

CHRISTIAN ETHICS

PART 3

PERPLEXITY IN EVANGELICAL ETHICS

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

by Sam Waldron

General Introduction:

The role of women in church and in society in general is a hotly debated and terribly divisive issue among evangelicals today. For this reason a treatment of this issue by way of exemplifying the nature and character of Christian ethics is both appropriate and important. We will treat this issue by exegeting the three most important passages in the New Testament with regard to the role of women in the church and then drawing some practical conclusions. Thus our outline will be as follows:

Section 1: 1 Cor. 11:2-16

Section 2: 1 Cor. 14:33b-35

Section 3: 1 Tim. 2:8-15

Section 4: Practical Conclusions

Section 1: 1 Cor. 11:2-16

Introduction:

By way of introduction to 1 Cor. 11:2-16, I want to make reference to three things:

- (1) The Theme of This Section
- (2) The Argument of This Section
- (3) The Exposition of This Section

(1) The Theme of This Section

1 Corinthians is an issue-oriented or problem-oriented letter. Through reports that had filtered back and through a formal letter from the church, Paul had been informed of a number of issues and questions on which authoritative Apostolic direction was needed (5:1, 6:1, 7:1, 8:1, 11:17, 12:1, 15:1). 1 Corinthians is Paul's response to these needs.

What is the issue being addressed in this section? The NIV's uninspired heading, *Propriety in Worship*, has both expressed and formed many peoples understanding of this issue. While this section has something to do with propriety, it has little or nothing to do with public worship and so this heading is not very helpful. A superficial reading of this section of 1 Corinthians will inform the sleepiest reader that the issue Paul is now addressing is *Womens' Headcoverings*. That certainly is the issue which provoked Paul to pen these words.

(2) The Argument of This Section

What is the argument, flow, or movement of thought in Paul's treatment of women's headcoverings? Now I shall have to ask you for the moment to hold back all the questions

that are flooding into your mind about this passage. What is the headcovering? What about the angels? What about long hair? In due time we shall address to some degree all these questions, but we must first try to get the big picture by passing by these difficulties. Think of a jig saw puzzle. How do you put a puzzle together? The border pieces come first, the difficult pieces last! It is the same with Biblical Interpretation. So we ask, What is the outline or flow of thought of this section?

Introduction: Paul's Prefatory Commendation (vv. 1, 2)

I. Paul's Assumed Foundation on This Issue (v. 3)

There is a divine order which undergirds the world and provides the framework for answering the question about womens' headcoverings.

II. Paul's Specific Evaluation of This Issue (vv. 4-6)

III. Paul's Further Argumentation About This Issue (vv. 7-16)

Paul supports his directions regarding womens' head coverings by appealing to three authorities or using three arguments:

- A. His Appeal to the Facts of Creation, vs. 7-12
- B. His Appeal to the Teaching of Nature, vs. 13-15
- C. His Appeal to the Practice of the Churches, v. 16

Now we will say much, much more about this passage, but do you get the big picture? Can you follow the main flow of thought?

(3) The Exposition of This Section

I do not believe that the most helpful method of expounding this passage would be a verse-by-verse commentary. Instead, I am going to arrange my exposition according to Paul's logic or structure. Paul first lays out the framework of the divine order (v. 3) and then applies it to the issue of headcoverings. Thus, our outline will be:

- I. *The Exposition of the Divine Order of Male Headship*
- II. *The Application of the Divine Order to Womens' Headcoverings*

Under (I.), "The Exposition of the Divine Order of Male Headship" we shall open up this divine order by expounding three characteristics.

- I. *The Exposition of the Divine Order*
 - A. *The Reality of the Divine Order of Male Headship*
 - B. *The Perpetuity of the Divine Order of Male Headship*
 - C. *The Quality of the Divine Order of Male Headship*

A. The Reality of the Divine Order of Male Headship

What do I mean by the reality...? I mean its factuality or actuality. There really is a divine order for the human race in which man is head and woman is subordinate to man.

1. The Meaning of Headship Confirmed

Up till now, I have simply assumed that the word, head, in 1 Cor. 11:3 meant headship, i.e. authority over someone. When Paul said, "the head of the woman is the man," I have assumed that he is saying, "the authority over the woman is the man." I am not alone in this assumption. This meaning was assumed by the whole Christian church till the 20th century. In this century this meaning has been challenged by certain so-called "Christian feminists." They have asserted that head never means authority over, but often means source or beginning. Thus 1 Cor. 11:3 should be read by inserting the word, source, for head.¹

These assertions are refuted in detail by the following facts:

(1) An Exhaustive study by Dr. Wayne Grudem of 2336 occurrences of "head" in biblical and pre-biblical Greek has shown that there is not an instance in which head means "source", but 49 times in which it means "authority over."²

(2) Verse 10 of 1 Corinthians 11 confirms that the headcovering of the woman was related to the idea of authority. Note the parallels in verses 8 and 9 with the assertion of verse 3. It is because woman came from man and was created for man that she should have a sign of male *authority* on her head! Here in v. 10 the specific Greek word that means "authority" is used. Authority here implies legal superiority in rank.

(3) Head often means "authority over" or "ruler" in the Bible (Judges 10:18, 11:8, 9, 11; 2 Sam. 22:44; 1 Kings 8:1; Ps. 18:43; Isa. 7:8, 9:14-16; Eph. 1:22, Eph. 5:22-24). These are only the most explicit references in the Bible. As a matter of fact, all 15 times in which head is used figuratively in the New Testament it probably implies the idea of authority.

¹George W. Knight III, *The Role Relationship of Men & Women*, (Moody Press, Chicago, 1990), pp. 49,50.


²Ibid, pp. 49-80.

In light of these facts, the assertions of "Christian feminists" that head does not mean authority over, but often means source, are at best, sinful ignorance of the Bible or at worst deliberate perversion.

2. The Idea of Headship Clarified

The discussion of the meaning of head in 1 Cor. 11:3 has begun to clarify the precise meaning of the idea of male headship. In a sense we shall be clarifying the idea of male headship throughout our study, but it is important to begin here. Male headship is a matter of legal position and objective authority. That is to say, it is not primarily a matter of subjective influence or raw power. There is a difference between power and authority. Often they go together. Ideally they go together, but the legal right to do something and the raw strength to do something are not the same. There may be a rightful King whose throne has been usurped by a powerful general. He has the authority or right to be king, but not the power. Here power is exercised to rebel against headship. Not all power in the hands of subordinates or subjects is, however, necessarily bad or a violation of the sovereign's headship. Think of an aged and wise counselor who has wisely guided a young prince's father before that father died and the young prince became king. *Ideally and properly* that counselor ought to exercise enormous influence and power over the young king. Such influence properly wielded is not a violation of the king's authority. It is not rebellion on the part of the counselor.

Do you see the application of these illustrations to male headship in the home and marriage and in every other sphere?

Men! Male headship is not embarrassed by the reality that a wife's character may have enormous influence or her wisdom a great power in shaping your decisions! Do you allow yourself to be sanctified by your wife's graces and virtues? Do you permit yourself to be influenced in your decisions by the wisdom of your wife? If you do not you are acting in a very foolish manner! If you have so cowed her that she's afraid to counsel you freely, you are the loser. Don't argue that such influence will violate your headship! Such an argument totally misunderstands what headship is! Most of the time when men make a decision against their wife's counsel, they are wrong. 

Women! Male headship is not abrogated or abolished because you are smarter, or more educated, or even bigger or stronger than your husband. It is not abolished by your ability to manipulate or out-argue your husband, or by your more assertive personality. All those things do not mean that your husband is not your head or that you do not need to respect him, obey him, and allow him to lead you! Male headship is not primarily a matter of brains, muscles, or personalities. It is a matter of divinely appointed leadership which no amount of brains, muscles or personality permits you to usurp or ignore!

As we continue our study of male headship in the church, many pitfalls and

misconceptions will be avoided by remembering what male headship is and what it is not! It is a matter of objective authority not merely subjective influence. May I say one more word of application before moving on? What a liberating concept this is of male headship! It should free men from the feeling that their headship is undermined every time they listen to their wives' advice. It should free them from the feeling that somehow if they are to be head they must repress their wives' abilities or pretend that they are superior in every way to their wives. It should free women from the idea that male headship means that "we can never be *all we're meant to be*." If male headship was merely raw power or influence, then it would be an oppressive yoke. But it is not! Women need not fear that they must be a mousey non-person with no opinions and no abilities because they embrace the biblical teaching on male headship. There is room for the full expression of womanly talents within the framework of and in submission to God's order. Outside of this order, there is only destruction and death for women.

Do you see that God's law is a law of liberty? God's law is always a law that gives freedom (Jas. 2:12). Do not swallow the devil's lie that somehow liberty and love are contradicted by God's law!

3. The Evidence For Headship Reviewed

1 Cor. 11:3 in my opinion is the classic passage which asserts the biblical doctrine of male headship. It asserts this doctrine with a clarity, fullness, and brevity found nowhere else. It is the tallest peak, but it is only the tallest peak. It is important to set this text in the context of the broad biblical witness. We must not allow any "Christian feminist" to think that it is just this text that they must get rid of in order to safely sail the feminist ship across the sea of the Bible. Rather, it must be seen that it is only the tip of an iceberg of massive biblical witness for male headship and female subordination. This iceberg is so big that it must wreck the "feminist" ship.

There is another reason why I am going to take the time to review the rest of this biblical evidence. In this study, we are specifically interested in the place of women in the church.

This question is addressed in only 2 or 3 passages. If we focus on just these passages and ignore its broad biblical background in the doctrine of the subordination of women to men, we will mar the force of these passages. We will not appreciate the strength of biblical teaching on the subject. It is not just a matter of 2 or 3 passages. It is a matter of 2 or 3 passages which specifically apply the broad principle of male headship to the church!

I have selected 10 passages which clearly enunciate this principle. More could be said. I will say nothing about the many incidental implications scattered throughout Scripture or the overall impression conveyed by it. I will not enlarge on the fact that God permitted only male priests in the Old Testament and that Christ chose only male apostles in the New Testament, though much could be said about this.

(1) Genesis 2:4-25

In this account that the New Testament builds so much upon, there are, at least, three indications that the woman was subordinate to the man. There is the order of her creation. Adam was created first, then Eve (1 Tim.2:13). This made Eve dependent for her knowledge of God's commands on Adam (vv. 15-17). There is the reason for her creation. She was made on account of Adam as a suitable help for Adam (1 Cor.11:9 and cf. Gen. 2:18, 20). There is the naming of the woman after her creation. Adam named the animals (Gen. 2:19-20). This manifested his authority over them. He also named Eve (twice--cf. Gen. 2:23 and also Gen. 3:20) showing his authority over her!³

(2) Genesis 3:16: "To the woman He said, "I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you shall bring forth children; Yet your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you.""

This verse should not be interpreted as a *command*, but as a *curse*. In other words, the statement, "he shall rule over you," is a prediction not a precept. As such it is part of God's decretive will, and not a part of that preceptive will of God which forms the rule of our duty. What relevance then does it have for the doctrine of male headship? Several factors must be remembered if we are to see its relevance. Adam's curse involved the cursing of creation ordinance, labor. The previous part of Eve's curse also involved the cursing of a creation ordinance, the bearing of children. Even so the subordination of the woman to the man, *present already in creation* (Genesis 2) was cursed. Just as labor and childbearing had evil and pain injected into them, so now the relationship of subordination between man and woman has evil and pain injected into it by sin. The point is Gen. 3:16 assumes that already in creation woman was under man and man ruled over woman.

(3) Num. 5:19, 20: "And the priest shall have her take an oath and shall say to the woman, "If no man has lain with you and if you have not gone astray into uncleanness, *being under the authority of your husband*, be immune to this water of bitterness that brings a curse; if you, however, have gone astray, *being under the authority of your husband*, and if you have defiled yourself and a man other than your husband has had intercourse with you ""

(4) Num. 30:1-16

This passage clearly implies the authority of the husband over the wife by giving him within certain bounds the right to annul sacred vows to God made by his wife. Note the parallel between fatherly and husbandly authority.

³Ibid, p. 30.

decretive -of or relating to an official and final decision

preceptive - 1. Of, relating to, or expressing a rule or principle that prescribes a particular course of action or conduct.

2. Instructive; didactic.

(5) Eph. 5:22: "Wives, *be subject* to your own husbands, as to the Lord."

Note the correlation between "submit" and "head" in this context (vv. 22-24).

(6) Col. 3:18: "Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord."

(7) Tit. 2:5: "*to be* sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be dishonored."

(8) 1 Pet. 3:1-6: "In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any *of them* are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. And let not your adornment be *merely* external-- braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; but *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands. Thus Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear."

(9) 1 Tim. 2:8-15: "Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension. Likewise, *I want* women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments; but rather by means of good works, as befits women making a claim to godliness. Let a woman quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. For it was Adam who was first created, *and* then Eve. And *it was* not Adam *who* was deceived, but the woman being quite deceived, fell into transgression. But *women* shall be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint."

(10) 1 Cor. 14:33-35: "Let the women keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but let them subject themselves, just as the Law also says. And if they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church."

This overview of evidence underscores the importance of this subject and the necessity of our study of it. This is a major theme of biblical ethics. Attacking this theme is attacking the core of biblical ethics.

One response which I anticipate is someone saying, "Pastor, I don't see what's so complicated about all this. It seems to me that the Bible is clear as to this issue. Why do so many have a problem with it?" I agree. The broad picture is clear. The fact that some

have come to different conclusions or think that the issue is not clear after studying God's Word is due ultimately to rebellion against God and His Word. It is their rebellion which has blinded their minds. Some "Christian feminists" actually admit that there is inconsistency in the Bible on this issue.⁴ Such perspectives are ultimately rebellion against God. Such rebellion against the Word of God has the most serious spiritual consequences (1 Cor. 14:37, John 14:21, 23, 15:14) Others profess to believe the Word of God, but are blind to this clear teaching. Such blindness over such a clear issue also raises serious questions (1 Jn. 2:21, 27).

The submission of women to this teaching in our day will be one of the clearest marks of their genuine attachment to Christ! To knowingly believe all that the Bible says except this manifests the rottenness of your profession of Christ. Accepting Christ as prophet means giving heed in everything he says to you (Acts 3:22, 23). Inability to trust God in this area, especially after being clearly shown that there is nothing to be afraid of in God's law is a serious exhibition of unbelief.

B. The Perpetuity of This Order

I mean by the perpetuity of this order its permanence. If something is permanent or perpetual, it is lasting or enduring. It is the opposite of short lived, temporary, impermanent.

Why is it important to say that the divine order of male headship is permanent? Because one of the major rationalizations of so-called biblical feminism is this. "Yes," they say, "the Bible does teach that women should be subordinate to men. But that order of things has now passed away. Once it was right and good that women should be subordinate and so the Bible taught it, but now it's no longer necessary."

Now we must admit that there is a certain plausibility to this argument because not everything the Bible commands was intended to be perpetual. God instituted the order of the Old Covenant, but did not intend it to be permanent. Thus, Heb. 8:13 says, "By calling this covenant "new" he has made the first one obsolete and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear." It is, thus, necessary to show that the divine order of male headship is not intended to pass away. Our outline of this subject is as follows:

1. *Its Perpetuity Established by Two Considerations*
 - a. *It is the Order of Creation*
 - b. *It is the Order of Redemption*

⁴Note the statement of Paul Jewett quoted in Susan T. Foh's *Women and the Word of God*, (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1980), p. 26.

2. *Its Perpetuity Applied Against Various Objections*

1. Its Perpetuity Established

a. It is the order of creation.

We saw above that Paul appeals in verses 7-12 of this passage to the facts of creation to confirm his directions regarding womens' headcovering being made necessary by the divine order of male headship. Why does Paul appeal to the facts of creation? What was instituted at creation endures as long as creation endures! Paul assumes that what was instituted at creation has abiding relevance for Christians. What is creational, for Paul, is perpetual. You remember that Jesus thought the same way. When he proved that his doctrine of marriage was true, he appealed to creation (Matt. 19:4, 5): "And He answered and said, 'Have you not read, that He who created *them* from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE, and said, 'FOR THIS CAUSE A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER, AND SHALL CLEAVE TO HIS WIFE; AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH'?"

Verses 7-12, Paul's appeal to the facts of creation, has a very clear structure or movement of thought. Notice ...

- (1) Paul's assertion (v.7)
- (2) Paul's argumentation (vv. 8, 9--"for")
- (3) Paul's conclusion (vv. 10--"for this reason")
- (4) Paul's qualification (vv. 11, 12--"however")


By way of opening up the idea that the divine order of male headship is the order of creation, I will briefly expound each of Paul's four points.


(1) Paul's assertion (v. 7)

Verse 7 revolves around two key ideas: the idea of image and the idea of glory. Consider, first of all, the idea of image. *What does image mean?* The language, image of God, takes us back to Gen. 1:26-28, the creation account. An image is a visible replica or representation. An image may be illustrated by an idol-statue or a snapshot of one's wife with a 35 mm. camera. Both are images. According to Gen. 1:26-28 man is the living, visible replica or representation of God in creation. *What does Paul assert about image?* Paul asserts that the man is in some sense the image of God in a way that the woman is not! You will note that Paul does not say that the woman is the image of man. This would have implied that woman was not the image of God. Paul certainly believed that women were bearers of God's image. The Bible teaches this clearly (Gen. 1:26-28). Paul himself teaches that all Christians are renewed in the image of God (Col. 3:9-11 with Gal. 3:28-29). Paul's point, then, in this verse must be that in some sense the man is specially or

pre-eminently the image of God, since he clearly teaches that in other senses woman is also image. What is this special image the male bears? Being the image of God means many things. Man is like God in many ways. One of the main ways in which man is the visible image of God in creation is that he bears rule (Gen. 1:26, 28; Psa. 8:3-8). Clearly, the man and the woman share this ruling function, but just as clearly the man is in some way pre-eminently the visible representative of God's sovereignty because by creation he is even head of the woman. Thus in a way the woman can not, the man images God's supreme headship over all creation. The woman since she has a creaturely head cannot be the image of God's supreme rule.

