pressures in our society on marriage. The laws that protected marriage which we had, even up to thirty and forty years ago, have disappeared in our society. Virtually the only thing that keeps marriages going today when they are in trouble is the sheer will of the two people, or maybe one of the two people, involved. Whereas, a hundred years ago even if you had wanted to get away from the creep, you could not have gotten away from him. The law would not let you. So our society, by its very legal structure, has enabled marriage to crumble.

And then, of course, we have this unbelievably bizarre spectacle today being forced upon us of “same sex marriages” which according to the Scripture is an unreality, a contradiction in terms. Marriage is grounded in the creational ordinance, and as far as God is concerned, there is no such thing as same sex marriage. Why should the Christian be concerned about that type of legislation? Because every assault on the ordinance of marriage as it is originally created, every variation on that ordinance as it was originally established by God, is an attack on the uniqueness of marriage. Look, men especially are not instinctively committed to marriage. There have to be pressures at force in order to help men be connected and committed to that marriage. When our society takes away all those forces and expects marriage to perpetuate, it is being incredibly unrealistic and naive. In every assault, every variation on traditional forms of marriage is, in fact, an assault on the traditional form of marriage. Those ideas of things like “same sex marriages” or “open marriages” or “living together” cannot be sanctioned by the society and see marriage prosper at the same time. That is a cultural fact. So we see here, in verses 23 and 24, God establishing the foundations of marriage.

Finally, in verse 25, Moses reminds us that there was no sin in the relationship between Adam and Eve and, therefore, there was no shame in this stage of human experience. The man and his wife were both naked and they were not ashamed; no sin, no shame, no barriers of relationship with one another, no barriers of relationship with God. The need for covering is a result of the fall. That covering is symbolic of the mediation that we need between us and God, and it is also a practical and moral sign of the need for modesty, eventuated because of the fall. Man will look across the marriage bounds and outside the marriage bounds to experience some of the pleasures and blessings of the marital relationship which are only to be experienced within the bounds of the relationship, and therefore covering becomes necessary in order to keep man from being so quick to do that. That is why the beach is a very dangerous place for a man to be today, because there is not much covering going on out there. So we see in this passage the link between sinlessness and shameless. There is no shame before the fall, because there is no sin before the fall.

Now let me review very briefly what we have seen here as we close. First of all, we have seen man created prior to woman and thus establishing the headship, or authority of man in the marital relationship according to God’s creation ordinances.

Secondly, we have seen that the sexes are complementary. The woman is the perfect match for man, and so the term ‘biblical complementarians’ which is given to express the evangelical view of how man and woman ought to relate in marriage is a good term, because man and woman are made perfect as complements to one another. By the way, it is proper to say that the sexes are complementary, not that the genders are complementary. I hope that some of you English teachers out there are as ticked off as I am by this constant improper use of gender. People talk about gender relations, when they mean relations between men and women. When I hear gender relations I am thinking that there are problems between masculine and feminine pronouns. Gender is a linguistic term. It is not a sexual, personal term, and let us keep it that way. But at any rate, that is my pet peeve for the day.

Third, we see here that the union of two in marriage in an exclusive, permanent, God-sealed, bond between man and woman is the order of marriage which God has established. This exclusive, permanent, God-sealed bond is between one man and one woman. Therefore, it is against polygamy and it is against all forms of “same sex marriages.” By the way, there is a beautiful statement by von Rad, speaking about God bringing Eve to Adam. Listen to this. von Rad says: “God Himself, like a Father of a bride, leads the woman to man.” Now every dad in here has to have sort of a lump in his throat when he thinks about his daughter and that statement. It is a beautiful statement. “God Himself, like a Father of a bride, leads the woman to man,” and gives her to Adam as the perfect gift.

Finally, we see a pattern of perfect ease between them. They are naked, and they are not ashamed. This is the beautiful relationship which God had established prior to the fall, and by the time we get seven verses into Genesis 3, we are going to see this relationship ruptured because of sin. It is not surprising that this relationship would be the first casualty of Adam and Eve’s sin.

One last thing I would say. Even as Adam and Eve were naked and not ashamed because there was no sin, and even as God provided them with coverings in the garden after their sin, so also the One who undertook to provide our covering because of our sin bore the shame on our behalf. ■

# Cultural Commentary<sup>1</sup>:

## Steinem I Know, and Smeal I Know, But Who Are You? American Culture Looks at Evangelical Feminism

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The increasing burden for evangelical feminists is not so much the criticism of their enemies, but the praise of their friends. After all, evangelical egalitarians must constantly make the point that their views on male/female roles are not rooted in a feminist movement intrinsically hostile to revealed Christianity. Instead, they argue, their views on gender equality come from the Bible itself. Their support for women pastors and mutually submissive marriages, they note, are rooted in a high view of biblical authority.

Sometimes it is easier to convince evangelicals of that argument than it is to convince the secular culture—especially after the secular culture reads the Bible.

When the mainstream media or religious liberal groups look at our evangelical differences over, say, baptism, they rarely show much interest. After all, to them the debate is simply one group of “fundamentalists” arguing that the Bible calls for sprinkling babies and another set of “fundamentalists” arguing that the same Bible calls for immersing believers only. The secular culture is rarely interested in our intramural debates over Arminian/Calvinist differences or dispensationalist/covenantal distinctions. In the gender debate, however, the cultural left seems to see a much different dynamic, a dynamic they see at work in the larger culture itself.

A recent letters-to-the-editor exchange in the *Atlantic Monthly* showcases this trend. In the March 2003 issue, a Midwestern evangelical furiously complains that an article on Third-world Christianity by religion scholar Philip Jenkins is off the mark. Specifically, the correspondent complains that

Jenkins “sees the ordination of women as marking ‘liberal’ theology.” This is a distortion, the writer argues, since “conservative theologians in my own church body have come to see the restriction of ordination to men as fundamentally a misinterpretation of Scripture (which, to be honest, we might not have bothered to verify until more-secular forces aroused us!).” This evangelical, stung by the charge of “liberalism”, wishes to make known that his egalitarianism is rooted in Scripture, not the feminist movement.

The response from the *Atlantic* writer is instructive. Jenkins is not an evangelical partisan arguing against theological liberalism, but a marginally Catholic expert on world religions. As such, Jenkins calls on the evangelical correspondent to honestly question whether or not the Bible teaches gender egalitarianism. Jenkins therefore notes that he differs with the letter writer on “the definition of contemporary ecclesiastical liberalism”—not that there is anything wrong with that.

“Some New Testament passages seem, *prima facie*, to veto a leadership role for women in the Church, and Church traditions offer powerful support for that stance,” Jenkins responds. “For various reasons, many churches have decided that these scriptural and traditional authorities no longer apply. In other words, they are arguing for a substantial revision of the bases of Christian authority—one that most would, I think, view as liberal on the political and religious spectrum. If these ideas are not strictly ‘theological,’ there is certainly a very high degree of correlation between those holding liberal theological views and those urging such modernizing reforms in Church life.”

*The Atlantic* is representative here of a larger phenomenon. More and more “mainstream” egalitarians seem to be saying to evangelical feminists: “We agree with your feminism, but why pretend that the Bible supports it?” In this respect, the majority of mainline Protestant theologians are at least more consistent. They affirm the biblical witness of distinctions in the roles of men and women in the church and home. They just think this witness is wrong and outdated.

Evangelical egalitarianism marches on, and seems to be gaining more and more converts among the evangelical subculture. But it is not as easy to fool the outside world. They’ve seen this before. They call it “feminism.” Not that there’s anything wrong with that. ■

<sup>1</sup> Check CBMW’s website ([www.cbmw.org](http://www.cbmw.org)) for regular commentaries by Dr. Moore.

# Annotated Bibliography for Gender Related Articles in 2002

Compiled and Annotated by Rob Lister and Todd L. Miles  
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In this issue of the journal we profile significant gender-related articles from 2002. 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. they see no Scriptural warrant for affirming 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 non-evangelical point of view. This category also serves as our classification for liberal scholars. 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

Andrews, James W. "Boundaries Without Bonds: How to Keep Headship from Being Hardship." *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* 7/1 (2002) 30-36.

Andrews offers a pastor's perspective to thinking through implementation of a complementarian vision in our church and home life. He recognizes that there are numerous godly women who are extraordinarily gifted. And he is concerned to see that they are deployed to their maximal fulfillment in ministry in a way that is consonant (and therefore not restrictive but affirming)

with God's guidelines for ministry in the church and home.

Bock, Darrell L. "Do Gender-Sensitive Translations Distort Scripture? Not Necessarily." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 45 (2002) 651-669.

Bock's article proceeds in four main sections. In the first section, Bock attempts to lay the groundwork for his discussion by evaluating the different approaches to "gender-sensitive" translation. He argues that the terms gender-inclusive, gender-accurate, and gender-neutral do not, in and of themselves, reveal which form of gender sensitivity (e.g., ideological sensitivity vs. translational sensitivity) is being applied. He then argues that much of the issue comes down to a debate over formal equivalence vs. functional equivalence in translation theory. Briefly, in the second section, Bock suggests that the issue has been around a long time, pointing to supposed examples from the Tyndale Bible, the seventeenth century KJV, and even the LXX. In the third section, which makes up the bulk of the article, Bock turns his attention to evaluating a variety of texts. In each case, Bock concludes that there is some warrant for allowing the "gender-sensitive" translation. Sometimes the "sensitive" rendering is to be preferred; occasionally it is not preferable; but in the texts he examined, Bock opines that it is never an issue of orthodoxy. In the concluding section, Bock offers some final observations. He suggests, for instance, that translations like the TNIV are not ideologically driven. He notes that he does not agree with those who argue that the English language has changed so much that these translational changes are now required. He advises the use of marginal notes, where interpretational difficulties arise. But on the whole, he does not see "gender-sensitive" translation as necessarily problematic, and he maintains that we should leave translators with this option. [The reader will be interested to note that Wayne Grudem has reviewed and critiqued an earlier, web-based version of this article as a component of a much larger article evaluating "inclusive" language translation. See Grudem's article in JBMW 7/2 (Fall 2002) 31-66. The article can be accessed on-line by clicking on the journal icon at the CBMW website.]

Bray, Gerald. "Bishops, Presbyters and Women." *Churchman* 116 (2002) 7-20.

After commenting upon the established conviction that *presbyteros* and *episkopos* refer to the same office in the NT, Bray goes on to argue that however prominently women may be featured in the ministries of Jesus and Paul, there is no evidence whatsoever that women ever filled this office. Bray then looks to the



inter-Trinitarian relationships as further evidence for the equality and distinction that we see in the ordering of church life.

Castro, Ann F. "An Inconclusive Replay: Is There Conclusive Evidence for Women's Ordination." *Touchstone* 15 (2002) 27-31.

Castro recounts, in fascinating detail, the story of her recent study and findings on the "women's issue." Previously, she had been undecided on the matter. In order to participate in a denominational study of the matter, Castro (a Greek professor at Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry in Ambridge, Pennsylvania) read three volumes, including *Beyond Sex Roles* by Gilbert Bilezikian (a prominent egalitarian) and *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* (RBMW hereafter), edited by John Piper and Wayne Grudem. In the course of completing her study, two features in particular stood out in leading her to a complementarian conclusion. In the first place, Castro came to a recognition of the eternal Sonship of Christ and its concomitant significance for gender roles. Castro comments, "Since within the Trinity relationships of both subordination and equality exist, it would seem logical to see these same relationships reflected in our lives." Secondly, she discovered from her reading of RBMW, in a way that she had not previously seen, the fact that such an ordering of relationships is not only right but good. Castro identifies this as the missing link in her thinking of the matter heretofore. Of RBMW, she comments, "The authors of this third book really believe, and demonstrated convincingly, that men and women are completely equal as persons in Christ and that in placing men in headship and requiring women to submit to this, God was not trying to make our lives miserable. He was, in a way we may not fully understand, trying to protect us from ourselves and to provide a framework for us to live out our identities as Christian men and women."

Conver, Leigh E. "Marriage as a Spiritual Discipline." *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 6/1 (2002) 78-93.

Conver's thesis is that marriage has been designed by God to be an instrument by which individuals can provide each other with opportunities to grow toward the ideal of Christ's self-emptying love. He sees the failure of marriage in contemporary society as evidence that pervasive narcissism prevails as a mindset that infects many who enter the marriage covenant. Rather than seeking to have one's own needs met, Conver encourages Christian couples to view marriage as an opportunity for growth and spiritual discipline. Conver briefly surveys some biblical teaching on marriage and sanctification and then offers reflections on how

contemporary therapeutic theories inform the marriage crisis. Rather than view marriage as an enemy to personal happiness, one should view marriage as a "potential crucible for the change and transformation" of individuals.

Grudem, Wayne. "Are the Criticisms of the TNIV Bible Really Justified? An Interaction with Craig Blomberg, Darrell Bock, Peter Bradley, D.A. Carson, and Bruce Waltke." *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* 7/2 (2002) 31-66.

Grudem offers a detailed interaction with the work of five scholars who are on record in their support of the TNIV. He begins by correctly focusing the debate on the main issue, i.e., whether it is acceptable "to translate only the general idea of a passage and systematically omit male-oriented details of meaning that are present in the original Hebrew or Greek text." This is no small thing, for as Grudem demonstrates some of the criticisms made by his opponents in this debate have failed to take this into account. Grudem also examines (and finds wanting) the claim that 18 of 19 recent Bible translations have adopted a gender-neutral policy like the TNIV. He then turns to provide a comparison of translation guidelines, and he debunks the idea that only scholars are capable of understanding the issues. Further, Grudem offers a careful analysis of the supposed changes in English that supporters of the TNIV suggest require a gender-neutral translation. He also engages in a detailed analysis and critique of a number of arguments put forward on behalf of the TNIV, before turning to assess specific biblical texts. Once again, it is distressing to note with what frequency some of the TNIV proponents have introduced significant misunderstandings or misrepresentations into the debate. On the whole, Grudem's article provides a remarkably thorough analysis of the issue.