Do you see your calling, men? You, in your distinctive male-ness, are to image--visibly represent--God's supreme sovereignty over all creation. You are a son of Adam, the visible king of creation. Indeed, God has crowned you with glory and honor! In you shines the glory of God's sovereignty. How closely he has related Himself to you! Be then, what you are! Resist every temptation which would detract from the dignity and honor with which God has crowned you. Resist every base, degraded impulse or desire which would pervert the image you give of God's power and glory. Is it too old-fashioned to say that you must remember your nobility and walk worthy of it. You are gods. Reflect, then, God's authority. Be kind, and good and wise, do not tyrannize your family. But also be strong, protective, assertive--do not abdicate your manhood! Take your responsibility! Let no one usurp it! Husbands let no one tyrannize your wife and family. Be their savior, protector, provider. Are you the head you should be? If you are, it ought to smack of arrogance and pomposity to womens' libbers! If you are, it should constrain your wife and family's pride and gladness. Are you the kind of man that your wife and children can be proud of? Remember Prov. 17:6 "the glory of sons is their fathers."

Consider, secondly, the idea of glory. The basic meaning of Paul's idea of image is clear. The case is different with his idea of glory. This is not so clear at any rate to me. *What does glory mean?* Glory is visible splendor (1 Cor. 15:40, 41). When applied to persons, glory is the external or visible manifestation of their excellence (John 2:11). It is the opposite of shame. Shame is the visible exposure of baseness, nakedness, or evil. Note 1 Cor. 11:22: To shame those who have nothing is to "openly expose their poverty." *What does Paul assert about glory?* He asserts that the man is the glory of God. He is the visible manifestation of the excellence of God's power and authority. In contrast to this (Note the *men de* construction in the Greek.) **woman is the glory of the man**. Though this is somewhat difficult, I believe the meaning is this. The woman is the visible manifestation of the excellence of man's headship.  The fact that over such an excellent creature as the woman, man is head clearly manifest the man's excellence. Godet penetratingly comments, "It is an honour, the highest of all undoubtedly, for one being to become the object of another's love and devotion; and the more the being who loves and is self-devoted is exalted in talent and beauty, the more is the honour increased. Can there therefore be a greater glory to man than to possess as a loving and devoted helpmeet, a

being so admirably endowed as a woman!⁵ Prov. 12:4 says, "a wife of noble character is her husband's crown." 

(2) Paul's Argumentation (vv. 8, 9)

Note the "for." Paul uses two arguments to prove that the male is especially the image of God's authority. Both are rooted in the facts of creation as recorded in Gen. 2. We may summarize these two arguments succinctly:

v. 8 - Woman was made *from* man.

v. 9 - Woman was made *for* man.

For these two reasons Paul regards the man as especially God's image and the woman as the glory of the man. Now the fact that Paul, the authoritative apostle of Christ, asserts that these things vindicate male headship ought to be the end of the debate for any genuine Christian. But in order to show that Paul's use of Gen. 2 is indeed accurate and for the further confirmation of your faith, I want to mention 6 facts which evidence the legitimacy of Paul's use of Gen. 2 to support male headship.

Firstly, Adam is made first! His personal name is the name of the race. Prior to Eve's creation he alone receives the command concerning the tree. He alone names the animals. The phrase "Adam and his wife" repeatedly is used and suggests that he is central in the relationship (2:25; 3:8, 3:20, 21). He, not Eve, is addressed by God after the sin (3:9). When the account is given of man's being driven from the garden only Adam is mentioned (3:24, 25). Perhaps anyone of these things taken by itself might be ignored, but together they convey a cumulative impression which no unprejudiced mind can evade!

Secondly, Adam's naming of the woman is an act of authority in Hebrew thought and indicates his headship over her (Gen. 1:5a, 8a, 10; 2:20, 2:23b).

Thirdly, Adam and the narrative of Genesis 2:23, 24 agree with Paul in seeing the woman's derivation from the man as defining her identity. She is named for her derivation.⁶ One's name in Hebrew thought defines one's identity.

⁵Frederic Louis Godet, *Commentary on First Corinthians*, (Kregel, Grand Rapids, 1979), pp. 548, 549.

⁶James B. Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective*, (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1981), pp. 210, 211.

Fourthly, origin and authority are related in the Bible (Col. 1:15-18). Thus the facts of Eve's creation were ordered by God to show her subordination to the man's authority. She was derived from him, originated from him by God to teach us that while God is the supreme lord of the woman, man is her earthly head.

Fifthly, the purpose of the woman's creation as a suitable helper for Adam suggests his pre-eminence. She is made for Adam to help him with his task. She is given no separate or independent task of her own. Remember Col. 1:16 which says "all things have been created by him and for him." The fact that all is for Christ means that He is Lord of all. So Adam with his wife.

Sixthly, Gen. 3:16 properly interpreted presupposes the role relationship of man and woman. It is the cursing of a previously existing relationship. ⁷Interpreted in light of its parallel passage in Gen. 4:7, it teaches the man's ruling position.

It may be asked, "Why do you go into such detail to show that Genesis 2 teaches what Paul says it does? If the inspired Apostle in the sacred writings of the New Testament says it teaches it, then it must be, right?" I thoroughly agree, but I have gone into such detail to show the utter folly of certain objectors to Paul's reasoning. Paul Jewett says of Paul's argument here:

Furthermore, in reasoning this way, Paul is not only basing his argument exclusively on the second creation narrative, but is assuming the traditional rabbinic understanding of that narrative whereby the order of their creation is made to yield the primacy of the man over the woman. Is this rabbinic understanding of Genesis 2:18f. correct? We do not think that it is.⁸

Not only are these sentiments a bald-faced repudiation of the authority of the Holy Scriptures, they are also simply inaccurate. In literally many ways Genesis 1, 2, and 3 imply and assert the headship of man over woman in creation. Only one blinded by the prejudices of modern feminism can fail to see it. The only alternative to humble submission to the Word of God is to be given up to blindness and folly.

⁷Knight, loc. cit., p. 31.

⁸Paul Jewett, *Man as Male and Female*, (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1975), p. 119 (cf. also pp. 112, 113).

(3) Paul's conclusion (v. 10)

Before we begin the discussion of this interesting, but difficult verse; we must remind ourselves of the place it occupies in Paul's appeal to the facts of creation. It is Paul's conclusion based on the arguments of verses 8 and 9 in which he restates the assertion of v. 7. Note the words, "for this reason." It is crucial that this be kept in mind as we attempt to unravel the knots in v. 10.

There are two such knots. What is meant by "authority on her head"? And what is meant by "because of the angels"?

What is meant by "authority on her head"? This is a reference to the covering of v. 7. Remember Paul is restating in this conclusion the assertion of v. 7. The covering is called "authority." (The word "symbol" is not in the original though it is rightly supplied by the NASB.) The simple reason for this is that the covering is a sign of her husband's authority over her. The fact is that it is not the sign of the woman's authority, but the sign of someone's authority over her.

What is meant by the phrase, "because of the angels"? In other words, why are the angels mentioned in this connection? Again, we must recall that this verse is a conclusion from the previous verses. Paul in mentioning this is not giving an additional reason to those already mentioned in vv. 8 and 9. The word "and" in v. 10 supplied by the NIV is not in the original. If that word is deleted, you see that this is not a new reason for headcoverings, but a restatement of the ones already given. The angels, then, are mentioned as the representative or guardians of the created order referred to in vv. 8 and 9. The angels are associated with creation in Scripture (Job 38:7). They themselves are arranged in a very defined hierarchy (Eph. 3:10; Col. 1:16). Thus, they are keenly sensitive to the maintenance of the order of creation among God's people.

(4) Paul's Qualification (vv. 11, 12).

Let me again remind you of the place these verses occupy in Paul's appeal to the facts of creation. They are a qualification of what Paul has been saying. Note the "however." Paul has made his main point but before he moves on he wants to make sure that it is not taken to a wrong extreme. Man is head, yes, but this does not mean he can get along without the woman. In a sense he is dependent on the woman. Once again in v. 12 Paul appeals to the facts of creation to make his point. If woman came out of man, it is also true that every son of Adam comes through the woman.

One point must be made about this qualification. Paul is obviously not taking back or annulling the point he had just made. Some have attempted to use Paul's qualification to empty verses 7-10 of any force. This is obviously wrong. To qualify and to deny are two different things. If I say, for instance, Craig is my friend; however, Dave is also my friend, I

have qualified the statement that Craig is my friend, but I have not denied it.

There are two other reasons why we must not use verses 11 and 12 to destroy the force of verses 7-10. First, if these words were intended to take back all he just said, Paul would be guilty of either spineless wishy-washy-ness or irrational contradiction. Both ideas are unworthy of an inspired apostle. Second, in fact Paul is very careful not to contradict the point he made in verses 8 and 9. He very carefully uses two different prepositions. Literally, here is what he says: "For even as the woman was *out of* (ek) the man, so also the man is *through* (dia) the woman. The preposition ek designates source. The preposition dia designates medium. These two prepositions may be illustrated in the sentence: *The water came out of a pond through a stream.* This same distinction between the two prepositions may be seen in 1 Cor. 8:6. Thus Paul carefully preserves the man's priority, while teaching the woman's indispensability.

Conclusion:

This concludes our brief exploration of 1 Cor. 11:7-12. The basic thrust of these verses is clear. Would you agree that by following careful principles of interpretation reasonable and even compelling explanations of even its most difficult parts have been given? Then, how can we explain this quotation: "It is really not clear what verses 8 and 9 mean in light of verses 11 and 12."⁹ Others say the same! How can anyone read this passage and be so blind? What is the explanation for such blindness? 1 Cor. 2:14 reads, "The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned."

What does this say to us who do accept the things of the spirit of God? Thank God for it! Pray to God for more of it! Weep for the evangelical church! The fact that evangelicals would even be arguing about these issues shows how deep its need is and how darkened its churches are!

What does this say to those for whom the Bible is a closed book? The consistent testimony of the children of God is that when they were saved the Bible which had once been a closed book--uninteresting and confusing--now began to make sense. Why doesn't it make sense to them? Because they are not the born of the Spirit.

b. It is the Order of Redemption

We have seen that Paul did not trace his demand for the proper subordination of woman

⁹Patricia Gundry, *Woman Be Free*, (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1977), p. 66.

to a concern not to offend the cultural prejudices of the first century, but to the unalterable facts of the creation of men and women. Now we want to show that this order is not destroyed or annulled by the facts and realities but rather confirmed and re-enforced by a redemptive work of Christ. Why is it important to make this point? For this reason: someone might object to the idea that the order of creation is permanent by saying, "Creation did not remain in its original integrity. It fell under Adam and was redeemed in Christ. Doesn't this alter the original order?"

Many things might be said to such an objection. We could say that the very fact that Paul appeals to the facts of creation to support his point shows that the original order has not been altered by the facts of the fall and redemption. We could say that such an objector must remember that redemption is redemption. It does not annul creation, but redeems it, restores it, perfects it, and glorifies it. Finally we could simply show that the order of 1 Cor. 11:3 is treated by Paul as the order of redemption. To put it in the words of Pastor A. N. Martin, "The implications of this distinction are not negated by the fall or redemption (at least in its present dimensions.)"

The order of 1 Cor. 11:3 is seen to be the order of redemption by three things:

- (1) *It is the existing order in the redemptive age*
- (2) *It is the proper fruit of the Redeemer's exaltation.*
- (3) *It is the practical basis of the redemptive community.*

Before I open up 1 Cor. 11:3 along these lines, it is necessary to mention a word of qualification. I am referring to the qualification stated by Pastor Martin in the quotation I gave earlier. Why does he say, "(at least in its present dimensions)"? He says this because of a statement like that found in Luke 20:34-36. Something changes in the nature of man which supersedes marriage at the second coming of Christ. This raises many questions; for most of which I do not have an answer. Does it mean that male headship passes away with the old creation? I am not sure, but *at least in its present dimensions* the work of redemption does not negate male headship.

Now as we come to examine 1 Cor. 11:3 in a little more detail, we must ask this question. Why does Paul mention the headship of Christ over the man and God over Christ? The rest of the passage makes clear that his "real point" is the headship of man over woman. Why, then, does he mention those other headships?

The answer must be that these other headships are mentioned for the purpose of explaining and clarifying the headship of man over woman. In fact they do this in many ways.¹⁰

¹⁰Knight, loc. cit., pp. 20f.

Having said this by way of premise, let us examine the three things that show that this order is the order of redemption.

(1) This order is the existing order in the redemptive age.

All three of the headships of v. 3 are of lasting validity and are permanent. Even now, as Paul writes, after the death and resurrection of Christ in the gospel age and to those "upon whom the fulfillment of the ages has come", he can say Christ *is* the head of every male, and the head of the woman *is* the man, just as the head of Christ is God. These are *present* realities. The present tense is used. "*is* not *was*!"

(2) This order is the proper fruit of the Redeemer's exaltation.

Far from annulling this order, redemption confirms it. *Christ is the head of every male*. How? By his exaltation to glory, Christ has been given all authority in heaven and in earth. (Matt. 28:18; Eph. 1:19b-23; Col 2:9, 10). Redemption's work, the Redeemer's exaltation, has brought male authority under the domination and protection of the risen Christ. He is the head of all power and authority--also male authority and power!

(3) This order is the practical basis of the redemptive community.

Verse 16 very plainly implies this. It reads: "But if one is inclined to be contentious, we have no other practice, nor have the churches of God." The meaning of this verse has been unnecessarily befuddled and obscured by failure to observe a very basic interpretive principle. *Context is king* in biblical interpretation. In this context this is Paul's third support in his argument for the covering of women. He certainly is not going to say something that undermines and contradicts his whole argument.

Paul is, therefore, not saying that we have no such custom (practice is the word for custom) as being contentious. Paul is arguing against the custom or practice of women not being covered, not against the problem of a contentious spirit. Besides that being contentious is not a custom. It is a spirit or attitude, not a practice or custom. The custom against which Paul is arguing in this appeal to the practice of the churches is the one he mentions in v. 5, the custom of women publicly praying or prophesying uncovered. Paul says it is not the custom of the churches of God to allow this or practice this. Perhaps some contentious, ignorant, or perverse Corinthian had claimed that it was!

Paul has appealed to the facts of creation (v. 7-12), then to the teaching of nature (v. 13-15) and finally as the end of all argument (There is a tone of finality in v. 16.) as the

conclusive proof of his demand for the covering of women. He asserts that "we have no other practice--nor do the churches of God."

The question which must be answered is this. What authority is Paul appealing to in these words? Is he saying that the church at large possesses some sort of final authority for the Christians at Corinth? Is there some sort of incipient Roman Catholicism here? Is Paul appealing to the universal tradition of the church?

No, that would be a complete misunderstanding. He is appealing to apostolic authority. The apostles of Christ were Christ's direct representatives on earth. The churches of God in the 50's of the first century were under their direct supervision. Paul appeals to the practice of the churches of God because it reflected the teaching and direct supervision of Christ's apostles. The key word is "we". This is clearly in this context a reference to Paul and his fellow apostles (1 Cor. 4:9, 15:9-11). The practice of the churches was only important because the church was governed at that time by living apostles.

One of the most grievous problems in the present debate on women in the church is the total lack of due respect for apostolic authority. What is an apostle? It is a man's legal representative. The Hebrews had a saying "a man's *shaliach* is as the man himself." Shaliach was the Hebrews' word for apostle. Christ appointed the apostles. They carried His authority. They were as Christ himself. The church is built on the foundation of the apostles. We know nothing of Christ except through His apostles. The New Testament was written by apostles or their associates. The apostles claimed authority over Christ's church. This is especially true in the Corinthian church (1 Cor. 7:17, 5:9-12, 4:18-21, 11:17,33, 34, 14:26-40 esp. v. 37). They claimed to be the living voice of Christ to the church. cf. 2 Cor. 13:1-3. Do you see how completely devastating it is to Christianity when apostolic authority is rejected?

Brethren, we cannot and may not, appeal from the apostles to Christ. We may not appeal to Jesus against the apostles. The earliest heresy involved the claim by the heretics of secret knowledge received directly from Christ not given to the Apostles. The first heresy was an attempt to bypass the Apostles and appeal to Christ. The only Jesus we know is the Jesus of the Apostles.

One of the central assumptions on the issue of women in the church must be that of Paul in v. 16. Appeal to the authority of the apostles of Christ is appeal to final authority. Apostolic directions and examples are law for the church of Christ not only on this issue but on every issue. Apostolically sanctioned customs may not be disregarded.

The divine order of male headship, then, is mandated not only by creation, but by redemption because:

(1) *It is the existing order in the redemptive age.*

(2) *It is the proper fruit of the Redeemer's exaltation.*

(3) *it is the practical basis of the church--the redemptive community.*

With this foundation we can now apply the perpetuity of the divine order against various objections that have been raised against male headship.

2. The Perpetuity of the Divine Order applied against Various Objections

The first objection is this: "Subordination is rooted in the Fall and removed by redemption."¹¹ Answering this first objection is not difficult. Subordination is not rooted in the fall and the curse, but in the order of creation pronounced good by God. It is not removed by redemption, but confirmed by it. Now in back of male authority stands not only creation, but also the exalted Christ.

Do you see how perverted the attitude behind this objection is? The attitude is that male headship is part of the curse brought on by the Fall. It is an evil consequence of sin from which Christ redeems us. Yet the Bible teaches that this order is part of the wise, good, and beautiful original creation. How perverted is the heart that sees what God said was good as bad and evil and oppressive! Truly, such people have said evil be thou my good. For them the lack of such an order that would not be a curse. Women, however, must not merely tolerate, they must embrace and thank God for this divine order!

All of us must remember that sin has so deeply perverted us that often we do not even love what is good! Sin has touched not merely our minds and wills, but our affections and emotions. We love what is evil and consider oppressive what is good. For some their feelings are the basis for their attitudes. Our feelings, however, are also depraved!

The second objection is this: "Subordination was a necessary and prudent concession to first century cultural attitudes, but ceased when those cultural attitudes changed." This is a common objection today. Answering it is also not difficult. The New Testament nowhere roots male headship in a concession to passing cultural attitudes, but in the orders of creation and redemption which transcend passing cultural fashions. Cf. also Eph. 5; 1 Tim. 2; 1 Cor. 14. What is creational and redemptive is not transitory or in that sense cultural.