Grudem, Wayne. "A Brief Summary of Concerns About the TNIV." *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* 7/2 (2002) 6-8.

Grudem provides a brief statement of his main concerns regarding the translation policy of the TNIV. Herein, he cites several categories of examples to demonstrate his main point, namely that "in hundreds of verses the TNIV translates only the general idea of a passage and omits male-oriented details."

Grudem, Wayne. "The 'Gender-Neutral' NIV: What is the Controversy About?" *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* 7/1 (2002) 37-40.

This brief response from Grudem offers some of his early comments and reflections on the TNIV that was only newly released at the time. Grudem points out the

bottom line of the controversy and proceeds to establish his critique by an examination of a number of significant passages. As he puts it, "the heart of the controversy is this: The TNIV people have decided to translate the general idea of a passage and to erase the male-oriented details." After examining what the TNIV has done in translating a number of passages, Grudem concludes that it is no slight error to undertranslate male-oriented meanings when they are intended as a part of the text. Indeed, he fears that it will lead some to question the trustworthiness of their own English translations.

Heitland, Steve. "YWAM Leadership Embraces Egalitarianism." *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* 7/1 (2002) 24-29.

Heitland (a YWAM staffer himself) offers a pointed critique of the new egalitarian emphasis that YWAM leadership (including the founder) has taken, evidenced in their recent publication of *Why Not Women?* As the book proceeds in two main sections, so also does Heitland's critique focus on the two emphases of egalitarian presuppositions and egalitarian interpretation. In the aftermath of his analysis, Heitland goes on to offer his own specific suggestions for roles appropriate to men and women in YWAM.

Hulse, Erroll. "The Puritans on Marriage and the Family." *Reformation Today* 189 (2002) 3-12.

Hulse examines the teaching of Puritan pastors which is attributed with the establishment of English Christian marriage and the English Christian family. He summarizes the context of incorrect doctrine and institutionalized malpractice in which the Puritans lived and taught. He argues that the example of the Puritan pastors to hold society accountable and fight for a biblical understanding of marriage should motivate current believers to defend the biblical teachings on marriage, sex, and the family in our contemporary culture where the Christian view of marriage and the family are under considerable attack.

Jones, Peter. "The TNIV: Gender Accurate or Ideologically Egalitarian." *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* 7/2 (2002) 15-20.

Jones offers some fascinating insights in his evaluation of the TNIV from a big-picture perspective. He reminds us that translation does not occur in a vacuum, and that male representation is no insignificant feature of the biblical plotline. Jones further points out the highly ideological nature of the logic of muting masculinity in the secular arena. Culturally speaking, this represents an assault on God's good intentions. And yet, Jones clearly demonstrates that "consciously

or not . . . this fine group of Christian scholars (i.e. the TNIV committee) seems to be momentarily in agreement with radical academic feminism, an ideology that has successfully convinced contemporary culture, including many evangelicals, that male representation and generic male language are signs of male chauvinism and power-hungry patriarchy."

Laney, J. Carl. "Gender Based Boundaries for Gathered Congregations: An Interpretive History of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35." *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* 7/1 (2002) 4-13.

Laney provides a remarkably thorough interpretive history of Paul's injunction in 1 Cor 14:34-35. Upon concluding his survey, Laney posits his own resolution to the perceived tension between Paul's comments in 1 Cor 11:2-16 and 1 Cor 14:34-35. He defends the view that 1 Cor 14:34-35 pertains to the church in its public assembly, whereas 1 Cor 11:2-16 refers to women "praying and prophesying in contexts other than the meeting of the church."

Leadership Interview, "Noble Masculinity: An Interview with Robert Lewis." *Leadership* 23 (2002) 26-32.

In this interview/article, Pastor Robert Lewis discusses "Noble Masculinity." Among the topics addressed are reconciliation with fathers, raising godly men, mentoring for men, and the need for men to actively lead their families.

Ovey, Michael. "The Economy of Salvation and Ecclesiastical Tyranny: Issues Relating to Female Episcopacy." *Churchman* 116 (2002) 21-72.

In the context of the Church of England, Ovey marshals a sustained case that women should not be bishops. He contends that the key texts as well as the economy of redemption actually support the traditional reading. Ovey provides a fine discussion of key texts, e.g., 1 Corinthians 11 & 14, 1 Timothy 2, Galatians 3, Ephesians 5.

Poythress, Vern S. "Avoiding Generic 'He' in the TNIV." *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* 7/2 (2002) 21-30.

Poythress addresses one major component of the TNIV's translation policy, namely the consistent avoidance of "generic he." Poythress points out and evaluates the five ways in which the TNIV primarily maneuvers around "generic he." Finally, in an addendum, Poythress responds to recent articles by Craig Blomberg and D.A. Carson. Poythress notes that Blomberg appeals to certain Gospel parallels where there are differences in person or number. He then makes the important point that such an

appeal proves nothing since “Gospel parallels are not Bible translations.” In a somewhat lengthier response, Poythress shows how, with distressing frequency, Carson has either misunderstood or glaringly misrepresented the position of Poythress and Wayne Grudem.

Poythress, Vern S. “Systematic Pattern in TNIV.” *Westminster Theological Journal* 63 (2002) 185-192.

Poythress argues that the central problem with the TNIV is not merely the translation of this or that passage, but with an overall translation policy that generally disallows “using a male representative or example to communicate a general truth.” After demonstrating this with several examples from the TNIV, Poythress concludes that TNIV translators have cut themselves off from the possibility of maximal accuracy in their translations of masculine generics. Clearly, these resources are available in the English language. The decision then, at the principal level, not to use them is a decision to sacrifice meaning.

Schemm, Peter R. “Kevin Giles’s *The Trinity and Subordinationism*: A Review Article.” *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* 7/2 (2002) 67-78.

Schemm cogently critiques Giles’ thesis. Giles has attempted to rule the eternal functional subordination of the Son unorthodox, and he (i.e., Giles) further maintains that such a Trinitarian reading is born out of a consuming drive for male headship. In response, Schemm insightfully displays the weaknesses of Giles’ work—and they are many. In the first place, Giles’ theological method is sub-evangelical in that he holds a neo-orthodox view of Scripture. Schemm also demonstrates that Giles has loaded some terms (e.g., conservative) improperly and failed to make vital distinctions between other sets of terms (e.g., subordination v. subordinationism). Further, Giles wrongly attributes certain views to his opponents, and frequently his reading of key theologians from church history is at least suspect, if not clearly mistaken. Giles groundlessly maintains mutual submission in the Godhead. And finally, though it may not be a weakness in terms of substance, the inflammatory way in which Giles conducts the debate functions only as a hindrance to moving the debate forward.