¹¹P. Gundry, loc. cit., p. 61f. cf. *Scripture, Tradition, and Interpretation*, ed. by W. Ward Gasque, and William Sanford Lasor, "The Role of Women in the Church and Home: An Evangelical Testcase in Hermeneutics", by Robert K. Johnston (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1978), p. 236.

The third objection is related to the second objection and in reality and is a specific application of it. Here it is: "Subordination of women like slavery was purely a matter of regulating first century practices without sanctioning them." Knight summarizes this objection this way: "If the New Testament requires wives to submit to their husbands, then it also sanctions slavery." ¹² Col.3:18 and 22 may be cited by way of illustration of this. In v. 18 wives are told to submit to their husbands. In v. 22 slaves are told to obey their masters. Why do we practice the one and not the other? is the question then pressed by the feminists.

Several answers may be given to this objection: First, if slaves were sitting among us, then it would be their duty on the basis of apostolic authority to obey their masters. It need not be admitted that such commands were culturally temporary. Second, this argument naturally implies that children are not bound to obey their parents. Cf. Col. 3:20. Are the feminists ready to assert this? Third, a very important distinction between two questions must be made which the feminists overlook. The two questions are: What is my duty if I am a slave? and, Is slavery itself divinely instituted? It is the duty of slaves to submit to their masters, just as it is the duty of children to submit to parents or wives to husbands. This does not mean that slavery is divinely instituted. Marriage and the family are clearly instituted in the creation order. Slavery is not! Slavery is merely regulated. Marriage is divinely instituted and regulated.

C. Its Quality

Having looked at the reality and perpetuity of the divine order, we now examined the quality of this order. Under the quality of the divine order, we will eventually examine three characteristics of it.

1. *Its Broad Generality*
2. *Its Functional Necessity*
3. *Its Underlying Unity*

1. Its Broad Generality

What do I mean when I speak of the "broad generality" of the divine subordination of women to men? I am saying that this order has a broad or general importance for human life which cannot be limited to one specific relationship. If a child says, "I like apples better than plums," you would assume that this is true not just today...and not just of this particular apple or plum...and not just of these particular kinds of apples or plums. You have made a general statement which would have a broad application to all apples and plums.

¹²Knight, loc. cit., p. 9; cf. Johnston, loc. cit., p. 237; Jewett, loc. cit., pp. 137, 138.

Even so when I speak of the broad generality of divine order, I mean to say that the statement "and the head of the woman is the man" is not limited to the marriage relationship. Though marriage is the central expression and most common expression of this order, male headship has a general significance for all of human life.

It is important to say this because one of the most frequent dodges to avoid the implications of this order when it is popularly discussed is the assertion that 1 Corinthians 11 or 14 only applies to married women. Even so good an evangelical as Harold Lindsell restricts headship to marriage and rejects its application to church life!


How does the New Testament teach us the "broad generality" of the divine order? We could refer to 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2 where Paul sees womanly subordination as applicable to the question of church life and leadership in the church. This by itself indicates that male headship has a broader application than merely the marriage relationship. There is no indication either that the directions of either passage only apply to married women.


More closely related to our present business, we may say that Paul is not thinking merely or even primarily of the marriage relationship or married people in 1 Corinthians 11. Some interpreters have assumed this because the terms used for man and woman in 1 Corinthians 11 are ambiguous. Normally, they simply mean a man or a woman, but sometimes they do designate a husband or a wife. In 1 Corinthians 11 Paul is thinking more generally. He is thinking of "generic" man or "generic" woman and not merely of "married" man or "married" woman. Generic is a very popular word nowadays. A generic drug is the opposite of a specific name brand. Paul is thinking of generic womanhood and generic manhood, not of any specific individual or class of men and women. He is thinking of women in general or men in general.

On what things do I base this statement? Many things in this passage show this. First, the repeated mention of "every man" or "every woman" creates the impression that it is not merely married men and women that are referred to. Cf. vv. 3, 4, and 5. Second, the subject under discussion, headcoverings for women, is not restricted only to married women. Assumedly all adult women would have to possess a head-covering. Cf. vv. 4-6. Third, the absence of the article in v. 3 and vv. 11 and 12 grammatically indicates that woman in general, woman as woman is in view (as well as man as man!) cf. Ralph Alexander says, "The anarthrous *gunaikoj* stresses the nature, character, or essence of a woman in verse 3. If "wife" were meant, the article would be more appropriate in order to identify or specify, the wife of the man."¹³ Fourth, the appeal to the facts of creation and the teaching of nature (in verses 7-15) tends to support the idea that all men and women

¹³Knight, loc. cit., p.23.

are in view. Fifth, verses 11 and 12 cannot be applied to the marriage relationship. A husband does not come through, is not born of his wife.

This teaching of the Bible raises several questions, does it not? Does this mean that every woman must be subject to every man? Think of the zealous young college fellow on first date with a young lady turning her to Eph. 5:22 and saying, "This means you must obey me." The answer is, Obviously not! Every woman's supreme allegiance must be to God and Christ. No obedience or subjection contrary to this is proper. Furthermore, a woman has a prior responsibility to be subject to her own man whether that is her father or her husband. Only where this general order comes to expression in a definite or specific relationship does this general order have an application. Then the woman should show an appropriate deference to male leadership depending on the nature of the relationship. Thus, the young lady does not owe this zealous young collegian marital obedience or subjection, but she should show him certain deference, i.e. she shouldn't offer to drive, pick-out the evening's recreation, choose the restaurant, pay the bill, or call him up for the next date on the following Tuesday .


How does this apply in other areas of life, particularly in terms of political and business affairs? I have said (and the Bible teaches) that male headship has a broad and general significance that cannot be limited to marriage. So what is that significance? First, for most women such questions as these will be largely speculative and irrelevant. Many women will be married and will find being a wife, mother, and then a grandmother a full-time vocation  Second, the Bible has specifically regulated how male headship and womanly subordination comes to concrete expression in church-life. So this is not open to question. Third, the Bible has not specifically regulated how womanly subordination comes to expression in the areas of the state or business affairs. The order of 1 Cor. 11:3 certainly is relevant to such things. I am sure that it does apply. I am simply not sure exactly how it applies. The Bible allows more liberty and flexibility in such areas.


We must take our children's sexual identity as a man or a woman into account in planning for their futures and molding their vocational goals. It may not be wise to encourage and support a young lady who will in all likelihood find her life's vocation in being a wife or mother to pursue a career that requires many years of training and will have no practical usefulness to them in the home.


Single women (and single men) may not opt out of the order of 1 Cor. 11:3. This order which comes to regulated expression both in the home and in the church governs single women as well as married women. ! Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2 which forbid headship in the church to women apply to all women including single women.


2. Its Functional Necessity

The fact that this general order exists between men and women is not arbitrary in

character. This order is not an arbitrary arrangement to help two identical beings live together in harmony. The reason for this order is not that "Somebody must be the boss." "Somebody have the final say. So God arbitrarily chose the man." It is not so! Our first joint today regarding the generality of this order applying to all of human life indicates this! It is rooted in the nature and identity of men as men and women as women. This order is related to the divinely created sexual differences between men and women 

Even conservative writers have tended to soft-pedal this truth. They have been so anxious to avoid the charge and even any appearance of teaching that women are inferior to men that they have often been almost silent on it. Now, of course, I am not saying that women are inferior by nature to men. But I am saying that the differences between men and women are such that it is better that headship in the family and in the church be exercised by men! 

The sexual differences between the minds of men and women are being supported even by secular scientists. Newspaper articles detail the physiological and mental differences even between baby boys and baby girls. The Bible was way ahead of modern science in teaching that there were profound differences between the sexes. 

- ✓ This is the implication of a wise creation. If men are called to be heads, and women are
- ✓ called to be helpers, it only makes sense that God would fit them by creation for their
- ✓ differing roles. If Adam was made to work in the garden and the woman was made to work in the home, it only makes sense that by creation man would excel in spatial abilities and woman in social abilities. 

God's creation manifests His wisdom. "The Lord by wisdom founded the earth; By understanding He established the heavens." (Prov. 3:19) Such wisdom involves the adaptation of things to their appointed ends. Even so we would not expect God to call woman to be a helper and fit her by creation to be a head. This would be foolish and cruel.

This is the implication of 1 Pet. 3:7 which speaks of "the weaker vessel, the woman." Surely this statement in this context indicates that a woman's duty to subordinate herself to the man is related to her being created by God as the weaker vessel. Cf. vv.1, 5. Feminists see this verse as devaluing the woman and flagrant male depreciation of the "inferior" woman. Weakness, however, is not always of less value than strength. Pastor Greg Nichols speaks of an old iron pot and an expensive antique vase. Which is more valuable? Which would you rather be?

This is the implication of 1 Tim. 2:14. There are many things this verse is not intended to teach by Paul. It does not teach that Adam did not sin, that Eve was a worse sinner than Adam, that Eve did not sin, that women in no sense make good teachers. Paul asserts none of these things.

This verse does teach, however, that woman is prone to deception on religious matters when she takes a leadership role in violation of male headship. Both conservative and liberal interpreters have striven to avoid this idea, but not withstanding all their work, this is still the obvious and natural meaning of the text.

Paul's emphasis is on teaching in this context. Cf. v.11's "learn", v. 12's "teach" and "silent", v. 14's twofold use of "deceived", and also v. 7 where Paul speaks of himself as a "teacher". Genesis 3:13 is referred to in v. 14. The same root as is used in the LXX is used.

✓ Paul's reference is to the woman, not merely Eve personally. Her action is seen as providing an insight into the nature of woman as woman. Notice how in v. 15 Paul speaks of "they" i.e. all women with Eve's nature. Eve's action is seen as typical of all women.

Paul's point is that God made man to lead in the realm of religious teaching and woman to follow. Hence, v. 13: Adam was first created so that his position as prophet to his wife could be clearly seen. Hence, v. 14: The woman was out of place to take the lead in the debate with Satan. Her deception and fall manifested her incompetence to take the lead in religious teaching.¹⁴ Women can teach well, but only in subjection to wise male religious instructors. This is why in the history of the church so many leaders of cults and sects have been women.

The objection may come that I am teaching that women are inferior to men. My response is that I am only teaching that because of the differences between men and women, it is good and wise and necessary for men to lead. I believe that women make much better mothers than men, but that does not mean that I think men are inferior to women.

"But," someone may still object, "by making women inferior to men in terms of leadership and headship, you have made them inferior in the central thing. If women are inferior for headship they are inferior, period." We do not think so. Listen to Fairbairn's presentation of our point: "Her very excellences in other respects--excellences connected with the finer sensibilities and stronger impulses of her emotional loving nature--tend in a measure to disqualify her here."¹⁵ This objection manifests an unbiblical focus or fixation on ruling which betrays an idolatrous and proud desire for headship by one who as a creature has for his ultimate duty worship and subjection and obedience.

¹⁴Patrick Fairbairn, *Pastoral Epistles*, (James&Klock, 1977), p. 129.

¹⁵Ibid, p. 129.

Many practical applications of this functional necessity of male headship are obvious. Women must submit to male leadership for their own good. Their created character will find its greatest fulfillment and good in so doing. Much depends for women on their choosing the right man as their religious leader. Their own good, their usefulness is at stake. Men can lead their homes by God's grace. Men must realize that their wife and family need them to lead. Remember her fragile physical and emotional make-up, her prone-ness to deception without your instruction, her created nature. They must be sensitive, diligent, compassionate in taking the lead.

3. Its Underlying Unity. Now under with this point, we will examine ...

- a. *Its Practical Exposition*
- b. *Its Modern Perversions*

a. Its Practical Exposition


You will notice that I have spoken of "the underlying unity" of the divine order. Let me tell you why I have chosen this terminology. The word "underlying" refers to the fact that we have been talking about a divine order for men and women which tends to stress the differences between men and women. What I want to say by using this term "underlying" is that under this divine order as important as it is, there is a basic, foundational, unity or equality between men and women.

You will notice, however, that I have chosen the word "unity" not equality to describe this foundational reality. I have not chosen it because I do not believe that men and women are important respects "equal". I do believe that men and women are equal. I have chosen the word "unity" because I believe it is the term which most precisely and commonly describes the biblical concept at stake. It is not equality so much as it is unity which is the biblical concern. We can see this by looking at the passages where this biblical concept is asserted.

1 Cor.11:11-12: "However, in the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as the woman originates from the man, so also the man *has his birth* through the woman; and all things originate from God."

Literally in v. 11 Paul says that the woman is not without the man, neither is the man without the woman. They need each other. There is this essential unity between them. In v. 12 he elaborates it. "for even as the woman is out of the man, even so also the man is through the woman, but all things are out of God." There is interdependence or mutual dependence between man and woman. In stark contrast to this, Paul underscores the sovereign self-sufficiency and independence of the Creator. There is no analogy between man's headship over the woman based upon her derivation from him and God's headship

over both based on his being Creator.


Between man and woman there is mutual dependence and therefore essential unity. Note that there is here nothing about equality--though that is, of course, implied. 


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


This text is often claimed as the biblical manifesto for the equality of men and women. A certain equality is implied, but that is not the word Paul uses. He says "you are all one in Christ Jesus." It is the unity of men and women in Christ that is emphasized. As to God's adopting and justifying grace and salvation, men and women jointly, in oneness participate in it. This implies of course, that they share equally in God's salvation.

1 Pet. 3:7: "You husbands likewise, live with *your wives* in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered."

Literally Peter says they are "together-heirs" of the grace of life. The emphasis is on the joint or united participation of husband and wife in the promised inheritance. Again, equality is implied, but the concept is clearly of the unity of men and women!



These key texts underscore the peculiar quality of male headship as opposed to other divinely ordained authorities. This head is one with, dependent upon, and equal with the one over whom he is head. Thus, this headship is different in quality than the parental authority. Parents are not dependent upon children generally speaking, but men are dependent upon women. There is mutual dependence. It is different in quality than the headship mankind was given over creation (Gen. 1:26, 28; Psa. 8:5-8). All things were put under their feet. Woman is not put under man's feet, but under his arm since she was taken from his side. There is much greater intimacy between man and woman and much greater unity than between mankind and creation. 


This headship is also different in quality than Christ's headship over every male in 1 Cor. 11:3. Though there is a common humanity and in that sense unity between Christ and men, Christ is not dependent upon or equal to those over whom He is head. Male headship is not like that of Christ's over men. His headship is supreme, absolute, independent, sovereign. Male headship is none of these things. 

Is there any analogous headship to that of man's headship over woman? Again, 1 Cor. 11:3 points us in the right direction by setting the statement of male headship in context with the statement of male headship in context with the statement "and the head of Christ is God." Here is a headship and a relationship which Paul regards as enlightening and illumining male headship. 

Christ is one with the Father. They share a common deity. "I and the Father are one" Christ said. He was equal with God. Yet, Jesus Christ was the eternal Son and the eternal Word of God. He is God, and yet the Son of God. He is one with the Father and yet the Son of the Father. He is God and yet He is the Word of God. Here in the eternal Trinity there is equality and subordination at one and the same time: equality of essence, subordination of persons. Even so it is in the man-woman relationship. There is equality of humanity, but subordination of woman to man.

What has this lofty theology to do with us? Much every way! The man's headship must be exercised with due appreciation and consideration of the woman's unity and equality to himself. Woman was made to be man's helper. It was not good that man should be alone. He needs her. He is deficient without her. She is equal to him and, perhaps, in certain ways his superior.

This means, therefore, that the man in the exercise of his headship must elicit, respect, and only slowly and necessarily contradict the wisdom and opinions of his wife. He must do all this if he is going to lead his wife and family successfully, and he cannot do any of it without communicating with his wife. Communication, mutual dependence which demands communication, is the characteristic quality of male headship. The mutual dependence of the man-woman relationship demands communication and condemns any attitude or thing that short-circuits communication.  

This also means that in the exercise of his headship, the man must utilize his wife's talents and abilities. This involves assessment and appreciation of his wife's talents (not depreciating and degrading her); appropriate delegation of responsibility to the wife; and diligent mortification of laziness and lack of discipline by the wife. 

b. Its Modern Perversions

(1) There is the perversion of Gal. 3:28. "Christian feminists" on the basis of this passage assert that men and women are equal and that such equality is incompatible with any subordination of the woman to the man in roles or functions.

This assertion leads some feminists to deny the inerrancy of Scripture.¹⁶ Others profess to believe that Scripture is inerrant, but proceed to twist Scripture on the basis that no other Scripture could teach subordination of women because that would contradict Gal. 3:28.¹⁷ The assertion that equality and subordination are contradictory raises the

¹⁶Jewett, loc. cit., pp. 112, 134.

¹⁷Cf. Johnston's analysis of Gal. 3:28 in *Scripture, Tradition, and Interpretation*, pp. 240-242.

question. What do these feminists mean by equality? If we are to believe Letha Scanzoni equality means role-interchangeability--a maximum of equality of every kind.¹⁸

The whole argument of the feminists is, then, that equality and subordination are contradictory. Male headship means female inferiority. We must remember, however, that the central biblical concept is that of the unity of men and women. The question is this. Does the biblical idea of the unity and equality of men and women contradict the idea of subordination in roles and functions?

The answer is no, and that for at least five reasons. First, biblical unity is consistent with diversity of function (1 Cor. 12:12-26). Unity, then, does not mean role-interchangeability!

¹⁸Letha Scanzoni and Nancy Hardesty, *All We're Meant to Be*, (Word, Waco, 1974), p. 110; cf. Also Foh, loc cit., pp.38-45. In these pages Foh shows that are indications in their writings that this definition may be suspect as to its derivation having a frankly secular origin.

Second, biblical unity is consistent with a strict divine order. Gal. 3:28 says there is neither Jew nor Greek! Yet there was a carefully observed order between Jew and Greek in the gospel (Rom. 1:16--the reading is Jew and Greek literally; Rom. 2:9, 10--again the literally reading is Jew and Greek)¹⁹ Third, the context of Gal. 3:28 is not dealing with equality of function or role in the life and offices of the church, but with equality of participation in the justifying and adopting grace of God by which He saves men. Since we have seen that biblical unity is consistent with a strict divine order and great diversity of function, the "Christian feminists" may not assume that equality in salvation means equality in roles and functions in the church. Such an assumption would be a flagrant denial of the context of Gal. 3:28. In contrast the assertions of 1 Corinthians 11, 1 Corinthians 14, and 1 Timothy 2 are dealing in context with precisely the issues of subordination of women, the exercise of gifts in the assemblies of the church, and the ordering of the visible church. Fourth, the Word of God manifests no sense that equality and subordination are inconsistent. In fact, in two passages which are parallel in thought to Gal. 3:28, the unity and equality of men and women is juxtaposed with the strongest assertions of the subordination of women to men. Note 1 Cor. 11:11, 12 with vv. 3, 7-9 and 1 Pet. 3:7 (especially the word, fellow-heirs) with vv. 1, 5 and 7. Fifth, the doctrine of the Trinity itself shows that equality and subordination are not biblically inconsistent. From all eternity Christ was God and yet the Word of God (John 1:1). He was one with God the Father and yet the Son of God the Father (John 10:30; John 5:18,19). There is equality of essence, but order of persons in the Trinity. Nothing could more clearly show the pagan character of feminist thinking than the fact that it contradicts the historic doctrine of the Trinity taught in the Bible, the Nicene creed, and the Athanasian creed!²⁰

(2) The Perversion of Eph. 5:21

"Both husbands and wives are told to be submissive to one another in the realization that all Christians should be subject to one another (Eph. 5:21)."²¹ This is the meaning of Eph. 5:21 according to Letha Scanzoni, Nancy Hardesty, and other "Christian feminists". They assert that this verse teaches the mutual submission of all Christians and each Christian to every other Christian. It, therefore, teaches, they say, that husbands should submit to their wives just as much as wives should submit to their husbands. There is mutual submission in the husband-wife relationship.

To these assertions, the following things may be replied. First, if Eph. 5:21 teaches that


¹⁹Robert L. Dabney, *Discussions: Evangelical and Theological*, vol. 2, (Banner of Truth Trust, London), p. 100.

²⁰Notice the questionable statements of Jewett, loc. cit., p. 133; Scanzoni, loc. cit., pp. 22, 23, 31; and cf. Knight, loc. cit., pp. 43, 44.


²¹Scanzoni, loc. cit., p. 99; cf. also Gundry, loc. cit., pp. 71-73.

husbands should submit to their wives, it is the only passage in the Bible that does so. In fact, it would contradict the whole direction of the Bible's teaching. There are a multitude of passages that teach that wives should submit to husbands, but not one which teaches the opposite. Second, if Eph. 5:21 teaches that Christian husbands should submit to Christian wives, then does it not also teach that Christian parents should submit to Christian children? Is this thinkable? Third, assuming that this verse is teaching every Christian to submit to every other Christian, this does not mean that it teaches that husbands should submit to their wives. Christians in v. 21, are addressed as Christians not as husbands and wives. For instance, there might be a pastor with his father in his congregation. The father would submit to his son as his pastor, not as his son. Even so a husband would submit to his wife not as his wife, but as a fellow Christian.

It is doubtful, however, that this is the proper interpretation of Eph. 5:21. Eph. 5:21, properly interpreted, teaches that every Christian should submit to whatever other Christians have authority over him. They should not refuse to submit to a fellow Christian's position of authority over him (Cf., for instance, 1 Tim. 6:1, 2). Even the feminist, Paul K. Jewett, sees this as the proper meaning of the passage.²²

This interpretation is supported by two considerations: the connection of v. 21 and the meaning of submit. The connection of v. 21 is significant. This verse is transitional. It concludes the preceding verses and introduces the following verses. It is the last in a series of participles flowing out of v. 18. Cf. the NASB's translation: "speaking...singing...making melody...giving thanks...submitting." It introduces the following verses by bringing up the idea of submission which is carried on in 5:22; 6:1, 5. Note that the word submit in v. 22 is supplied from v. 21. Literally, the text is "submitting to one another in the fear of Christ. Wives to your own husbands as to the Lord." This connection implies that when Paul says that Christians should submit to one another in v. 21, he is not thinking of a general submission of all Christians to each other, but of the many different authority structures which Christians must embrace in their lives: the authority of husbands, parents, masters. 

²² Jewett, loc. cit., p.137.

The meaning of the word, submit, is also relevant. The best translation of this word is "subordinate yourself". It is composed of two Greek words: The word which means "order" and the word which means "under." Hence, it may be translated, subordinate yourself. It means to put yourself under an authority, to take your place in an order or authority structure. It always implies an authority or hierarchy. It is never used of general humanity toward other Christians.²³ 

²³Hurley, loc. cit., p.144.

II. The Application of the Divine Order to Womens' Headcoverings

Introduction:

One of the marks of Pharisaism and false religion is externalism: pre-occupation with the externals of religious practice and ritual at the expense of spiritual reality and heart-deep godliness. (Read Isa. 66:1-3.) God's priority according to Isaiah is a man's spiritual attitude not a man's external, religious actions no matter how correct.

Nonetheless a religion which consists only of spiritual attitudes that achieve no external embodiment is an enormity of which the Bible knows nothing. There is a commanded "form of godliness" (2 Tim. 3:5). The relationship of "internals" and "externals" may be illustrated by the relationship of the body and soul. The soul is without doubt that which imparts life to the body. Thus, a certain priority must be ascribed to the soul. Even so in religion "internals," as we have seen, take priority over the "externals" in God's eyes. On the other hand, it is only through the body that the soul can have any practical effect in the world, and the soul without the body is a monstrous abnormality created by the Fall and not by the Creator. Even so, religion which has no external embodiment is useless, monstrous, and dead!

I say all of this because in this lecture we come to the commanded external embodiment of the spiritual divine order that Paul has enunciated in 1 Cor. 11:3. In the preceding lectures we have expounded at length that divine order--its reality, its perpetuity, its quality. In the following brief treatment we will expound Paul's application of that spiritual order to a practical matter of external embodiment. The relative length of the spiritual as compared to the practical in these treatments will I trust convince all of you that, whatever you may think of this lecture, it is not marked by imbalance.

In this treatment we will ask and answer three question about the headcovering of which Paul speaks in these verses. Our outline will be as follows:

- A. The Context Assumed: *Where* was the headcovering to be worn?
 - B. The Constraint Presented: *Why* was the headcovering to be worn?
 - C. The Covering Identified: *What* was the headcovering to be worn?
-
- A. The Context Assumed: *Where* was the headcovering to be worn?

Let me start out my answer to this question by reminding you that this is a different question than the question: *Where* should a woman pray and prophesy? We will address that question when we come to 1 Corinthians 14, but now we ask *where* was the headcovering to be worn? My answer to this question has four points:

1. The headcovering had to be worn in some public situation.

Very obviously, a woman would not have to be covered in the privacy of her own home with only her children and husband present. Paul obviously has some more public situation in view.

2. The headcovering had to be worn in public situations beside church or public worship.

✓ Why do I say that? Because it had to be worn when women publicly prayed and prophesied and Paul forbade women to pray and prophesy in the church assemblies. Now, when I come to 1 Cor. 14:34, 35, we will look at the question of how 1 Cor. 11:2-16 relates to that passage in some detail. Here, let me only state that when Paul said "they are not allowed to speak", he clearly prohibited the praying and prophesying of women in church. This clear deduction is confirmed by a study of the word, "speak", (*la lew*) as it is used in 1 Corinthians 14. I cannot stop here to give you all the evidence to support this conclusion. This word is used 24 times in chapter 14. (2 of those times are in verses 34 and 35.) 14 of those times it is used of tongues speaking, 3 times of prophetic speaking, and 6 times of general speaking. The point is this. Whatever Paul forbids when he says women "are not allowed to speak," he certainly prohibits prophesying and tongues-speaking. Tongues-speaking was a form of prayer. Cf. 14:14. Thus Paul prohibits both praying and prophesying by women in church. The conclusion must be that wherever Paul had in mind that women could legitimately pray and prophesy, it was not in the gatherings of the church. Thus, in 1 Cor. 11:2-16 when he commands women to be covered, he is not just commanding them to be covered in church. They were to be covered when they prayed and prophesied, and they could not do that in church. Hence we conclude that the headcovering had to be worn in other public situations besides the church assemblies.

3. The headcovering had to be worn even when women were not praying or prophesying if they were in a public situation.

At first, this assertion might seem odd because Paul's whole concern is that when women pray and prophesy they must be covered. But you will notice that Paul never commands them to put on a covering when they are praying and prophesying. He rather implies that what women ought always to have in public, they should have when they pray and prophesy. Paul's language cannot be limited to only those rare times when women might pray or prophesy publicly. Cf. vv. 6, 14, 15.

Are the assertions made in these verses only true when men and women are publicly prophesying or praying? No! They are true whenever a man or woman is open to public view.

Paul does not refer particularly to praying or prophesying here, he speaks in

general. This shows even more clearly than vs. 5 did, that Paul does not have public worship in mind. cf. 14:33f. Paul's argument is: that which a woman is obliged to do under different circumstances, she must do also when she worships, when she prays or prophesies. The apostle appeals to common sense. it is shameful for a woman to have her head uncovered in public.¹

4. A probable reconstruction of what was happening at Corinth confirms this interpretation.

Tongues-speaking and prophesying were both forms of ecstatic speech. In the excitement and energy of such speech, it would be easy for a woman to get carried away and uncover her head perhaps deliberately or perhaps unintentionally. Paul warns against this violation of the normal, external manifestation of the divine order.

✓ My conclusion to the question, Where was the head covering to be worn? is this. It was to be worn everywhere in public, also and especially when women prayed or prophesied!

B. The Constraint Presented: Why was the headcovering to be worn?

What constraint or moral necessity does Paul present as grounding this duty of the head covering? Lenski² and other theologians argue that the headcovering was a culturally mandated expression of the divine order of female subordination. Thus Paul's directive was grounded on two assumptions: the divine order and the cultural meaning of headcoverings. Lenski proceeds to argue that since in our culture headcoverings do not symbolize subordination, this specific directive is not relevant, though the underlying divine order is relevant for us.

Great and holy men of God have held this position. No great issue is at stake if we should decide to agree with those men. This seems to nicely solve the perplexing problem of whether headcoverings and veils are mandatory for women today without falling into any grave error.

¹F. W. Grosheide, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1976), p. 254.

²R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of I and II Corinthians*, (Augsburg, Minneapolis, 1943), pp. 435f.

Nonetheless, I cannot agree with this interpretation for these reasons.

(1) This directive according to v. 16 was a matter of universal custom and practice in the Apostolic churches. It was not of merely local significance (as Lenski implies). This interpretation, then, implies that Apostolic directives and customs universally practiced by the Apostolic church do not bind the church today.

This implication was perhaps not so dangerous in another day, but in our day it cracks the door to the many flourishing deviations from the apostolic church order. The question must be faced: If this directive is culturally based, what others might be? Where will it all stop?

(2) This directive according to Paul is taught by nature itself. Cf. v. 14 which literally says, "does not nature itself teach you that ...?" Notice that nature does not teach merely that women should submit to men. It teaches the necessity of the covering itself. Cf. verses 13-15. Nature teaches that long hair is a shame for men, but that it is a glory for women.

What is nature in the Bible? Is it merely deep-rooted cultural feeling that may vary from culture to culture? Some commentators teach this. Nature never has such a meaning in the Bible. It never designates something so superficial as cultural feeling. It is used 14 times in the NT: 1 time of the unchangeable divine nature (2 Peter 1:4); 1 time of the inborn sinful nature (Eph. 2:3); and 12 times of the divinely created nature (cf. Rom. 1:26 and 2:14). It is in this last sense that is used in 1 Cor. 11:14. Paul appeals to natural revelation as it is given by and in God's work of creation. He is saying, "Your God-created nature, general revelation, the work of the law written on your hearts, teaches you that women ought to have long hair and not be uncovered!"

My conclusion is that the covering of women is mandatory today. I conclude this because the covering of women was (1) a matter of universal, apostolic practice and (2) was required by the teaching of nature. Why was the headcovering to be worn? Because it is required by Apostolic command and natural revelation.

C. The Covering Identified: What was the headcovering to be worn?

I would be remiss if I did not express gratitude for the help that the commentary of F. W. Grosheide and especially the study of James B. Hurley have been to me on the identity of the woman's covering in this passage.¹ On the basis of help they have given me, I am going to answer this question by making and supporting three statements.

¹Grosheide, *op. cit.*; Hurley, *op. cit.*

1. The woman's headcovering is not just her long hair.

Some have asserted that the covering is long hair on the basis of 1 Cor. 11:15. That verse literally reads, "long hair is given her as a substitute for a covering." The preposition "as" or "for" is regularly used of Christ's substitutionary atonement. Whatever importance this verse may have for our interpretation of this passage, verses 5 and 6 prevent us from simply equating long hair and the covering. If the covering is long hair, Paul could not have said "it is just as though her head were shaved." He could not have said, "If a woman does not cover her head, she should have her hair cut off." That would already be the case, if the covering were long hair.

2. The covering is not a piece of clothing, whether one thinks of a shawl or a veil.

This assertion is warranted by several facts. (1) In 1 Cor. 11:2-16, Paul never explicitly requires women to wear a certain piece of clothing. Verse 4 reads literally "something down from the head." Verses 5 and 6 use two words "covered" and "uncovered" which do not necessarily imply a piece of clothing. Verse 15 does mention a literal piece of clothing. The word here may refer to either a shawl or a wrap that could be thrown over the head. In verse 15, however, Paul says that long hair is given *in place of a covering*. (2) There is no directive or command any place in the Bible requiring women to wear a veil or shawl in public. If Paul requires such a garment here, that directive would be utterly without parallel in the Scriptures. (3) In the archaeological and historical evidence it is not clear that the Greeks, nor the Romans, nor the Jews practiced as a general custom the public veiling of women during the first century.

3. The covering is long hair done up (or styled) in an orderly or tidy fashion.

This conclusion is supported by the following things: (1) This interpretation gives full weight to v. 15 without contradicting verses 4-6. Long hair (kept in an orderly manner) is given in place of covering. Verse 6 then means that if a woman lets her hair down to flow in a wild unkempt fashion, she should have it cut off. (2) It makes sense of the transition from headcoverings to long hair in verses 13-15. This transition indicates that the covering in some sense consisted in long hair. (3) It is consistent with the Old Testament meaning and usage of the words, cover and uncover. In the Old Testament to uncover one's head was to loose one's hair or allow one's hair to flow free with the connotation of disorder and disarray. One may see this by comparing Lev. 13:45 where in the Greek the same word meaning uncover as is used in 1 Cor. 11:5 occurs: "As for the leper who has the infection, his clothes shall be torn, and the hair of his head shall be *uncovered*, and he shall cover his mustache and cry, 'Unclean! Unclean!' Keil and Delitzsch remark on this word that it means that lepers should "leave the hair of their head in disorder".¹ (Note also

¹Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament (Volume 1)*--The

Lev. 10:6; 21:10; Num. 6:5 where the same Hebrew word as occurs in Lev. 13:45 is used. Note finally Num. 5:18 where the same root word is used in the Greek version as is used in 1 Corinthians 11.) This Old Testament background helps us understand v. 6.¹

4. It is consistent with the general custom of the Greeks, Romans, and Jews at this time. Hurley remarks:

A further observation, however, is in order before leaving Graeco-Roman practice. While it is clear that veiling customs were a matter of indifference for Greeks and Romans of the first century, it would appear that coiffure, hair-style, was not. Remains show that both boys and girls wore their hair either free or in one or two simple braids. Roman custom gave the men and boys relatively short hair, while Greek men had somewhat longer hair, sometimes reaching shoulder length. Adult women of both cultures, on the other hand, had long hair which was drawn up on or behind their heads in various styles. Women are not shown with their hair loose and flowing. In literature, however, disheveled hair is a sign of despair, or mourning.²

Here is my conclusion to the question, What was the headcovering to be worn? In all probability it was long hair done up or styled in an orderly way. This is the best and perhaps the only satisfactory interpretation of 1 Cor. 11's head covering for women. ✓

Several practical conclusions follow from the foregoing discussion.

First, women are not commanded in church to wear veils or shawls or hats or doilies on their heads by this passage. If women conclude from this passage that they are required to wear such coverings, they must according to the passage also wear them everywhere

Pentateuch, (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1975), p. 382.

¹James B. Hurley, "Did Paul Require Veils or the Silence of Women? A Consideration of 1 Cor. 11:2-16 and 1 Cor. 14:33b-36," *Westminster Theological Journal* 35 (1973): p. 202f.

²Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective*, p. 257. Cf. also Grosheide's comments, *op. cit.*, pp. 260, 261.

in public. If women conclude from this passage that they are required to wear such coverings, this practice would have no other scriptural confirmation. If women concluded that they were required to wear such coverings, they would be neglecting the best and most probable and perhaps the only satisfactory interpretation of this passage.

Second, women *to the best of their ability* ought to appear in public with long hair done up or styled in an orderly way. This passage commends long hair to every Christian woman.

It is her glory and her covering. As her glory it is the manifestation of her distinctive excellence. As her covering it is the sign of her submission to the divine order. External signs have a certain power. They remind us of and reinforce our commitment to what they signify. The relinquishment of the sign may be associated with spiritual declension.

What is long hair? It is hair that is not shaved, nor shorn (cut short), and that is distinctively longer than ordinary male hairstyles. This condones the time it takes to keep long hair attractive and orderly. This condemns the uni-sex hairstyling and all Christian participation or adoption of it. This condemns all deliberately unkempt hairstyles. (The suggestive, messed-up bedroom look.) This condemns the wearing of hair at feminine lengths by men. Long hair in the 60's, 70's and 80's was and is not amoral. It was a symbolic identification with an immoral counter-culture. It obscured masculine identity. It encouraged sexual perversion.

Third, Paul's teaching about long hair teaches the more general principle that the appearance of women (not only their hairstyles, but their clothing, bearing and demeanor) ought to be distinctly feminine. This is one of three main biblical principles. The other two are discreetly modest, properly becoming.