Schreiner, Thomas R. “Review of Slaves, Women, and Homosexuals.” *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* 7/1 (2002) 41-51.

Schreiner offers a summary and review of the provocative new thesis by William J. Webb. He begins by thoroughly summarizing Webb’s appeal to a trajectory hermeneutic that would allow us to follow the “redemptive spirit” and actually go beyond the

explicit teachings of Scripture in our adjudication of some matters (e.g., slavery and the women’s issue, but not homosexuality, according to Webb). In the course of the summary, Schreiner also traces the eighteen criteria that Webb appeals to in establishing the hermeneutical boundaries of his view. Then, in the second section of the review, Schreiner deftly points out the weaknesses and inconsistencies in Webb’s overall thesis and supporting criteria. In the end, Schreiner concludes that Webb misappropriates the concept of redemptive history and that he poorly construes the relationship between the OT and NT, which in turn, shows his own criteria to be inadequately related to the biblical storyline.

“Translation Inaccuracies in the TNIV: A Categorized List of 901 Examples.” *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* 7/2 (2002) 9-14.

This article points to over 900 examples of translation inaccuracies in the NT of the TNIV that, roughly speaking, fall into eight major categories (each with its own subcategories). The article examines shifts in translations from the NIV (1984) to the TNIV (2002), most of which stem from an intentional effort “to avoid using five words with masculine meaning or nuance: father, brother, son, man, and he/him/his.”

Ware, Bruce A. “Male and Female Complementarity and the Image of God.” *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* 7/1 (2002) 14-23.

Ware tackles the issue of the Image of God vis-à-vis our own genderedness. The article proceeds in three main divisions. First, Ware offers an historical and theological examination of just what the Image of God is. After concluding in favor of what he terms “functional holism,” Ware moves into his focused examination of what this means in accord with our creation as men and women. Here, Ware stresses three points: 1) the Image as an indicator of male-female equality, 2) the Image as an indicator of male-female differentiation, and 3) the Image as an indicator of male-female complementarity. It is in the context of this third category that Ware offers five practical and helpful conclusions as to how men and women should live out this complementarian vision “as the images God created us to be.”

## Egalitarian Authors/Articles

Bilezikian, Gilbert. "Biblical Community versus Gender-Based Hierarchy." *Priscilla Papers* 16/3 (2002) 3-10.

In a hotly charged essay, Gilbert Bilezikian argues that the church must recapture God's definition of the church as the community of oneness. Comparing this necessary revolution to the Reformation turn to Scripture over Tradition, he defines oneness as being based on three structures: the ontological structure of plurality within unity, the structure of servant relations, and the structure of ministry where God entrusts responsibilities to humans. Although Bilezikian admits that God the Father is often at the forefront of divine action, the Son and Spirit are always involved. From this theological starting point, he argues that divine design for humans is the same. He denies that there is any authoritative role differentiation in the creation account, but that the Fall destroyed the community of mutual submission and shared responsibilities, and brought about a hierarchy of roles. Bilezikian sees Jesus Christ, in his redemptive work, as cleansing sinful humanity from that role differentiation, replacing it with a "bond of mutual subjection." The church is to operate on the basis of those three pre-fall structures, where leadership in ministry is a servant function, rather than a "male prerogative." He concludes by condemning churches who restrict the role of elder to males based on 1 Timothy and Titus, but do not demand perfect adherence to the other requirements in those passages.

Carlson-Thies, Christiane. "Hermeneutics in Pink and Blue." *Priscilla Papers* 16/4 (2002) 3-7.

In this article, Christiane Carlson-Thies denies the affirmation that women can be equal in essence without equal opportunity to authority in roles. She argues that complementarians are inconsistent and reductionistic in their hermeneutic, employing a double standard to the creation narrative and 1 Timothy 2. She challenges men to read the Bible through the lens of gender and is convinced that "patriarchal" interpretations sever the unity of men and women and create "two distinct human races." Carlson-Thies concludes that whereas the full humanity of Genesis 1 defines maleness, without access to authority, full humanity is "stripped away" from females.

Colijn, Brenda B. "A Biblical Theology of Women in Leadership." *Ashland Theological Journal* 34 (2002) 67- 80.

Colijn, who argues for women in church leadership, suggests that the way to go about formulating the best view, is not to focus so much on individual texts as it is

to develop a solid biblical theology of women's leadership. In so doing, she makes the stupefying claim that "in general, egalitarian interpreters have been more sensitive to biblical theology and developments in salvation history than have non-egalitarians . . ." She then proceeds to offer a standard egalitarian vision of the canonical framework—absolute equality only at creation, hierarchy as a consequence of the fall, and the restoration of absolute egalitarianism in redemption. (Appended to her main argument, Colijn suggests some additional theological points concerning an egalitarian understanding of the Trinity and the nature of the church.) The problem with her canonical picture, of course, is that it is a fundamental misreading of the biblical theological vision. The better salvation historical framework acknowledges that God's good intent in creation established full equality of persons along with functional distinctions between the man and the woman. The Fall reveals the assault on the God-ordained relational orderings. And our redemption marks the restoration of our right relations and our fully equal access to salvation in Jesus Christ.

Fee, Gordon D. "The Cultural Context of Ephesians 5:18-6:9." *Priscilla Papers* 16/1 (2002) 3-8.

In an edited transcript of his address at the Christians for Biblical Equality International Conference, Gordon Fee explains that one can only understand Eph 5:18-6:9 if one understands the Greco-Roman household, the system of patronage, and the role that men played as *paterfamilia*, the head of the household, in that society. Fee suggests that Paul was not trying to change the cultural mores, but was addressing individuals within an existing cultural system, urging them to transform those preexisting relationships through sacrificial love and humble service to Christ. Fee concludes that the structures written about in Ephesians 5 are "immaterial since they are predicated altogether on cultural givens that are simply not ours."

Gagnon, Robert A. "Are There Universally Valid Sex Precepts? A Critique of Walter Wink's Views on the Bible and Homosexuality." *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 24 (2002) 72-125.

Gagnon challenges the attempts of Walter Wink who, in an effort to validate homosexual activity, suggests that the Bible, while having sexual mores, does not have a universally valid sexual ethic. In particular, Gagnon challenges Wink's analogical hermeneutic as not offering relevant comparisons to the question of homosexuality.



Groothuis, Douglas. "What Jesus Thought About Women." *Priscilla Papers* 16/3 (2002) 17-20.

Douglas Groothuis examines the interactions of Jesus with women and compares the New Testament to other ancient documents, including those of Gnosticism and Judaism. He sees Jesus as revolutionary in affirming the dignity of women and affirming a woman's right to theological instruction. All this begs the question of why Jesus did not do more than simply affirm a woman's right to learn. Groothuis explains that Jesus did include women in his close followers although given the highly patriarchal society it would have been "unlikely, if not culturally impossible" for him to minister effectively with women in his inner circle.

Groothuis, Rebecca Merrill. "Leading Him Up the Garden Path." *Priscilla Papers* 16/2 (2002) 10-14.

In this article, Rebecca Groothuis suggests that Paul, in 1 Timothy 2, was not denying women the opportunity to teach and/or have authority over men. In fact, his reference to Eden suggests that Paul was actually cautioning against Eve's error in the garden, namely, "believing a satanically twisted view of God's word" and teaching that view to others. If that be the case, Groothuis argues there is nothing particularly gender-specific in the prohibition, but that it applies to all people.

Kohlenberger III, John R. "What About the 'Gender Accurate' TNIV." *Priscilla Papers* 16/2 (2002) 3-9.

John Kohlenberger defends the TNIV by providing the translation's background, a discussion of its translation theory, and a comparison of key biblical texts. The article is written with an edge (he accuses TNIV critics of a conflict of interest, and infers that their criticisms are hypocritical). Readers will find it helpful to compare *JBMW* 7/2 to this article, where many of the same biblical texts are discussed.

Ludwig, Kamilla. "The Subjection of Women." *Priscilla Papers* 16/4 (2002) 8-11.

Ludwig reviews the utilitarian ethicist John Stuart Mill's "The Subjection of Women" and attempts to utilize his social theory to build a case for evangelical feminism. Ludwig believes that Mill makes contributions with his partnership pattern of marriage, his criticism of classicism, and his suggestion that society would benefit from both men and women applying their resources to a given task. Mill's utilitarian social ethic has little in common with the biblical worldview and has been largely discredited. It seems a strange place to build an argument for evangelical feminism.

Mikhael, Mary. "St. Paul and the Place of Women in the Church." *Theological Review* 23 (2002) 125-142.

This is the transcript of a lecture that Mikhael delivered at the Near East School of Theology. She identifies Gal 3:28 as the verse that defines male and female roles in the New Testament and then wonders whether Paul in his other writings was being inconsistent or has been misunderstood and/or misinterpreted throughout church history. In a troubling conclusion, she asserts that "the maleness of Christ has no more relevance to his redemptive mission than his ethnic identity or his appearance. If the maleness of Christ deprives femaleness from being part of the reality of God when Jesus is worshiped as Lord and Savior, then we need a new interpretation of the Gospel." Redemptive history teaches exactly what Mikhael denies: Both the maleness and ethnic identity of Jesus were critical to his fulfillment of the Old Testament covenants and promises. Both are fundamental to the correct interpretation of the Gospel. (See the article by Bruce A. Ware in this issue.)

Oden, Thomas C. "On Women and Men Working Together in the Church: Who Will Lead Us? Surely the One whom the Spirit Gifts." *Evangelical Review of Theology* 26 (2002) 119-135.

Oden delivered this paper to a Women's Commission in Malaysia. In his address, he covered such hot topics as the incarnation, women teaching in the church, and mutual submission. In the main, Oden's conclusions are based upon typical egalitarian arguments. For example, 1 Tim 2:11-15 is explained away as being culturally bound; Jesus had to be a man because his mother was a woman; and men and women are to mutually serve and love one another. Oden does offer a light defense of masculine language for God in Scripture and worship. He suggests that the elimination of all gender reference reveals "an ideological bias reflecting an anti-historical prejudice, a hatred of actual history, that fails to reason with the believing church over all generations."

Padgett, Alan G. "What is Biblical Equality?" *Priscilla Papers* 16/3 (2002) 22-25.

Padgett gives an explanation of the beliefs and understandings of the Christians for Biblical Equality. He suggests that biblical equality has three main ideas. First, human equality is based upon the creation of men and women in the image of God. They are equal before God, and in the church, home, and society. Second, men and women have equal responsibility in the church, home, and society. Padgett argues that men and women are equally believer priests and share equally in the ministry of the church. Finally, men and women are to

mutually submit to one another. Padgett sees this as the embodiment of the Christain ethic of love. Although Padgett affirms that believers are to serve within the scope of their gifting, he makes two broad false assumptions: 1) difference in roles entails a difference in essence and 2) equal access to Christ entails equal access to ministry and leadership roles.

Payton, Jr., James R. "A Tale of Two Cultures." *Priscilla Papers* 16/1 (2002) 13-17.

Payton believes that much of the debate over the roles of women in the church ignores the question of the historical context of the New Testament writings. The early church in Jerusalem was caught between two quite different cultures, Greek and Roman. Each accorded a significantly different place to women in the society. Payton suggests that in churches located in a more egalitarian culture, Paul was very comfortable with women sharing equally in ministry. He argues that it is also important to understand some New Testament writings as reacting against the Greek idea of *hetaira*, a harlot or prostitute who spoke openly in public. Payton concludes that where cultural mores prevent full female participation, then the proclamation of the gospel must take precedence for the time being. Since women in North America can speak without tarnishing their reputations, they should be eagerly embraced as coworkers. It must be stated that Payton's premise that "prohibitions regarding women speaking in the church were all bound up with cultural attitudes toward female sexual immorality" must be imported onto the biblical text. Paul's writings never make this specific argument. Far from it, Paul's prohibitions on women speaking in the church explicitly refer back to the creation account.

Robert, Dana L. "The Influence of American Missionary Women on the World Back Home." *Religion and American Culture* 12 (2002) 59-89.

Robert believes that the women's missionary movement is "a lightening rod" for debates over the changing roles of women in ministry. She chronicles the history of the movement, differentiating strongly between the legacy of women missionaries as recorded by men and by women's missionary societies. Although she discusses the impact of female missionaries on the countries to which they were sent, Robert is most attentive to the impact that women missionaries have had on the sending countries. She believes that the uniqueness of the impact by women missionaries lies in their stimulating leadership among women and their calling attention to the needs of women and children around the world. Throughout the article, Robert assumes rather than argues for the legitimacy of the changes she believes women missionaries have

wrought in their homelands.

Warner, Sharon. "The Meaning of Ordination in the Church." *Lexington Theological Quarterly* 37 (2002) 61-84.

Warner discusses the question of ordination with particular attention given to what she believes are competing models for ordination and the laying on of hands. Should it be from the "empowerment" model where the clergy is set apart for utility and authority is functional, not essential? Or should it be from the "embodiment" model where people are ordained on the basis of gifting? Her argument includes a brief history of the meaning and practice of ordination in the Disciples of Christ denomination, as well as a discussion of the pneumatological implications of ordination. She concludes that the ones who lay on hands should be those who participate in the community of faith, where both ministry and authority should be based upon ontology and gifting, not upon functional conferrance.

## Non-Evangelical Authors/Articles

Cheng, Patrick S. "Multiplicity and Judges 19: Constructing a Queer Asian Pacific American Biblical Hermeneutic." *Semeia* 90/91 (2002) 119-133.