Fourth, God in Jesus Christ lays a totalitarian claim on the minutest details of our lives. His word calls for meticulous obedience. Cf. Mt. 5:17-20; 23:23.

Fifth, the Bible is not out of date. The whole drift of modern theology in general and feminism in particular is to emphasize and accentuate the differences between our culture and the Bible. The idea is that we simply cannot apply biblical rules straight forwardly to our lives. The impression is left that it is difficult to apply the Bible's ethic to us today, or that the Bible is not sufficient to guide our lives. It is only useful to teach us a few facts we must believe to be saved. 1 Cor. 11:2-16 is the great proof-text for this idea. "You don't believe..." To this we must reply: There is nothing cultural about Paul's directive. The emphasis of the Bible is on the unity of mankind and all cultures not on their diversity.

General Introduction:

The second major passage touching on the role of women in the church is also found in the 1 Corinthians. It is, of course, 1 Cor. 14:33b-35. In order to properly understand this passage we must deal with two points:

- I. *The Correlation with 1 Cor. 11:2-16 Explored*
- II. *The Prohibition of 1 Cor. 14:33b-35 Expounded*

I. The Correlation with 1 Cor. 11:2-16 Explored

A. The Problem Stated

The problem may be simply stated. 1 Cor. 11:2-16 permits women to pray and prophesy in public, while 1 Cor. 14:33b-35 appears to contradict this by forbidding all speaking by women in church.

B. The Proposals Examined

Many different proposals have been made by interpreters attempting to resolve this problem. Let me present the proposals I reject and briefly point out why I reject them.

1. 1 Cor. 14:33b-35 is a textual variant.¹

The fact is that it is not. It is in all the texts of 1 Corinthians only its position very rarely or occasionally changes.

2. Paul changed his mind or contradicted himself.²

There are two problems with this viewpoint. It is inconsistent with Paul's sanity. No sane or competent person contradicts himself so badly in the space of a few sentences. It is inconsistent with the Bible's inerrancy. To say that Paul contradicted himself in writing Holy Scripture is challenge biblical inerrancy.

¹Scanzoni, op. cit., p. 68, Jewett, op. cit., p. 115.

²Jewett, op. cit., p. 116.

3. Paul only forbids women to babble and chatter noisily in a disrupting way in the church services.¹

A sufficient reply to this interpretation is supplied by the following two observations. First, "speak" (*lalēw*) occurs 298 times in the New Testament and never means to babble or chatter noisily. Second, this idea ignores and even contradicts the contextual usage of "speak" in 1 Corinthians 14.

4. Paul is quoting the Judaizers not saying these things himself.

In this interpretation Paul is supposed to be quoting the Judaizers in vv. 34 and 35 and then replying to them in v. 36. Two things may be said in rebuttal of this interpretation.

There is absolutely no proof for this view. It is totally without justification. Paul is not engaged in answering a series of Judaizing statements. This interpretation would introduce total confusion into the interpretation of 1 Corinthians if entertained. One could never be sure if Paul was quoting the Judaizers or saying these things himself.

This view ignores the context. Paul is engaged in introducing order into the church (vv. 27, 33, 40). In so doing he addresses tongues speakers (vv. 27, 28), prophets (vv. 29-33a), and women (vv. 33b-35) before giving some closing exhortations (vv. 36-40) on this subject. In each of these sections he uses the terms "speak, be silent" (vv. 27, 28; vv. 29, 30; vv. 34, 35). Thus, there is every indication that these verses are an integral part of their context.

All of the first four interpretations may be viewed as feminist evasions of the true meaning of 1 Corinthians. The following are suggestions sometimes made by those who hold the traditional view of women in the church.

5. Paul is talking only about wives in 1 Cor. 14:34, 35 not single women as in 1 Corinthians 11.

Two replies may be made to this suggestion. It is not certain that Paul had only wives in mind in 1 Corinthians 14. The language of v. 35 about asking one's husband may also be translated one's man and could be easily applied to daughters asking their fathers. (Cf. 1 Cor. 7:38.) Wives are certainly included in 1 Corinthians 11 and are permitted to pray and prophesy.

¹Scanzoni op. cit., p. 68, Gundry, op. cit., p. 70.

6. Paul never gave permission for women to speak in 1 Corinthians 11.¹

In other words this view asserts that Paul merely mentions, but does not approve of women praying and prophesying in 1 Corinthians 11. He reserves his condemnation of this practice for 1 Corinthians 14.

This interpretation is open to the following fatal objection. Why should Paul so carefully instruct on the necessity of women being covered when they pray and prophesy if under no conditions, they may do these things?

7. Praying and especially prophesying (due to its extraordinary character) are exceptions to the general rule of 1 Cor. 14:34-35.²

Several problems with this interpretation show its unsatisfactory character. It is hard to understand how prophesying can be distinguished from speaking or teaching authoritatively. It would seem that, if women may prophesy (the greater), they may also speak (the lesser). Speaking includes prophesying in 1 Corinthians 14. Cf. vv. 29, 30, and 27, 28 with v. 34. Cf. also 12:3

8. Paul is forbidding women to engage in "judging the prophets" (v. 29).³

This is an unjustifiable restriction of the meaning of "speak." "Speak" never refers to "judging the prophets" in 1 Corinthians 14. In the passage cited by Hurley (v. 29) "speaking" is distinguished from "judging the prophets".

9. Praying and prophesying in 1 Corinthians 11 are a general description of

¹For this view see John Calvin's and Charles Hodge's comments on this passage in their commentaries.

²For this interpretation see Robert L. Dabney, *Discussions: Evangelical and Theological*, (Banner of Truth, London, 1967), pp. 96-97. Cf. also Knight, op. cit., p. 34.

³Hurley, *Man and Woman ...*, p. 188f.

worship.¹

This totally ignores the meaning of the word, prophesy, in 1 Corinthians and the New Testament. In 1 Corinthians it is plainly a reference to a spiritual gift in which one receives direct revelation from God and utters it to His people. Not only so, it appeals to a questionable Old Testament parallel to prove the general meaning of worship for praying and prophesying.

¹Dabney, op. cit., p. 97.

10. Two different kinds of meetings of the church are in view in 1 Corinthians 11 and 14.¹

The simple objection to this view is that the New Testament never distinguishes different kinds of church meetings. Thus, this view is completely speculative.

C. The Solution Explained

If these ten alternative explanations are unsatisfactory, What, then, is the explanation for the apparent contradiction between 1 Corinthians 11 and 1 Corinthians 14? Simply stated it is this, 1 Cor. 11:2-16 is giving guidelines for the public speaking of women in general. In 1 Cor. 11:2-16 Paul is not addressing himself to the church situation, but is speaking more broadly. 1 Cor. 14:33b-35 addresses itself more specifically to the assemblies of the church. While in general women may (if covered) pray and prophesy in public, in the church they may not speak at all. Think of two concentric circles. The outer circle is the public situation in general. The inner circle is the church situation in particular. 1 Corinthians 11 addresses the general issue, 1 Corinthians 14 the specific issue.

It seems likely that there were really two problems with regard to women prophets in Corinth which Paul deals with respectively in 1 Corinthians 11 and 14. The first problem is that women were throwing off their covering while prophesying. The second problem is that women were prophesying and praying in the meetings of the church. 1 Corinthians 11 addresses the first problem. Since there were places and times where it was proper for women to prophesy Paul delays dealing with the other issue (2) until 1 Cor. 14. 1 Corinthians 14 addresses the second, the issue of women prophesying in the church.

D. The Solution Supported

There are two points which tend to support and even demand the solution I have proposed.

1. The prohibition of speaking in 1 Cor. 14 is a broad prohibition which must include tongues' speaking (praying) and prophesying.

The prohibition that women must not speak in the church clearly forbids them to lead in prayer. Tongues-speaking is said to be a form of prayer in 1 Cor. 14:14-17. The word used for *speaking* in tongues 14 times in 1 Corinthians 14 is the same one used in the prohibition of verses 34 and 35. Furthermore, the same correlation of the verbs, speak and keep silent found in verse 34 is found in vv. 27 and 28 where tongues-speaking in the church is regulated. Thus, when Paul forbids women to speak he clearly forbids them to

¹Foh notes this view, op. cit, pp. 118, 119. Cf. also Hurley, op. cit., p.187.

speaking in tongues. Since speaking in tongues was an ecstatic and inspired form of prayer, we must argue that the greater includes the lesser. If, in other words, Paul forbids women even to engage in inspired prayer, he certainly means to forbid them to lead in prayer with only ordinary gifts.

The evidence is almost as clear with regard to prophesying. Three times in 1 Corinthians 14 (vv. 3, 6, 29) the verb, *speaking*, used in verses 34 and 35 is used of speaking a prophecy or prophesying. (Cf. also the use of this word in 1 Cor. 12:3.) Speaking, then, must include prophesying and be forbidden to women in the church. Thus, clearly the very things allowed to women in 1 Corinthians 11 are forbidden to them in 1 Corinthians 14.¹

2. 1 Corinthians 14 clearly and emphatically has the assemblies of the church in mind, while 1 Corinthians 11 does not.

The prohibition of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 is limited by this emphasis on the church to this church context or situation. Verses 34-35 themselves use the term, church, three times. The meaning in each case is an assembly or meeting of the church, not the church as an institution. This is obvious in verse 35. Speaking in church clearly means speaking in a meeting of the church. The same meaning is necessary in verse 34 where the plural, "churches," clearly means the assemblies of the church in Corinth. Since there was only one church in Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:2), the reference must be to the meetings or assemblies of this one church. In addition the rest of 1 Corinthians 14 uses the word, church (*ekklesia*), this way. It is used 9 times in 1 Corinthians 14. Each time it is used of an assembly or meeting of the church. Cf. vv. 4, 5, 12, 19, 23, 28.

In contrast to this there is no evidence that 1 Corinthians 11 has an assembly of the church in mind. The word, church (*ekklesia*), is used only once in verse 16 and, then, not

¹Let me point out that I am not saying that speaking only includes speaking in tongues and prophesying. I am simply saying that these are the two most prominent forms of speaking which Paul had in mind. The prohibition of inspired utterance must clearly include the prohibition of uninspired utterance. If speaking in tongues and prophesying are forbidden then all lesser forms of prayer and instruction are in the assembly forbidden to women. The word, *speaking*, is used several times in this general way in 1 Corinthians 14. Cf. verses 3, 6, 9, 19.

of an assembly or meeting of a church, but of other local churches. (This same use is found in 1 Cor. 16:1 and 10:32.)

Some have assumed that the mention of prayer and prophesying demands the conclusion that an assembly of the church is in view. This conclusion assumes that Christians did not pray or prophesy except in church. This is a faulty assumption indeed. It is clear from the New Testament that prophets prophesied and Christians prayed and preached in many public situations beside church. Read the Book of Acts (cf. especially Acts 2:14f.; 17:16f.; 21:7-14).

The argument that 1 Cor. 11:2-16 refers to the worship of the church is often based on the assumption that 1 Cor. 11:2 marks a transition to matters of concern dealing with the public worship of the church at Corinth. There is no indication of such a transition at verse 2.

It is interesting, however, that such a transition or the introduction of the consideration of such matters is clearly marked at 1 Cor. 11:17. This transition is marked by the contrast of v. 17 with v. 2 (Verse 2--"I praise you"; Verse 17--"I do not praise you"). It is also marked by the frequent reference to the gatherings of the church which begins and continues from v. 17. Cf. the mention of their coming together as a church in vv. 17, 18, 20, 22, and 33. This reference to issues dealing with their church gatherings continues in the discussion of spiritual gifts which fills chapters 12-14. This transition to issues of public worship is also probably manifested by the words, "in the first place". Lenski's comments on this transition are helpful:

We should note that Paul now writes: "you come together." This coming together or assembling for public worship is mentioned again in v. 18 and a third time in v. 20; in each instance the same verb is employed. It is repeated twice at the end of this section regarding the Lord's Supper in v. 33, 34; and again in 14:23, 26 near the close of the section regarding spiritual gifts. Paul thus marks with great plainness that the disorders of which he now speaks occur in the public assemblies of the congregation. In the section regarding the head covering for women no mention is made of public assemblies.¹

E. The Implication Expanded

Introduction:

The important practical implication of our discussion of the relationship of 1 Cor. 11 and 1 Cor. 14 is this: Woman may speak (the Word of God) outside the church in public. 1 Cor. 11:2-16 assumes that it is legitimate for women to pray and prophesy in public. 1 Cor.

¹Lenski, op. cit., p. 455.

14:33b-35 qualifies its prohibition of women speaking by the words, "*in the church.*" I want to expand upon this important practical implication under four heads:

1. The Implication Confirmed

Many other passages of Scripture confirm and make explicit this implication that women may speak the Word of God in public. (Exod. 15:20, 21; Judges 4:4-6, 2 Kings 22:12-20; Joel 2:28,29; Acts 2:14-18; 18:24-26; 21:8, 9). Note particularly the examples of public situations outside the church where women "prophesied" (2 Kings 22:12-20; Acts 18:24-26; and cf. also Acts 21:10f). These illustrations make concrete what the Bible means to permit when it allows women to speak in non-church public situations.

2. The Implication Cleared

At this point, an objection may be foreseen: Most of these passages have to do with prophetesses. It may be said that they were and are an exception to the rule. It may be argued that they may speak when other women without the gift of prophecy may not speak.¹ The following replies may be made to such an objection:

(1) By forbidding prophetesses to prophesy in church in 1 Cor. 14:34, Paul assumes that their inspiration is no exception to the rule.

(2) There is the case of Priscilla. Clearly, she spoke the Word of God to a man (Acts 18:24-26). There is no indication that she was a prophetess. In fact, the indications are in the opposite direction.

(3) The proper deduction from the case of women prophesying in public must be based on the principle that the greater assumes and includes the lesser. If God would inspire women to speak the Word of God with the extraordinary urgency, boldness, and authority of a prophet, then surely those with ordinary gifts and graces may speak the word in an ordinary way.

(4) 1 Corinthians 14 makes no clear-cut distinction between extraordinary speaking and ordinary speaking. While Paul has tongues and prophecy primarily in mind, he also forbids the ordinary speaking of asking questions in verse 35.

3. The Implication Qualified

All this is not to say, of course, that women may speak the Word of God in public situations without qualification. 1 Corinthians 11 and 14 qualify the right of women to speak the Word of God in public in two ways. First, as we have seen, they may not

¹Dabney, op. cit., pp 96, 97.

according to 1 Corinthians 14 speak in the assemblies of the church. Second, they may not according to 1 Cor. 11 speak the Word of God in an uncovered condition. That is to say, Paul's requirement of the headcovering for women signifies that they must not be insensitive to the divine order of male headship. This means that they must be speaking with appropriate deference to their specific male authority. If their father or husband is present and willing, they must not usurp his leadership in family devotions. They must not interrupt or rudely contradict their husband's teaching. They must always speak to men with appropriate meekness (1 Pet. 3:4). They must not be given any stated or formal religious teaching position over adult men (1 Tim. 2:12). The circumstances in Acts 18:24-26 where Priscilla's actions are recorded constitute an informal situation in which Priscilla spoke with Apollos in conjunction with her husband. It is in light of these principles that the proper application of the divine order of male headship to Sunday School classes, home Bible studies, and house prayer meetings may be made.

4. The Implication Applied

a. Women may and must speak the Word of God to those around them; with boldness, certainty, and reverence. Women must not dishonor the Word of God by toning down its authority when they speak it. (They may not turn its *shall's* and *will's* and *must's* into *maybe's* and *perhaps's*.) They must not use femininity as an excuse to indulge the fear of man and excuse them from speaking God's word. They are not violating the Word of God if they exhort their husbands. They are violating the Word if they do not. Personally, I thank God for a wife who exhorts me. Many men have been given over to their own folly because their wives would not plainly and with urgency exhort them.

b. Women do possess a superior dignity in the Word of God as compared with other religions. Can you imagine the Koran encouraging a woman to publicly prophesy?

c. Men, we must be ready to receive the Word of God even from a woman without caviling or objecting. We may not use male headship as an excuse to ignore our wives counsel, advice, or exhortations.

d. There are many appropriate "speaking" ministries for women in the work of Christ. They may speak the Word even to adult men provided that they take no stated, formal, or official teaching position over adult men. They may be valuable counselors and mothers in Israel. They may teach other women (Tit. 2:4). They may teach their own children (Prov. 1:8, 1 Tim. 5:10, 14). By implication they may teach other people's children whether male or female. This is so because of two plain distinctions. Sunday School classes are not assemblies of the church. Boys are not men. (The Greek word translated man or husband in 1 Corinthians 11, 14, and 1 Timothy 2 (anhr) refers to an adult male--not a boy-child.)

II. The Prohibition of 1 Cor. 14:33b-35 Expounded

A. Its Context

1. Analyzed

a. The larger context: ch. 12-14

Chapters 12-14 have for their theme, spiritual gifts. Cf. 12:1. This theme is clearly carried all the way through chapter 14 (just as the theme of Christian liberty dominates 8:1-10:33). This theme has the following clear sub-divisions in these chapters:

Ch. 12: The Unity of the Spirit and Spiritual Gifts

Ch. 13: The Superiority of Love and Spiritual Gifts

Ch. 14: The Regulation of the Gatherings and Spiritual Gifts

b. The nearer context: chapter 14

Chapter 14 has for its peculiar theme: the regulation of the spiritual gifts in the gatherings of the church. The exercise of spiritual gifts in the church are to be regulated by two principles which are successively dealt with in chapter 14.

Verses 1-26 apply the principle of edification.

Verses 27-40 apply the principle of order.

The gatherings of the church are to be governed in accordance with the principles of maximum edification and sensitivity to the divine order. Notice how these themes are summarized in the concluding verses of each section, verses 26 and 40.

c. The immediate context: chapter 14:27-40

The theme of this section is the orderly use of spiritual gifts in the assemblies of the church. Cf. vv. 27, 33, 40. The movement of thought in this section is as follows:

I. *The Particular Applications of the Principle, v. 27-35*

A. *To Tongues-speakers, v. 27,28*

B. *To Prophets v. 29-33*

C. *To Women v. 33b-35*

II. *The Vehement Enforcement of the Principle, v. 36-38*

III. *The Concluding Summary of the Principle, v. 39,40*

Note how both in chapter 11 and in chapter 14 the subject of the conduct of women is dealt with in conjunction with a discussion of order. The divine requirement is that

everyone keep rank, keep in step with the divine drummer. This is the sense of the Greek word (taxin) translated order in 1 Corinthians 14:40.

2. Applied

a. To the Application of 1 Corinthians 14

The context of 1 Corinthians 14 demonstrates that its teaching is appropriately applied to the exercise of gifts in the gathering of the church by women. It is precisely the question of spiritual gifts, precisely the question of the regulation of church-gatherings, and precisely the question of the exercise of such gifts by women at church-gatherings which 1 Cor. 14 is addressing *in its context*. In so applying this passage we are not taking it out of context.

Contrast this use of 1 Corinthians 14 with the non-contextual misapplication of Gal. 3:28 so common among feminists. By the misapplication of this text it can be made to appear that this issue in the church today is merely a stand off between two parties each with their favorite verses and favorite interpretation. But this is a superficial assessment. The question of the place of women and their gifts in the gatherings of the church is precisely the question being addressed in our passage. Gal. 3:28, on the other hand, in context is addressing a completely different issue, the issue of equal participation not in the services of the church, but in the blessings of salvation. To make Gal. 3:28 normative for the place of women in the church is to rip it completely out of context and forget that it is addressing the question of salvation, i.e. justification, adoption, and the eternal inheritance. Cf. Gal. 3:1-4, 26, 27, 29.

b. To the Prohibition of 1 Corinthians 14

Something has already been said about the meaning of the term "speak" in 1 Corinthians 14, and more will be said, but our examination of its context surely brings us one step closer to a precise understanding of it. The whole context of 1 Cor. 14:33b-35 has to do with spiritual gifts (12:1), but especially the unusual or extraordinary gifts of the Spirit manifested in oral communication (12:3; 14:1, 2, 27-33a, 39). If anything ought to be clear, it is that speaking in this context designates the use or exercise of such gifts. 1 Cor. 14:33b-35, then, prohibits the exercise of such gifts in church by women.

c. To the Relevance of 1 Corinthians 14

How does this prohibition of the exercise of (mainly) extraordinary gifts by women in the church apply to us today since we have no such gifts among us? The relevance is, I think, very clear. If even women with extraordinary spiritual gifts are told to keep silence in the church, then there can be no possible exception for women with only ordinary gifts today. Based on the fact that God has given them unusual gifts, some women are claiming the

right to speak in the church. But here in 1 Corinthians 14 were women who spoke under the direct inspiration of the Spirit, who prophesied, who spoke in tongues! If such could not speak, then surely it is arrogant impiety for women with only ordinary gifts to claim a privilege they did not possess.

Furthermore, if we assume for the sake of argument, the viewpoint of the charismatic churches of our day and hold that tongues-speaking and prophecy are gifts resident in the church today, then the relevance of this passage is straightforward. Charismatic churches must not allow women either to speak in tongues or prophecy in their church-meetings!

d. To the Rationale of 1 Corinthians 14

Certain feminists have argued that Paul gave the instructions of 1 Corinthians 14 because women in his day were so ignorant and uninstructed that they could not speak to the general edification of the church. They proceed to argue that in our day when women have equal educational opportunities, Paul's words do not apply. Again, the context of this prohibition refutes this: (1) Verses 33b-35 do not occur in the part of 1 Corinthians 14 which applies the principle of edification, but in that which applies the principle of order. See the above outline. (2) More importantly, it is not ungifted ignoramuses whom Paul forbids to speak, but women with the gifts of tongues and prophecy!

B. Its Universality

Verse 33b, as the NIV indicates, is to be connected with vv. 34 and 35 not with v. 33a. I am not going to engage in an extended argument for this connection. Suffice to say, it seems unnecessary for Paul to say that God is a God of peace in all the churches, since we may safely assume that the early Christians recognized that God does not change from church to church. The consensus of interpreters have recognized that v. 33b goes with v. 34.

Verse 33b is Paul's assertion that what he is about to require is the universal practice of the Apostolic churches. In all their gatherings women are silent so also it should be at the meetings of the church at Corinth. This demonstrates that the commanded silence of women did not arise via purely local circumstances in the Corinthian situation.

C. Its Basis (or Principle)

Note the words of verse 34b "but must be in submission, as the law says." In these words Paul indicates the basis behind or principle at stake in his prohibition of speaking. It is a matter of "subjection." This is the word that everywhere in the New Testament indicates subordination to constituted authority. It is used of subordination to government (Rom. 13:1,5) masters (Tit. 2:9, 1 Pet. 2:18) husbands (Eph. 5:22, 1 Pet. 3:1). Subordination is, thus, the opposite side of the coin from headship. The occurrence of this word clearly

indicates that it is the order of 1 Cor. 11:3 that requires the silence of women in the church.

Speaking in church is according to Paul, a violation of the divine order of male headship. The basis for Paul's prohibition is not some local circumstance but a universal divine order taught in the law.

The mention of the law has provoked much debate. What part of the law does Paul have in mind? It is likely (given the passages cited in 1 Cor. 11:7-12 and 1 Tim. 2:13) that he has primarily Gen. 2 in mind. Perhaps along with this the other passages in the Old Testament. (Gen. 3 and Num. 5 and 30) which manifest male headship.

Interpreters have asked, where does the law teach that women should be silent in the church? The answer is, of course, no place, but Paul does not say that the law teaches that women should not speak in church. He says that the law teaches submission. This general principle taught by the law is then authoritatively applied by the apostle to the specific situation of church gatherings. 1 Cor. 14:33b-35 is the authoritative application of a general moral principle to a specific situation by an Apostle.

What ought to be clear in all of this is that the Apostle Paul simply assumes that what the Law says is authoritative for the church. The Law is not bad. The Law is not 'passe' or irrelevant. The Law is viewed as divinely authoritative for the church.

Also, it is clear that what Paul prohibits is speaking from a position of leadership. In other words, it is the oral leading of the assembly in worship that Paul intends to forbid, not just all sounds in general uttering from a woman's mouth, nor all oral participation in worship, but speaking to and so taking a position of headship in the assembly.

D. Its Scope

As has already been noted, the scope within which Paul's prohibition must be understood is "the church." This term is used three times in verses 33b-35 and nine times in 1 Corinthians 14. Each time it means the gathering of the church or the meeting of the church.

This meaning is interestingly confirmed by the usage of the term, "churches," in v. 34. There was only 1 church in Corinth (1 Cor. 1:2). Hence, the reference to the many Corinthian "churches" must be a reference to their many gatherings as a church for worship.

This meaning is confirmed by the preceding context (23-28). "Church" designates a gathering of the whole church for worship. The activities which characterized these assemblies may be gleaned from the context. Such activities included: praying (vv. 14-

15); singing (vv. 15, 26); proclamation (vv. 6, 24, 27-33); and Lord's table observance (1 Cor. 11:17f.)

The use of the term in this context defines the meaning of church (*ekklesia*) here and the assumed scope of Paul's prohibition. Negatively, the church is not any meeting which takes place in the church building. The church is not the church building. Furthermore, the church is not every gathering of 2 or 3 Christians. I used to have of lunch where I worked with several Christians every day, but this was not a church. (For one thing, even though we usually discussed religious issues, the main purpose of this meeting was not religious worship, but eating lunch.) The church is not every gathering for religious purposes. Sunday School classes, elders' meetings, and Bible studies do not constitute assemblies of the church.

Positively, very clearly, the church is a gathering of the whole church for the purposes of carrying on the appointed duties of the church in corporate worship. These duties include praying, singing, proclamation, Lord's table, church discipline and other scripturally mandated activities. It is in this context that Paul regards the general subordination of women as requiring the silence commanded here. Male headship and womanly subordination must come to their most pointed expression in the solemn, formal assemblies of the church.

E. Its Enforcement

Paul enforces this prohibition by calling its violation a shame (*aischron*). This word may mean according to one Greek lexicon: ugly, shameful, base, or disgraceful. Some have thought that the use of this word implied that Paul has merely cultural values in mind when giving the directives of 1 Cor. 14:34, 35. They argue that the speaking of women in church is not immoral, but only shameful in the eyes of contemporaries, a violation of social custom.

This idea is contradicted by the biblical usage of the word. It never implies a shame rooted in mere cultural values. Its three other uses (Eph. 5:12; Tit. 1:11; 1 Cor. 11:6) and its use in compound words like shameful (*aischronerthos*) (1 Tim. 3:8; 1 Pet. 5:2); shameful speech (*aischronologia*) (Col. 3:8); and shamefulfulness (*aischronothos*) (Eph. 5:4) plainly show this.

As, for instance, its use in 1 Cor. 11:6 indicates, "shame" is the opposite of glory. Cf. 1 Cor. 11:7, 15. "Glory" is the manifestation of excellence. "Shame" is the exposure of baseness and ugliness. Speaking in church is shame for a woman because it manifests deviation from and rejection of her God-ordained place. Clearly "shame" is related not to mere cultural values, but to manifest deviation from the divine order.

F. Its Significance

What is the significance of this prohibition? What precisely is included in and forbidden by

it? Both the words "keep silent" and "speak" are nondescript deriving their peculiar connotations from their context. As noted previously, this contextual usage is peculiarly important in 1 Corinthians 14 since "speak" (lalēw) is used 24 times in this chapter. To ignore this contextual usage in exegeting these verses is totally inexcusable.

In this chapter speaking clearly includes several things:

- (1) Speaking in tongues: It is used 14 times in this way in 1 Corinthians 14. Cf. especially vv. 27, 28 and note the parallel use there of "keep silent." Note that speaking in tongues might be a form of prayer or even singing (vv. 15, 16).
- (2) Prophesying: Cf. vv. 3, 6, and 29. Note the parallel use of "keep silence" in v. 30.
- (3) Other more ordinary forms of proclaiming the word: It is used in this way 6 times if its 2 occurrences in vv. 34 and 35 are included. Cf. v. 6 which uses it of revelation, knowledge, and teaching (didach) and v. 19 which uses it of instruction. Kathcēw, the word used in parallel with lalēw in v. 19, means to "teach or instruct." It is used of formal or even catechetical instruction. Cf. Rom. 2:18; Acts 18:25; Luke 1:4. This usage confirms the implication that both ordinary and extraordinary speaking are forbidden to women. This is further confirmed by the last usage.
- (4) Asking questions: In v.35 Paul proceeds to forbid the asking of questions to women on the basis of his prohibition of speaking. Thus, asking questions is "speaking" according to Paul. This implies, of course, that Paul regards women asking questions as a violation of the divine order and an act of insubordination. We may ask, How is asking questions in order to learn more about the word of God insubmissive? In the church and in some other formal gatherings asking questions is itself an act of great boldness and prerogative. It is, thus, a violation of the meekness, quietness, and subordination appropriate to a woman. It manifests insensitivity to her identity for her to take such a "leading role" in the public worship of the church.

It seems obvious that Paul is thinking of an individual speaking before or addressing the church in each of the examples just given. Clearly, Paul is not forbidding women to take part in congregational singing. This is not the "speaking" forbidden in this context. Though it is an oral part of worship, it is corporate not individual in character. The individual is not addressing the church. It is "leading" the assembly--not being a part of it--that Paul means to forbid. The paraphrase of the New English Bible is, therefore, right on target when it translates as follows:

And in all congregations of God's people, women should not *address the meeting*. They have no license to speak, but should keep their place as the law directs. If there is something they want to know, they can ask their own husbands at home. It

is a shocking thing that a woman should *address the congregation*.¹

¹As cited by Jewett, op. cit., p. 116.

Section 3: 1 Tim. 2:8-15

Introduction: The Transitional Verse Which Prefaces Paul's Directives Regarding Women (Verse 8)

Verse 8 forms the introduction to Paul's directives regarding women in verses 9-15. This is obscured by the KJV and NIV, but it is made clear by the more literal translation of the NASV. Verse 8 forms the introduction to verses 9-15 because it is transitional. In it we find Paul's transition from the subject of prayer to the subject of women. The mention of prayer connects it with the preceding verses (1 Tim. 2:1). The mention of men (adult males) connects it with the parallel and contrasting mention of women in v. 9 and the following verses. As a transitional and introductory verse, verse 8 provides us with three important preliminary considerations to the directives regarding women in verses 9-15.

A. The Authoritative Force of Paul's Directives: "I want"

The verb, I want (*boulomai*) must be supplied in v. 9. Thus, its force governs the directives of verses 8-15. Notice the pronoun, "I". Who is speaking? Who is this "I"? This pronoun is, of course, a reference to the inspired and authoritative apostle who claimed that his words carried the authority of Christ (1 Tim. 1:1, 12f. with 1 Cor. 14:37; 2 Cor. 13:3). In this very letter and in connection with this very subject, Paul has emphasized his authority.

Notice the verb, "want" (*boulomai*). This is a word that frequently designates the divine counsel, purpose, or decree in the New Testament. Cf, for instance, Rom. 9:19. It designates a matter of settled determination on the basis of clear deliberation. Fairbairn cites Webster to this effect: "Boulomai expresses a wish, intention, purpose, formed after deliberation, and upon considering all the circumstances of a case..."¹

This word aptly indicates that Paul's directives are a matter of "apostolic decree." These words are not merely Paul's opinion as a man or a rabbi. They are his settled determination as an apostle of Christ for the churches of Christ which he governed.

B. The Assumed Context of Paul's Directives: "in every place"

In speaking of the assumed context in which his decree was to operate, Paul says literally "in every place" (NASB) not "everywhere" (KJV, NIV). The Greek is *en panti topw*. This phrase is a clear indication that Paul is thinking not of everywhere in general, but of every place where the church is gathered when he gives the directives of vv. 8-15. Several factors confirm this reference.

¹Fairbairn, op. cit., p. 121.

1. The Theme of 1 Timothy

What is the theme of 1 Timothy? According to 1 Tim. 3:14 and 15 the theme of 1 Timothy is instructions for Timothy for his ministry in the Church at Ephesus. Cf. 1 Tim. 1:3f, 1:18; 6:20f. (Cf. The similar nature of Titus in Tit. 1:5.) Paul is dealing with the ordering of the church in 1 Timothy!¹

2. The Structure of 1 Timothy

The outline of 1 Timothy and the place of 1 Timothy 2:8-15 in this outline tends to confirm this reference as well. Here is a reasonable outline of 1 Timothy:

Theme: Instructions for Timothy for His Ministry in the Church at Ephesus

Introduction: Salutation and General Introduction regarding Timothy's Task (1:1-20)

I. Instructions Regarding the Ordering of the Church's Life (2:1-3:13)

A. The Ordering of Its Assemblies (2:1-15)

1. Prayer in the Assembly (2:1-7)

2. Women in the Assembly (2:8-15)

B. The Ordering of Its Officers (3:1-13)

II. Instructions Regarding the Ordering of Timothy's Ministry (3:14-6:19)

A. As to Timothy Himself (3:14-4:16)

B. As to Different Classes in the Church (5:1-6:19)

--older men (5:1a)

--younger men (5:1a)

--older women (5:2a)

--younger women (5:2b)

--widows (5:3-16)

--elders (5:17-25)

--slaves (6:1, 2)

--opposers (6:3-16)

--rich (6:17-19)

Conclusion: Concluding Entreaty (6:20, 21)

Paul in 1 Timothy 2:8-15 is clearly in a section dealing with the ordering of the assemblies of the church in 1 Timothy 2.

3. The Specifying of Men

Verse 8 distinctly specifies men as the ones who are to pray. (Anhr, the Greek word used here designates an adult male as opposed to a woman or a child.) Paul cannot mean to forbid women to pray everywhere or absolutely! There must be a limitation in the context.

¹Hurley, op. cit., p. 196.

He must, in other words, be assuming the context of the church in the phrase, in every place.

4. The Mention of Teaching

Verses 11 and 12 of 1 Timothy 2 emphasize teaching. The natural conclusion is that the public assembly is being spoken of. This is the center of Christian instruction as 3:15 implies by calling the church, "the pillar and support of the truth". Confirming this is the fact of the parallel between 1 Tim. 2:8-15 and 1 Cor. 14:34f. Both have as their self-conscious context the assemblies of the church. In both Paul emphasizes the universality of what he requires. "In every place" matches "in all the churches of the saints" in 1 Cor. 14:33b and means every place throughout the world where the church gathers (Mal. 1:11, 1 Cor. 1:2, 2 Cor. 2:14).

We may conclude by stressing again the necessity of thinking biblically. If we are to do so, we must make biblical distinctions. We must clearly and emphatically distinguish church and not church. These are the biblical categories which must govern our thinking if we are to make any sense of these passages about women and many other matters in the Word of God. Without them we cannot make sense of our duty or the Bible!

What is the church? It is the formal gathering of the church as a church for its stated tasks as a church. In 1 Timothy 2 those tasks are clearly identified as including prayer and instruction. It must be understood that the church has a formal, legal identity. It is not an informal gathering. Ekklesia was used of political bodies. It was used of the solemn, formal, official, civil gatherings for national business of Israel and the Greek city-states. One lexicon gives this definition: "assembly as a regularly summoned political body."¹ The United States House of Representatives is such an assembly as this. Both the church and the House of Representatives may have informal gatherings to play softball or to picnic. But their formal gatherings have an official, legal capacity.

The directives of verses 9-15 have as their assumed context the formal meetings of the gathered church. The directives regarding prayer (v. 8), regarding the adorning of women (vv. 9, 10), regarding the behavior of women (vv. 11-15) all have this assumed context. None are directly applicable outside the church.

C. The Significant Occasion of Paul's Directives: "The men...to pray"

¹Bauer, Arndt, and Gingrich, p. 240; Cf. also the comments in Moulton & Milligan's, *The Vocabulary of the New Testament*, p. 195.

What is the occasion of Paul giving the directives of vv. 9-15? What provides the transition into these directives? The answer is the directive of v. 8. What is that directive? It is that (1) in the church (2) holy and peace-loving adult males (3) ought to lead in prayer (4) exclusively. This directive must be explained by four comments

(1) "in the church"--This has been explained above.