This article demonstrates the shift that has taken place in postmodern hermeneutics for the homosexual community. There is little attention given to the intent of the author of Judges 19. The purpose of Chang's work is to create a reader response hermeneutic which looks for themes of "multiplicity" in the text. Chang argues that employment of this hermeneutic will show that Judges 19 can be used as a "foundational text" for understanding the experiences of Asian Pacific Americans who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered—that is, the sexually and geographically disenfranchised will relate to the experience of the unnamed concubine in Judges 19.

Enzner-Probst, Brigitte. "Honoring the Wisdom of Old Women: Croning Rituals." *Studia Liturgica* 32 (2002) 129-143.

Enzner-Probst examines croning rituals such as the "Croning Celebrations" of Virginia Mollenkott. Croning celebrations are ceremonies where women symbolically are transitioned into the wisdom years of elderly life. Enzner-Probst believes that the theological implications of these rituals include an affirmation that every life-stage of a woman is significant, different

images of God such as God-Sophia and goddesses can be tested, and biblical stories of transformation take on a more personal meaning.

Feske, Millicent C. "Feminist Theologies and the Possibility of God-Talk." *Quarterly Review* 22 (2002) 138-151.

Writing from a feminist perspective, Feske outlines the problems and solutions that are articulated by modern feminist theologians about Christian God-language in general and names for God in particular. Although many postmodern thinkers do not believe that one can use language to speak about God with any certainty or meaning, Feske believes that there are numerous possibilities for speech about God and each of the possibilities creates powerful effects in the lives of the speaker. Her article is void of any biblical reflection, but instead relies upon the writings and work of other theologians. Her more troubling conclusions include a rejection of virtually any limits on the speech and names we use for God and a denial of the necessity of special revelation for knowledge of God.

Gottschall, Marilyn. "The Ethical Implications of the Deconstruction of Gender." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 70 (2002) 279-299.

This article attempts to demonstrate that the deconstruction of the social institution of gender coupled with egalitarian convictions can lead to a reevaluation of ethical questions and answers and a dismantling of ethical power structures brought about by the social institution of gender. This article is a troubling example of the nature of postmodern hermeneutics, at odds not just with Scripture but with any text or use of language that is or claims to be authoritative.

Hughes, Sheila Hassell. "'Eye to Eye': Using Women's Literature as Lenses for Feminist Theology." *Literature & Theology* 16 (2002) 1-26.

Hughes chronicles the turn in feminist theology to utilizing feminist literature as an additional and alternative "sacred text." This recent movement in feminist theology is clearly a work-in-progress. Hughes is critical of much recent work, but not because it reduces biblical authority. Rather, her critique of the manner in which poetic works are used is that their use is too limited in scope. She calls for a broader base of feminist literature to function authoritatively in feminist theology so the entire spectrum of postmodern hermeneutical theory can be better brought to bear within the feminist religious community.

Jarrell, R. H. "The Birth Narrative as Female Counterpart to Covenant." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 25 (2002) 3-18.

Jarrell argues that in the OT, YHWH primarily relates to humanity on the basis of a covenant. And yet, Jarrell continues, this fails to include women. Hence, Jarrell explores the possibility that the birth narratives—beginning with Hagar in Genesis 16—constitutes, for women, something akin to YHWH's covenanting with the patriarchs.

Johnson, Elizabeth. "Apocalyptic Family Values." *Interpretation* 56 (2002) 34-44.

Insofar as this article pertains to gender relations, Johnson argues from Gal 3:27-28 that "baptism represents the very end of the created order." Whereas binary relationships (e.g. male - female) previously reigned, Johnson argues that owing to our newfound union with Christ, no distinctions pertain any longer. We are, according to Johnson, now "one person." Here we might point out that, as is so often the case with the interpretation of this text, the context (which Johnson earlier acknowledges) is here ignored in order to press a point about role relationships that Paul was manifestly not trying to make. (The reader should consult the article on the interpretation of Gal 3:28 by Peter Schemm in this issue of JBMW.) We might also note a few other points of interest from Johnson's argument. 1) She rejects Pauline authorship of 1 Timothy. 2) In the face of enormous evidence to the contrary, she dismisses the originality of 1 Cor 14:33b-36. 3) She accuses Paul of jarring inconsistencies, e.g., the egalitarian emphasis of Gal 3:28 on the one hand, and the "tortured logic of 1 Cor 11:2-16" which maintains hierarchy, on the other hand.

Lancaster, Sarah Heaner. "God and the Socially Located Subject: A Process Framework for Poststructural Feminism." *Faith and Philosophy* 19 (2002) 195-213.

Lancaster argues that poststructural postmodernism has been a useful tool in the feminist's arsenal. Nevertheless, she maintains that poststructuralism cannot, in itself, carry the day for feminists, because "it is difficult to ground claims about justice in a theory that tends toward relativism." Interestingly enough, as some feminists have discovered, they need to appeal to some sort of moral norm in order to establish their "justice claims." In the end, Lancaster suggests that an appeal to process philosophy (coupled with poststructuralism) will be able to fill in the gaps.

Osiek, Carolyn. "The Bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:22-33): A Problematic Wedding." *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 32 (2002) 29-39.

Osiek is very concerned that Eph 5:22-33 be interpreted in a particular way. In fact she refers to it as a dangerous text, because it would appear to encourage a differentiation in roles between men and women. In her view, the metaphor of comparing Christ and the church to the husband and wife is detrimental to women, and as such, should be abandoned. Osiek shockingly concludes, "I would argue that casting the church as feminine, and above all as the bride of Christ, far from enhancing the dignity of women, has in fact done harm to perception of the capacity of women to image the divine, and thus of women's fundamental human and Christian dignity."

Reid, Barbara E. "Beyond Petty Pursuits and Wearisome Widows: Three Lukan Parables." *Interpretation* 56 (2002) 284-294.

Reid explores three of Luke's well known parables featuring women. She is concerned that some might read these parables as limiting women to the domestic sphere, and she admits that Luke sends mixed signals. Nevertheless, Reid argues that these parables have "liberating potential" to empower women in the public sphere, and even to "aid Christians in seeing God in female form."

Safrai, Shumel. "The Place of Women in First-century Synagogues." *Priscilla Papers* 16/1 (2002) 9-11.

In a reprint of an article that was first published in 1993, Safrai compares the place of women in 1st and 20th century synagogues. He concludes that at the time of Jesus, women, both Jewish and Christian, participated fully in the religious life of the Jewish community. Things are much different today in the Jewish synagogue, where women cannot be counted as part of the quorum.

Wang, Zhihe. "What Can Whitehead's Philosophy Contribute to Feminism." *Process Studies* 31 (2002) 125-137.

Recent feminist scholarship is investigating the relevance that process philosophy has for the feminist movement. In this article, Wang critiques the "uneasy marriage" between process thought and feminism, namely the lack of coherence between feminism's separatism and process thought's relational philosophy. She explains that the strength of process thought lies in its interrelated approach to life and suggests that the greatest benefit to feminism could lie in a "harmonious partnership" between man and woman, rather than a

stark male-female dualism.

Wilson, James Q. "Sex and the Marriage Market." *Commentary* 113 (2002) 40-46.