(2) "holy and peace-loving adult males"--As we have seen the word for men used here means an adult males (1 Cor. 13:11; Eph. 4:13). Such adult males must, of course, also have the necessary spiritual qualifications

(3) "lead in prayer"--Paul is obviously not forbidding women to pray in the sense of quiet communing with God. Hannah clearly did this in God's Temple in 1 Samuel 1. By prayer he means, of course, to lead in prayer, to act as the mouthpiece of the assembly. Prayer, here includes all the different kinds of prayer mentioned in v. 1.

(4) "exclusively"--By this word I intend to reject a certain false interpretation of v. 9. Verse 9 is elliptical, i.e. something must be supplied in order for it to make good sense. Literally, it reads, "likewise women with proper clothing to adorn themselves." The question is what should be supplied? Some assert that the words "I want to pray" should be supplied so that v. 9 would be translated: "Likewise I want the women to pray with becoming clothing." Just as the men are to pray in every place with holy hands, so the women are to pray in proper clothing with modesty and sobriety.

The vast majority of interpreters reject this interpretation and supply only the words, "I want." The translations of the NASB, NIV, KJV, and NKJV each reject this interpretation. Several good reasons may be given for rejecting this interpretation. It would have Paul commanding that women should pray in becoming clothing--a strange idea! It would contradict the command of silence given in v. 11. It ignores the chiasmic arrangement of "to pray" and "to adorn" in vv. 8 and 9. It ignores the presence of an infinitive in verse 9 and supplies another unnecessarily. The conclusive reason, however, for rejecting this interpretation is this. It introduces intolerable confusion into v. 9. What do you do with the words "to adorn" (or "to dress" NIV)? "Likewise I want women to pray with proper clothing, modesty and discreetly, to adorn themselves." This translation makes no sense, and the exegetes recognize this.

We may conclude this treatment of 1 Timothy 2 with several practical observations. First, this text confirms that women are not by 1 Cor. 11:2-16 permitted to pray or prophesy in church. Second, this text clarifies that in the following verses and directives Paul's emphasis is on the subordinate role of women in the church. Third, this text commands that women not lead in prayer in the church assemblies. Fourth, this text clues us in to the strictness with which Paul applies the principle of subordination in the church. Not only may women not teach, they also may not pray. This is similar to 1 Corinthians 14:35

where we learn that not only may women not speak, they also may not ask questions. Such commands as these ought to influence our judgment regarding issues not explicitly addressed in the Bible!

I. Paul's Instruction Regarding the Adorning of Women in the Public Assembly of the Church (Verses 9 and 10)

Having dealt with the introductory and transitional declaration of Paul that women should not be allowed to lead in prayer in the public assembly, we come now to verses 9 and 10 and Paul's instructions regarding the adornment of women in the public assembly of the church. It will be helpful as we approach these verses to set before ourselves the following analytical outline of 1 Timothy 2 as a whole.

Theme: Instructions Concerning the Assemblies of the Church.

Section I. Instructions Concerning Prayer in the Assemblies of the Church, Vv. 1-8

- I. The Nature of Such Prayer, Vv. 1,2*
- ii. The Encouragement to Such Prayer, Vv. 3-7*
- iii. The Offerers of Such Prayer, V. 8*

Section II. Instructions Concerning Women in the Assemblies of the Church, Vv. 9-15

- I. Instructions Concerning the Adorning of Women, Vv. 9,10*
- ii. Instructions Concerning the Role of Women, Vv. 11-15*

We will deal with verses 9 and 10 under three points. The first is ...

A. The Preliminary Analysis

1. Theme

The governing idea of these verses is given us in the keyword, adorn. This infinitive to adorn governs each of the main parts of this sentence, v. 9a, v. 9b, 10. This shows that the theme of these verses is, as we have said, Paul's instruction regarding the adorning of women in the assemblies of the church.

2. Structure

Here, then, is a suggested outline of these verses:

- I. Paul's instruction regarding the adorning of women in the assemblies of the church*
 - A. Its General Statement, v. 9a*
 - B. Its Specific Implications, v. 9b, 10*
 - 1. A negative implication, v. 9b*
 - 2. A positive implication, v. 10*

The negative and positive are two, but certainly not the only two specific applications of the principle stated in v. 9a.

B. The Detailed Exposition

1. The General Statement, v. 9a

a. The meaning of *kosmein*

This word is translated by the NASB "to adorn" and by the NIV "to dress". The root meaning of this word is the idea of ordering, putting in order. Hence, when applied to a woman's appearance it takes on the meaning of adorn, decorate, or even to make beautiful or attractive.¹ Note especially the following texts: Luke 21:5; Tit. 2:20; Rev. 21:2, 19. When applied to female appearance the meaning is always to adorn or beautify.

b. The meaning of *katastolh*

The NASB translates this word, clothing, while it is lost in the paraphrase of NIV. It comes from a word which means literally a robe or long garment. Here this is its primary meaning although the context makes clear that a woman's general appearance is in view including her hairstyle and jewelry (v. 9b). Some commentators think that woman's general deportment and appearance is the actual meaning of the word.

c. The meaning of *kosmiw*

This word is variously translated by the NASB as *proper* and by the NIV as *modestly*. It is derived from the same root as the word used here meaning adorn. (See above.) There is a play on words here. Literally Paul says, "I want women to adorn themselves in adorning clothing."² This alliteration or play on words confirms that *kosmiw* means here "adorning clothing" not proper or modest clothing. The idea is, of course, present that only proper, respectable clothing is adorning clothing. This meaning must be attached to the use of this word in a different way in 1 Tim. 3:2 (the only other use in the New Testament)

d. The meaning of *aidouj* and *swfrosunh*

The NASB translates these words, "modestly and discreetly", the NIV, "with decency and propriety". Trench treats the use of these words in this very context:

¹Cf. the definition of Bauer, Arndt, and Gingrich.

²Cf. The comments of Hendriksen and Lenski *en loc.*

At 1 Tim. 2:9 we shall best distinguish between *aidwj* and *swfrosunhj*, and the distinction will be capable of further application, if we affirm of *aidwj* that it is that 'shamefastness,' or pudency, which shrinks from overpassing the limits of womanly reserve and modesty, as well as from the dishonour which justly attach thereto; of ✓ *swfrosunhj* that it is that habitual inner self-government, with its constant rein on all ✓ the passions and desires, which would hinder the temptation to this from arising, or at all events from arising in such strength as should overbear the checks and barriers which *aidwj* opposed to it.¹

Trench's comments means that the first of these words designates that clothing which avoids every hint of the shame which attaches to sexual looseness. The second of these words designates that clothing which reason, sanity, and sound judgment indicate are in any given situation. Paul assumes that a normal woman will be able by the exercise of her rational faculties to know what is proper clothing in any situation. Such clothing is always "modest and appropriate."²

2. Its Specific Implications

a. A Negative Implication

Women, therefore (Paul goes on to say), are not to adorn themselves with "braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments." Those who want to show that the directives of Paul are culturally bound have a hey-day with this directive. See here! Paul forbids braids, gold rings, and pearl necklaces.³

This interpretation represents a complete misunderstanding of what Paul forbids. As the

¹Richard C. Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*, (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1975), pp. 71, 72.

²The modern punk style of clothing with its bizarre, irrational, clashing choice of clothing is a perfect illustration of clothing that is not *swfrosunj*. Such clothing is not just strange. It is sinful.

³Scanzoni, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

NASB correctly translates, he forbids "braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments."
It is braided hair *and* gold or pearls which Paul forbids, not merely braids, gold, and pearls. The idea is correctly brought out by many interpreters. Listen to the comments of Hendriksen:

But what about these *braids* which were popular in the world of Paul's day? No expense was spared to make them dazzling. They actually sparkled. The braids were fastened by jewelled tortoise-shell combs, or by pins of ivory or silver. Or the pins were of bronze with jewelled heads, the more varied and expensive the better. The pin-heads often consisted of miniature images (an animal, a human hand, an idol, the female figure, etc.) *Braids* in those days often represented *fortunes*. They were articles of luxury! The Christian woman is warned not to indulge in such extravagance. Similarly, a woman who is a believer must not try to make herself conspicuous by a vain display of ornaments of *gold*. Also, she will not yearn for *pearls*, obtained (at that time) from the Persian Gulf or from the Indian Ocean. These were often fabulously priced and thus way beyond the purchasing power of the average church-member. In order to obtain a pearl of great value a merchant might have to sell all his possessions (Matt. 13:46). Yet someone who was living in Paul's day said, "I have seen Lollia Paulina [wife of emperor Caligula] covered with emeralds and pearls gleaming all over her head, hair, ears, neck, and fingers, to the value of over a million dollars."¹

It is an elaborate, extravagant, expensive use of braids, gold, and pearls together that Paul forbids. This is made clear by the reference to costly or expensive clothes. Such attention and expense expended on a woman's appearance was not just wrong in that culture. It is wrong always, not just in Paul's day. This passage cannot be consigned to the wastebasket of out-dated culture.

b. A Positive Implication

Here we come to v. 10. It is a desire to appear beautiful to others and to have their respect and admiration which drives women to such extremes as those alluded to in v. 9b. This desire to be the object of love, praise, and admiration is not in itself evil. Paul asserts, however, that such distinction is to be sought in a proper way through lavish expenditures of time and energy on good works.² The attention once wrongly devoted to appearance must now be concentrated in a proper direction. The money and time expended on hair and clothes excessively must now be devoted to good works. This emphasis recalls Paul's enumeration of such good deeds in 1 Tim. 5:10-14 and Titus 2:4, 5.

¹Hendriksen, op. cit., p. 107; Hurley, op. cit., pp. 198f.

²Patrick Fairbairn, en loc., p. 126.

C. The Practical Implication of These Verses

1. An Enlightening Insight into the Feminine Psyche

✓ There exists in women a peculiar and powerful desire to adorn themselves. Both in 1 Tim. 2:9, 10 and 1 Pet. 3:2-5 the Apostles use the language of adorning with reference to directives toward women. Why? I do not believe it is a coincidence or a superficial play on words. Rather this concentration on adornment when addressing women manifests a penetrating insight into one of the most basic drives of women - to adorn themselves! What is the essence of this drive? Rev. 21:2 says: "And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband." The bride is adorned *for* her husband. The desire for adornment focuses on the eyes of others. It is the desire to appear attractive, lovely, admirable in the eyes of others. I want to say three things about this drive.

(1) This desire is not in itself sinful. Women are not told to mortify the desire to adorn themselves in 1 Tim. 2 or 1 Pet. 3. They are told to gratify this desire in a proper way. They are commanded to adorn themselves.

(2) This desire may be perverted by sin and manifested in sinful ways. It may be perverted into an idolatrous desire for the attention of others at any cost. It may be perverted into an attention-getting appearance (whether manifested by clothing, hairstyle, or bearing); into a sensual, immodest appearance; into an expensive, extravagant and ostentatious appearance; or into a dowdy, bizarre appearance; into an attention-getting demeanor in which a woman behaves in a brash, boisterous, or loud manner.

(3) This desire must be expressed by an appearance governed by biblical principles and a lavish concentration on good works. This is the proper way, dear women, to satisfy that deep longing for adornment.

✓ (4) Men, understand your women. They do have a native tendency to the fear of man. because of this need. You need to properly meet this need in them by providing adequately for them and being socially sensitive when you are with them in public.

2. An Encouraging Call to a Properly Becoming Appearance.

There is here an encouraging call to a properly becoming appearance. Hendriksen remarks: "It is clear, therefore, that the apostle does not condemn the desire on the part of girls and women--a desire created in their souls by their maker--to adorn themselves, to be "in good taste." But if a woman's robe is to be truly such, it will be expressive of modesty and good sense.

What is becoming appearance? I am not going to presume to tell women what is becoming! But I do know some things that it is not. It is not disorderly. This is the opposite of the words used here. It is contrary to all that is aesthetically offensive. As to a woman's bearing and posture, it condemns a slouchy or unwomanly posture. As to a woman's hair and hairstyles, it clearly is opposed to all untidiness or carelessness. Stringy, dirty, unkempt, fly-away, uncontrolled hair is not becoming. As to a woman's dress, what is becoming is not disorderly, sloppy, dowdy, dirty.

In general this condemns all unwillingness on the part of a woman to spend the time, effort, and expense to adorn herself with an adorning appearance. Such unwillingness is a foolish and ungodly super-spirituality which is in reality rebellion against God's providence in making you a woman. And an over-reaction.

3. An Insistent Demand for a Discreetly Modest Appearance

As to dress and hairstyles this condemns all that is sexually provocative. Myriad are the ways that evil men and women have devised to accentuate that which would arouse sexual desire. This is opposed to the tight, translucent, high-slitted, low-cut. Slacks may be immodest by tightness. Where is the line between a properly becoming dress and a sensually provocative one? Modesty means a proper reserve and good judgment. There is a chasm between the two.

This also condemns all that is extravagantly expensive or even inappropriately expensive. If you make what most of us make you ought to buy your clothes at Sears and Penneys not some boutique in ritzy-ville. For those who may have more money, a bit more might be appropriate.

It is also possible to be indiscreet and immodest by an un-lady-like bearing or posture or walk or use of the eyes. Women must be careful how they sit, walk, and stand.

4. A Helpful Focus on the Church's Assembly

Hendriksen emphasizes that the original context assumed for the carrying out of these instructions is the assembly of the church. Speaking of the word, similarly, which begins 1 Tim. 2:9 he says:

The word similarly shows that Paul is continuing his remarks about conduct in connection with public worship. Just as the men must make the necessary preparations, so that with prepared hearts and without previous disposition to evil they "come to church," able to lift up holy hands, so also the women must give evidence of the same spirit of holiness, and must show this while they are still at

home, getting ready to attend the service.¹

Obviously the principles stated here go far beyond the assembly in their application, but that is their focus in this context.

If there are places where a distinctly feminine appearance is un-achievable, and a properly becoming appearance is difficult, yet at least when we come to church all the principles of feminine appearance must be fully operative. There, at least, your appearance must be distinctly feminine, properly becoming, discreetly modest.

II. Paul's Instructions Regarding the Role of Women in the Church

Introduction: The Structure of Verses 11-15

1. Their Theme

The lack of any connective word at the beginning of v. 11 shows that v. 11 begins a new directive or a distinct aspect of Paul's instructions regarding women. The presence of a connective word at the beginning of each of the four following verses (de in v. 12, gar in v. 13, kai in v. 14, de in v. 15) indicates that verses 11-15 are a unit of thought with a single basic theme. As the contents of especially verses 11 and 12 make clear, that single theme is the role of women in the assemblies of the church, or rather Paul's directive regarding that role.

2. Structure

The connective, gar (for), at the beginning of v. 13 marks the transition in vv. 11-15 from the statement of Paul's directive to Paul's rationale for or his support for his directive. The, kai (and), at the beginning of v. 14 makes the transition from Paul's first supporting argument to his second.

The outline of vv. 11-15 may, then, be constructed as follows: {Note how directly this passage addresses the issue we are not examining.}

- II. *Paul's Directive Regarding the Role of Women in the Assemblies of the Church (vv. 11-15)*
 - A. *The Statement of the Directive (vv. 11, 12)*
 - 1. *Its Positive Statement, Paul's Liberal Permission (v. 11)*
 - 2. *Its Negative Statement, Paul's Emphatic Prohibition (v. 12)*
 - B. *The Argument for the Directive (vv. 13-15)*
 - 1. *The Argument From the Order of Creation (v. 13)*
 - 2. *The Argument From the Facts of the Fall (vv. 14, 15)*

¹Hendriksen, op. cit., p. 105.

- a. *The Clear Assertion of the Facts (v. 14)*
- b. *The Necessary Caution Regarding the Facts (v. 15)*

A. The Statement of the Directive (vv. 11, 12)

1. The Positive Statement--Paul's Liberal Permission (v. 11)

Paul begins his directive on a positive note. He wants women to learn. They should be present in the assembly. They should pay close attention. They should learn. This contrasts Paul's approach with the Rabbinic attitude toward women learning.¹ The Rabbis had a low opinion of the ability of women to learn and did not require them to learn.

According to Paul, however, they must learn, but their learning must from the outset be characterized by quietness (*hsucia*). This is not the same word used in 1 Cor. 14:34, 35. It does mean that the women must remain silent as they learn, but it connotes another idea also, the idea of restfulness or quietness. This word is used 3 other times in the New Testament (Acts 22:2; 2 Thess. 3:12; 1 Tim. 2:12). Close relatives of it are used in 1 Tim. 2:2 (*hsucioj*) and Luke 23:56 (*hsuczaw*). A look at these usages will begin to give you a feel for this word. Women are to learn in the assembly, but they are not to engage in a lively question-answer interchange with the teacher in the assembly. They are not to challenge, or probe the teacher with questions. In the assembly they are to keep silent while they learn. Additionally, this silence is not to be the kind of silence imposed by force. It is rather to be the manifestation of a quiet and restful spirit which sweetly submits to the divine role ordained for her. There is to be no restiveness toward the restraint.

Paul emphasizes this submission to the divine order in the final words of v. 11, *en pash upotagh*. The word, *upotagh*, (NASB *submissiveness*, NIV *submission*) is the word that we have studied before in 1 Cor. 14:34. It is the word which is implied by the headship of 1 Cor. 11:3. It means to subordinate oneself to one's divinely constituted head or authority. Hence, Paul requires that there be no breach of the divine order of male headship in the church's assemblies. Complete, full, entire subordination to the divine order is what is required.

2. The Negative Statement--Paul's Emphatic Prohibition (v. 12)

The permission of v. 11 smooths the way for the emphatic prohibition of v. 12. Let there be no misunderstanding. Whatever Paul may permit in violation of the rabbinic prejudice of his day, he does not permit a woman to teach in the public assemblies of the church. This and any other exercise of authority over a man is not permitted.

The last phrase of v. 12 describes the contrasting and proper role of the women. She is to

¹Hurley, *op. cit.*, pp. 63, 71, 72.

remain quiet. Paul emphasizes the contrast with the use of the strongest adversative (the strongest but) in the Greek language (αλλά). With the strongest contrast, a woman is to remain silent, or be quiet.