Wilson draws attention to one interesting factor that likely contributes to the high levels of single-parent families in our day. He argues that one overlooked factor is that for several decades in the United States it has been the case that "there are many more marriageable women than men." Societal sex ratios, in a similar fashion to the law of supply and demand, reveal whether or not women are generally in a position to expect more or less from their male suitors.

## Undeclared Authors/Articles

Bailey, Wilma Ann. "Black and Jewish Women Consider Hagar." *Encounter* 63 (2002) 37-44.

Bailey examines the similarities and differences in contemporary African-American and Jewish interpretations of the Sarah and Hagar narratives. She concludes that the social location of the reader is only one factor that leads to interpretation. The essay is a study in current reader-response interpretation with little attention paid to authorial intent.

Berecz, John M. "Is There Such a Thing as 'Christian' Sex?" *Pastoral Psychology* 50 (2002) 139-146.

Berecz critiques the teachings of evolutionary biologists, feminists, and popular culture on sexuality. He offers a solid biblical view of human sexuality that covers procreation, excitement, and the intimacy of the one-flesh relationship. He further argues for the therapeutic value of the sexual union between husband and wife.

Blazen, Ivan T. "Sexuality in Biblical Perspective." *Spectrum* 30 (2002) 51-59.

Blazen offers a balanced article on the biblical teaching on sexuality. He points out that human sexuality is not a result of the fall, but is good because God created it. He covers a range of biblical teachings on sexuality, including marriage and sanctification.

Coakley, Sarah. "Re-Thinking Gregory of Nyssa: Introduction- Gender, Trinitarian Analogies, and the Pedagogy of 'The Song'." *Modern Theology* 18 (2002) 431-443.

Coakley first briefly surveys the essays of Gregory of Nyssa, classifying them by their distinctive emphases. She then establishes ground rules for exegeting the



works of Gregory. Finally, she employs those principles to seek and interpret trinitarian images in "The Song." Coakley concludes that her rules for reading and understanding Gregory will encourage a broader base for assessing Gregory's trinitarianism, particularly with regard to the names of God, personhood, and gender.

Elliott, John H. "Jesus Was Not an Egalitarian: A Critique of an Anachronistic and Idealist Theory." *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 32 (2002) 75-91.

Elliott powerfully argues against the notion put forward by some (e.g. Fiorenza, Crossan, Theissen) that Jesus was an egalitarian bent on implementing a "discipleship of equals." After marshalling a host of evidence against the egalitarian thesis, Elliott concludes that their theory "has proved inconsistent with the content of Jesus' teaching, and the social reality of the Jesus faction, implausible on sociological grounds, and nonprobative on historical grounds. The claim that the Jesus movement was egalitarian involves flawed reasoning and an anachronistic, ethnocentric, and ideologically-driven reading of the New Testament." On the other hand, in the actual frame of the NT, references to equality are predominantly pointers to the "equal access to grace, forgiveness, and mercy of God effected by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ."

Fullerton, J. Andrew. "God by Any Other Name?" *Leadership* 18 (2002) 171-181.

Fullerton investigates the use of personal names for God and argues that it is the Holy Spirit who creates the "semantic link" between God and the words we use. Throughout he argues that the names "Father, Son and Holy Spirit" reflect important distinctions within both the immanent and economic Trinities. However, he concludes that because it is the Holy Spirit who subjectively creates the link between God and our use of the name "Father," other names for God could in principle be used. He doubts whether "Father, Son and Holy Spirit" can be improved upon.

Gudmundsdottir, Arnfridur. "Female Christ Figures in Films: A Feminist Critical Analysis of 'Breaking the Waves' and 'Dead Man Walking.'" *Studia Theologica* 56 (2002) 27-43.

Gudmundsdottir examines "Breaking the Waves" and "Dead Man Walking" through a "feminist Christological lens." The author contends that there is a need for films to portray female Christ-figures so that women can see "their capacity to bear the message of the Word of God becoming human flesh and to live among us." Sister Helen of "Dead Man Walking" is put forward as an excellent example, because of her ability

to love her neighbor sacrificially.

Haas, Guenther. "Perspectives on Homosexuality: A Review Article." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 45 (2002) 497-512.

Haas reviews the findings of six recent volumes on the subject of a Christian response to homosexuality. Essentially, the first three books revise the traditional Christian understanding by affirming homosexuality, whereas the latter three books espouse the traditional response. In his evaluation of the books, Haas engages their key arguments, pointing out strengths and weaknesses along the way. In his own estimation, the traditional view clearly offers the better interpretation.

Heth, William A. "Jesus on Divorce: How My Mind Has Changed." *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 6/1 (2002) 4-29.

Heth presents a thorough and irenic offering on the subject of divorce and remarriage. The majority view is that fornication and desertion by a non-Christian spouse are two scriptural grounds for remarriage. A significant minority view is that Jesus taught that remarriage constitutes adultery because God designed marriage to be permanent. Heth includes a very helpful chart that summarizes the way that both views understand sixteen biblical texts and theological topics. He then chronicles his journey from the minority view to the majority view, by discussing how his understanding of the biblical texts and theological topics gradually changed. He interacts primarily with Jesus' teachings on divorce, and the meaning of divorce and the one-flesh marriage relationship.

Johnson-Hill, Kelly. "Pacific Women's Experience of the Holy Spirit through Song and Dance." *The Pacific Journal of Theology II* (2002) 89-100.

Johnson-Hill investigates women's experience of the Holy Spirit in the arts. She believes that women have turned to this arena because they have traditionally been excluded from positions of authority in the church. Therefore, women's gifts "of spiritual perception have of necessity developed in somewhat 'subversive' ways." She looks at the practices of Pacific Island women in dance and song. Her arguments are entirely historical-experiential with no theological and/or trinitarian reflection on either pneumatology or the nature of worship.

Kavunkal, Jacob. "A Community of Equals: Women's Role in the Mission of the Church & Nation Building." *Third Millennium* (2002) 6-25.

Kavunkal examines the situation of women in Indian society. Although he approaches the topic from a Christian perspective, his concerns are more generally feminist in nature. His understanding of feminist theology is the promulgation of "a new mode of relationship" between men and women. Kanunkal does summarize biblical material that teaches equality of essence and highlights the role of women in redemptive history, but he also calls for a new hermeneutic, an ecological dimension to feminist theology in India, and collaboration between other religions to make the feminist movement more effective in India.

Maluleke, Tinyiko Sam and Sarojini Nadar. "Breaking the Covenant of Violence Against Women." *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 114 (2002) 5-17.

South African theologians Maluleke and Nadar believe that societal forces provide a de facto rationale for the systematic violence against women. Claiming Jesus Christ as their model, they argue that a correct strategy for opposing such systematic abuse is to deconstruct the biblical texts that are used to support authoritarian philosophies. The authors do not suggest what such deconstruction will look like. The substance of the article is devoted to two stories of oppression.

Paige, Terence. "The Social Matrix of Women's Speech at Corinth: The Context and Meaning of the Command to Silence in 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36." *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 12 (2002) 217- 242.

Paige offers a novel and far-reaching interpretation of 1 Cor 14:33b-36. He suggests that Paul's prohibition is not intended as a restriction on a woman's speech in gathered worship, but as a measure of restraining behavior that might have appeared sexually aggressive. Paige works this out by arguing that the restriction was directed exclusively to married women in order to prevent them from speaking with men outside of their family relations in the context of gathered worship. To have done otherwise, argues Paige, would have "implicitly called into question their relationship to their husbands."

Parry, Robin. "Feminist Hermeneutics and Evangelical Concerns: The Rape of Dinah as a Case Study." *Tyndale Bulletin* 53 (2002) 1-28.

Parry analyzes differences in feminist hermeneutics by examining various interpretations of the rape of Dinah in Genesis 34. One of the key questions to answer, according

to Parry is why Dinah's perspective on the incident is not given in the narrative. As one might suspect, some have charged that her view is ignored owing to the patriarchy of the OT world, and the consequent claim is made that the text, as it stands, needs to be challenged. In response, Parry makes some good observations. She notes that "every story is told for some reason." This, in turn, guides the selection and organization of material in a way that is conducive to making the intended point. Obviously then, this means that some perspectives are not centralized, which leads Parry to conclude that "In the telling of this story the rape is not the main focus of the plot." Then, in an effort to legitimate feminist reflections, Parry goes on to suggest that even while the textual narratives are divinely authorized, this should not lead us to conclude the narrator has exhausted all the details of the story. Consequently, Parry suggests that even though a feminist reading is not directly licensed by the text, we ought nevertheless, to permit "imaginative retellings of Dinah's feelings. . . ." Finally, this leads Parry to some reflections on the larger scope of biblical authority. She suggests that it is not the parts, but the whole that possesses authority. Thus seemingly, any text can be relativised by any other text. In particular, for Parry, this allows for the relativization of "androcentrism." One only wishes that Parry would flesh out her criteria for determining which texts are, in principle, underminable. This sort of argument, of course, must be demonstrated and not merely asserted.

Parsons, Michael. "Luther and Calvin on Rape: Is the Crime Lost in the Agenda?" *The Evangelical Quarterly* 74 (2002) 123-142.

Parsons looks at the comments of Luther and Calvin on the rape narratives to discern their attitude toward rape and violence against women. He concludes that because the Magisterial Reformers were looking for the theological interpretation in the rape narratives, they were less concerned with naming the violent crime for what it was. Parsons sees this as a weakness in the Reformers' exegesis.

Phiri, Isabel Apawo. "'Why Does God Allow our Husbands to Hurt Us?' Overcoming Violence Against Women." *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 114 (2002) 19-30.

Through a series of case studies, Phiri chronicles the abuse in South Africa against women and children, even in the church. She makes a call for theological insight into the nature of marriage that counters the entrenched patriarchy of the society. She also wants gender sensitivity in preaching and an inquiry into liberation theology to solve the problems of patriarchal institutions.

Pigott, Susan M. "Wives, Witches and Wise Women: Prophetic Heralds of Kingship in 1 and 2 Samuel." *Review and Expositor* 99 (2002) 145-173.

Pigott analyzes 1 and 2 Samuel to discover the role that women play in the narratives of those books. She concludes women were fundamental to the establishment of the Davidic throne and succession. Women were often instruments of prophecy, used to herald kingship, and at times were heralds of the demise of various contenders to the throne.

Roxburgh, Kenneth B.E. "Female Piety in Eighteenth-Century Scotland." *The Evangelical Quarterly* 74 (2002) 165-176.

Roxburgh examines various accounts of ordinary Christian women from eighteenth century Scotland. He concludes that many such women were marked by a "vital piety" and "deep devotion to Christ." Roxburgh points out that it may have even been the case that women were generally more affected by the revival movement than were the men. And yet, Roxburgh argues, their contributions were downplayed in their own day and throughout subsequent church history because they were smothered by a patriarchal society.

Soulen, R. Kendall. "The Name of the Holy Trinity." *Theology Today* 59 (2002) 244-261.

Soulen tries to answer feminist concerns over the patriarchal nature of the names of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit by what he calls a trinitarian approach to the Holy Trinity. He suggests that the names of the Trinity are really one name in three inflections: the theological, christological, and pneumatological inflections of the triune name. In so doing, he suggests that feminist theologians "undervalue the irreducible distinctiveness of the baptismal formula and fail to recognize the fact that it has no equivalent substitute." Yet he also cautions that "the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" functions as a proper name for the triune God and does not "underwrite patriarchal ideas and social relations." He relates this to the tetragrammaton YHWH. While the baptismal formula does function as a proper name to some degree (note that complementarians do not argue for God the Father being male), Soulen's proposal fails to address the issue of whether there is any male meaning in the names.

Van Geest, Fred. "Homosexuality and Public Policy: A Challenge for Sphere Sovereignty." *Perspectives* 17 (2002) 5-10.

Van Geest discusses Abraham Kuyper's notion of sphere sovereignty with regard to Christian involvement in formulating official state policy on homosexuality. These spheres, such as state, church, family, school, and business, each have God-given responsibilities, authority, and a relative autonomy. Van Geest argues that within the concept of sphere sovereignty the ideals of marriage can legitimately mean different things to the church and to the state. He concludes that although the church can rightfully speak against homosexuality, it is the responsibility of the state to provide justice and legal care to homosexuality.

Wall, John and Bonnie Miller-McLemore. "Marital Therapy Caught Between Person and Public: Christian Traditions on Marriage." *Pastoral Psychology* 50 (2002) 259-280.

Wall and Miller-McLemore believe that marital therapy would be enriched by an understanding of the diversity of approaches to marriage in Christian tradition. This conversation with the traditions would encourage therapists to balance personal well-being (the emphasis of most modern marital counseling) with a broader perspective on the social, intergenerational, and public dimensions of the marriage and family institution. Their thesis is that the notion of the marriage covenant is both pro-family and "critical of families that perpetuate oppression toward individuals."

Wenham, Gordon. "Does the New Testament Approve Remarriage after Divorce?" *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 6/1 (2002) 30-45.

Wenham provides strong biblical support for the disapproval of remarriage after divorce. He argues that the early church unequivocally interpreted the Gospel divorce texts as not permitting remarriage after divorce. Wenham then defends that interpretation by analyzing the New Testament context, the context in Matthew, and the context within Judaism. He concludes that the church is the arena where the principles of the new creation are to be proleptically lived out. Although the Old Testament viewed the failure of a marriage with ambivalence, the ideal of Genesis 2 is life-long harmonious monogamy. The church is called to demonstrate the life of new creation. Because sanctification is a slow process, the church may at times, "with a heavy heart" permit divorce and even remarriage, though it must "not fail to point out that it is contrary to our Lord's teaching." ■