This is the clear statement of Paul's directive for women's conduct in the assembly. Feminists have made two comments intended to cloud its clarity and evade its teaching. (1) They have suggested that only married women are in view. To this comment three replies may be made. First, it may be that married women are mainly in view. Cf. v. 15. The Greek word, *gunh*, may mean wife. This, however, does not mean that exclusively married women are in view. Second, the women of verses 9-15 are set in contrast to the men of v. 8. It is unthinkable that Paul means to say that only husbands may pray in the public assembly. This would exclude both Timothy and Paul himself! Third, the directives of verses 9 and 10 regarding adorning, modest, and discreet clothing, and good works may not be limited in their application to married women.

(2) They have suggested that the word translated, "exercise authority," by the NIV means to usurp authority, domineer, or be a dictator. Feminists on this basis argue that Paul is not forbidding the exercise of proper authority by women over men. Rather, they say, he is forbidding the exercise of improper authority (usurpation) or the improper exercise of authority (domineering). This idea may have been suggested by the KJV's translation, *usurp authority*.¹

Three replies may be made to this view:

First, even if the word does mean "domineer" or "usurp authority" it does not follow that Paul would allow any female authority over men in the church as proper. The implication could be that any exercise of authority over men by a woman would be a usurpation of authority. Or, taking the meaning, domineer, it may be that Paul is implying that the tendency of any female exercise of authority over men would be domineering or tyrannical. Authority wrongly seized is rarely exercised properly.

Second, in reality the meaning of the word is merely to have authority just as the NIV translates. In an in-depth analysis of every known occurrence of this word in Greek literature, George W. Knight III has shown that it never has the meaning attributed to it by feminists. He has also shown that it is not derived from or related to the word for suicide or family murderer.²

Third, in this context to assert with Scanzoni that only domineering authority is forbidden women is unthinkable. This word is used in parallel with the phrases, "let a woman quietly

¹This is the view of Letha Scanzoni (as quoted in Foh, *op. cit.*, p. 126).

²Knight, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

receive instruction", "with entire submissiveness", "But I do not allow a woman to teach", and "But to remain quiet." In the midst of such language Scanzoni's suggestion regarding this word's meaning is completely unjustifiable.

Concluding Observations:

In general the directives are closely parallel to and confirm our exposition of 1 Cor. 14:33b-35.

(1) It is clearly implied that women may not ask questions in the public assembly. In the language of 1 Timothy 2 they must learn quietly.

(2) It is clearly stated that the issue at stake in Paul's prohibitions is one of authority over men in religious matters. The words *upotagh* and *aughentein* make this clear.

(3) It is clearly stated that a woman teaching in the assembly of the church is a violation of the divine order demanding male authority. This confirms our interpretation 1 Cor. 14:34-35 in which we showed that speaking included ordinary teaching as well as extraordinary gifts like prophecy and tongues-speaking.

(4) It is clearly implied that no official teaching position over adult males is permitted to women in the church, whether that teaching ministry takes place in the assembly or not! The principle underlying Paul's prohibition is not restricted to the assemblies of the church, though it is in those assemblies that it has its most focused and emphatic application. To give a woman any stated teaching position over adult males is, then, clearly a violation of the Scriptures. This would seem clearly to forbid appointing a female Sunday School teacher over a mixed adult class, a female adult Bible study leader, a female seminary professor.

B. The Arguments for the Directive (vv. 13-15)

In verses 13-15 Paul proceeds to give arguments for the directives of the preceding verses. Here we must remind ourselves of the outline or structure of verses 13-15. The *for* (*gar*) at the beginning of verse 13 indicates that Paul is now going to tell us his reasons (or, in other words, give us his arguments) for the directives he has stated in vv. 11 and 12. The "and" (*kai*) at the beginning of v. 14 marks Paul's transition to his second argument or reason in support of these directives.

1. The Argument From the Order of Creation

a. The Simple Assumption of the Argument

In his first argument Paul assumes two things. He assumes that the order of the creation of Adam and Eve is also relevant for their offspring. He also assumes that the precise

relevance of this order is to support Paul's assertion of male headship in the church and female subordination.

b. The Feminist Objections to the Argument

Feminists, however, have serious objections to Paul's argumentation here. One argues as follows:

That subordination does not follow from derivation can be seen from this very same narrative where it is said (Gen. 2:7) that the man was formed "out of" the ground ... Who would argue that the man is subordinate to the ground because taken from it? Furthermore, even if one were to take the narrative in Genesis 2 literally so as to postulate a temporal priority in the creation of the male (Adam was first formed, *then* Eve, 1 Tim. 2:13), there is nothing in the thought of temporal priority which implies superior worth or value. So far as temporal priority is concerned, according to the first creation narrative animals were created before Man, yet this does not imply their superior worth over Man. Quite the reverse: Man, who is last, is the crown of creation and has dominion over the creatures. If one were to infer anything from the fact that the woman was created after the man, it should be, in the light of the first creation narrative, that the woman is superior to the man.¹

In every real sense, such slanders of Scripture do not deserve to be answered. Yet, because there is a specious plausibility about them, I am going to take the time to answer these arguments against 1 Tim. 2:13. I have three things to say:

(1) In earlier expositions I have shown in detail that Genesis 1-2 clearly teach that the man possessed a certain priority or primacy over the woman. I refer you to that material.

(2) The analogies of the feminists are irrelevant. They ask, "The ground and plants and animals were created before man. Why doesn't this--according to Paul's logic--mean that they have authority over man?" Such analogies are irrelevant. Temporal priority--merely being made first--does not in itself impart authority over that which is created earlier. Paul does not say it does. As his language makes clear, Paul is thinking only of temporal priority *within human relationships*. Literally Paul says in v. 13, "For Adam was created, a first one." Adam was created first only with reference to Eve. It is thus, only of human relationships that Paul is predicating the significance of temporal priority. In their eagerness to construct defenses against Paul's logic, feminists have blundered by ignoring the obvious and assumed distinction between the rest of creation and mankind.

¹Jewett, op. cit., pp. 126,127; Scanzoni & Hardesty, op. cit., pp. 27, 28.

(3) Within human relationships temporal priority does, in fact, have very clear ethical significance. Temporal priority does impart a certain dignity. The most obvious instance of this is in the primal and original human authority-structure, the parental authority. Parental authority clearly involves temporal priority and the derivation of those under authority from the parental authority. Similarly, Adam's authority involves his temporal priority in relation to Eve and her actual derivation from him. The Bible teaches, furthermore, that those who are older than we possess a dignity and deserve a respect that our peers in age do not. Cf. Lev. 19:32; Job. 32:4-10; 1 Tim. 5:1, 2. Most significant of all, the Bible recognizes the right and primacy of the firstborn.¹

2. The Argument From the Facts of the Fall

Notwithstanding all the modern evasions, it is clear that Paul regards the facts of the Fall as teaching that woman is prone to deception on religious matters when she takes a leadership role in violation of male headship. That is the plain meaning of v. 14. There is one very interesting feature of v. 14, however, which needs underscoring. It is that Paul regards Eve's sin as revelatory of the weakness of all her daughters. Several things make this clear.

(1) She is called, not Eve (cf. v.13), but the woman in v. 14. It was "the woman" with emphasis on her characteristic womanhood who was quite deceived.

(2) The very citing of Eve's deception as proof of Paul's prohibition in vv. 11, 12 implies that Eve was the epitome of womanhood and, thus, the representative of all women.

(3) The connection between verses 14 and 15 assumes this solidarity between Eve and all women. Both the NIV and NASV insert the word, women, into v. 15. It is not there in the original. Paul sharply says, "but they shall be saved..." He uses a plural. What is the antecedent of this plural? "Eve" and "the woman" of verses 13 and 14 are singular, but such a oneness exists between Eve and all women that Paul can move from the singular, woman, to the plural, women, without notice.

These facts enable us to see the fallacy of the false teaching theory and other "local" theories of 1 Tim. 2:11-15. So devastating are the directives of these verses to "Christian feminism" that desperate measures have been taken to evade them. One such theory is the false-teaching theory of Scanzoni and Hardesty:

¹Hurley, op. cit., pp. 207, 208. Cf. Deut. 21:15-17; 1 Chron. 5:1.

The passage seems directed at a particular situation rather than at stating a general principle ... In 1 Timothy the problem seems to be women who usurped authority from others, teaching when they had neither gift nor training. Perhaps one of the wealthier women thought her social position guaranteed her a leadership post. Or perhaps the church was even meeting in the home of a woman who was bossy and domineering. Maybe some women were putting their husbands down publicly. Whatever the local situation, we must be careful not to consider this passage the only and final word to women.¹

Gundry suggests that the problem at Ephesus was a peculiar, local, and temporary problem.² The idea is that if the problem was such, then Paul's directives in response have a purely local and temporary significance. They are not intended for the church at large.

It is clear that the arguments of verses 13 and 14 have a general significance, because Creation and Fall have a universal and perpetual significance. The directives of verses 11 and 12 are rooted not in temporary factors of expedience, but are grounded in facts of universal and perpetual significance for the church.

Excursus on Verse 15 of 1 Timothy 2:

Verse 15 of 1 Timothy 2 is one of those passages in Paul which suggests Peter's assertion that he said some things "hard to understand." Since neither the translation of the NIV or the NASV is completely adequate, let me begin the exposition of this verse by offering my own translation. "But they shall be saved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith, love, and holiness with sobriety."

It is the first part of this verse that is confusing, "But they shall be saved through the bearing of children." Therefore, what I intend to do is simply expound it word-by-word.

(1) "But"

Notice first that the verse begins with the connective word, but. The verse does not begin with "and" or "for." This means that this verse is not another argument in support of the directives of vv. 11, 12. Rather, it is intended to balance or qualify the preceding argument, by saying something encouraging to women. Paul is aware that v. 14 could be the occasion in the minds of sinful men to draw extreme conclusions. They might even wonder if perhaps women cannot be saved. Hence, to avoid such extremist interpretations by proud men or despairing women, Paul says, "But they shall be saved..."

¹Scanzoni and Hardesty, op. cit., p. 71.

²Gundry, op. cit., p. 77.

Verse 15 is intended in its original connection to balance and qualify v. 14 and encourage women not to despair.

(2) "The bearing of children"

The great question here is whether this phrase can refer to the incarnation, i.e. the birth of Christ. Can this phrase refer to the fact that we are saved through the birth of Christ? This question must be considered because some have felt that this phrase could be translated "the childbirth." There are at least two reasons why this understanding must be rejected. First, the reference to the Fall in v. 14, to which v. 15's thought is closely connected, points to Gen. 3:16 as the Old Testament background of this phrase. Genesis 3:16 reads, "To the woman He said, 'I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you shall bring forth children; Yet your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you.'" If the reference is to this Old Testament text, then it is clearly not the birth of Christ which is in view, but child-bearing in general. Second, the word used in v. 15 for child-bearing is not used elsewhere in the New Testament, but its verb form is used in this very letter in 1 Tim. 5:14. A similar word is used in 1 Tim. 5:10. Clearly, it is child-bearing in general which is in view on those passages. Finally, as the lexicographers make clear (cf. for instance the statements of Bauer, Arndt, & Gingrich), this word means the bearing of children, not childbirth.

(3) "They shall be saved"

Many orthodox interpreters argue that if Christ's birth is not in view, then these words cannot refer to salvation from God's wrath and to God's eschatological kingdom. Among such interpreters are Foh and Hurley.¹ We must conclude in contrast to their views that the unquestionable meaning of "saved" here is to be spiritually or eschatologically saved from God's wrath. I do not believe that this in any way conflicts with the Reformed doctrine of salvation by grace alone, Christ alone, and faith alone. On the contrary it is in perfect accord with the Reformed doctrine of perseverance. Why must "they shall be saved" refer to salvation from God's wrath?

(1) This is its characteristic meaning in the New Testament. Over 75% of its approx. 130 occurrences have this meaning.

(2) This is its exclusive meaning in the epistles of the New Testament including 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus. Cf. 1 Tim. 1:15; 2:4; 2 Tim. 1:9; Tit. 3:5. Frequently, it carries the peculiar connotation of being saved or preserved for participation in eschatological salvation. Cf. 1 Tim. 4:16; 2 Tim. 4:18. Thus, our perseverance may be viewed as a condition for the enjoyment of such salvation.

¹Foh, op. cit., p. 128; Hurley, op. cit., p. 221.

(3) The condition mentioned in v. 15b is precisely that condition mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament as necessary to participation in eschatological salvation. It is precisely continuing in faith, love, and holiness that is the essence of perseverance of the saints.

(4) "Through"

But why does Paul say, "they shall be saved *through* childbearing." This sounds like childbearing is the means of salvation. Notice that Paul does not say "by childbearing" but "through." There is a big difference in the Greek language between "by" and "through." Many of the commentators (Lenski, Hendriksen, White, Alford) and also the BAG lexicon state that "through" is used here to denote attendant or accompanying circumstances. This is similar to its usage in Rom. 4:11 which asserts that Abraham is "the father of all those who believe through uncircumcision" and 2 Cor. 2:4, which states that Paul wrote to the Corinthians "through many tears." For English readers, "through" could better be translated as "in connection with." Thus, we should translate, "But they shall be saved in connection with child-bearing if they continue in faith..."

Why does Paul say that women will be saved "in connection with child-bearing"? Child-bearing is used here to designate the woman's God-given role. The unique and peculiar function of a woman which sets her off from a man is her ability to be a mother. By way of the figure of speech known as synecdoche or metonymy, this unique function is used to describe the woman's God-given role in life. Paul assumes that child-bearing and motherhood will be the heart and core of the vast majority of Christian women's lives. He uses it to briefly describe their God-given role in life. Thus, Paul teaches that women will be saved in connection with embracing their God-given role and continuing in faith, love, and holiness with sobriety in that role. A parallel passage which states this same principle is 1 Tim. 5:11-15.

This verse is, then, part and parcel of Paul's doctrine of perseverance. Perseverance is necessary to be saved in the last day. This cannot be perseverance in the abstract, but must be perseverance in our unique roles. The woman must persevere in her unique role. ✓
The preacher must remain faithful as a preacher (1 Tim. 4:16). The rich man must ✓
persevere as a rich man with his unique responsibilities and opportunities (1 Tim. 6:17- ✓
19).

So also the woman must persevere in her role (1 Tim. 2:15).

There are several important applications of this difficult, but important verse. First, rejecting her God-given role endangers a woman's soul. Notice that I did not say failure to bear children endangers your soul. I did not say failure to be married endangers your soul. I said refusing to be a woman and embrace your role as a woman endangers your soul. Feminism is a godless and damned philosophy. Second, child-bearing and

motherhood are the characteristic and normal and central responsibilities of womanhood. When this ceases to be the case, as it has in our society, it is due to an evil deviation from the divine order. Third, the safest place for a woman to be spiritually is in that place where a whole-souled embrace of her identity as a woman would take her. Any place else is a very dangerous place spiritually. Fourth, merely occupying a traditional role as a woman will not save you! If you are to be saved, you must persevere in that role. That takes the exercise of faith, love, holiness, and *sobriety*. Sobriety means good sense. This implies that it takes diligent continuance in faith, love, holiness, and sobriety to be a good mother.

Section 4: Practical Conclusions

Under this heading we shall summarize the conclusions of our study about two basic issues:

- I. *The Role of Women in the Assemblies of the Church*
- II. *The Role of Women in the Offices of the Church*

I. The Role of Women in the Assemblies of the Church

It is accurate to say that this is the central concern of the New Testament teaching on the church and the role of women. The two central passages, 1 Cor. 14:33b-35 and 1 Tim. 2:8-15, do not focus upon the subject of church offices. They do not focus their concern on the formal organization of the church so much as on the vital dynamics of the actual meetings of the church. This is not to depreciate this concern. This is not to say that they do not touch upon, nor have clear implications for the matter of church office. They do. Yet their concern focuses on what happens when the church gathers for the worship of God.

In summarizing the teaching of the New Testament on this issue, we will review the *broad principle* undergirding its teaching regarding the role of women in the church. Then we will review the *exemplary applications* of this principle to the role of women in the assemblies of the church recorded in the New Testament itself. Finally we will attempt to answer certain *remaining questions* in light of the biblical principle and its exemplary applications.

A. The Broad Principle

Both 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2 are the application of a broad principle to the specific situation of the assembly of the church. That broad principle is this: The taking of a leadership role in the assemblies of the church is a violation of the divine order of masculine headship and feminine subordination.

This is the principle enunciated in 1 Cor. 14:34, "but let them subject themselves, just as the Law also says." It is also the principle in 1 Timothy 2 as the phrase in v. 11, "with entire submissiveness," and the phrase in v. 12, "exercise authority over a man," make clear.

Male headship is applicable to the assemblies of the church and its precise application is to prohibit leadership roles in the assembly from women.

B. The Exemplary Applications

The Bible, taking account of our weakness, ignorance, and wickedness, does not leave us

without guidance as to what does or does not constitute a leadership role in a church assembly. 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2 provide us with several applications of the broad principle. These applications address themselves to the major issues we face and provide instructive analogies and guidelines for answering our remaining questions. These passages specifically teach that the following things are violations of the broad principle of male headship in the church-assemblies.

(1) Prophesying

Speaking in the context of 1 Cor. 14:33b-35 includes prophesying. Cf. v. 29.

(2) Speaking in Tongues

Speaking in 1 Cor. 14:33b-35 in context includes speaking in tongues. Cf. v. 27 and v. 39. These first two applications have little direct relevance to us. They would, however, *taken seriously*, drastically reform many Charismatic churches.

(3) Teaching

By teaching I mean all public instruction not given via extraordinary gifts. All preaching includes teaching and so is included. The following reasons for the prohibition against women teaching in the assemblies may be given.

- (a) This is implied in #1. The greater includes the lesser.
- (b) This is included in the speaking forbidden in 1 Cor. 14:34. Cf. vv. 6 and 19.
- © This is implied by the demand for silence in 1 Cor. 14:34.
- (d) This is implied in the prohibition of questions in 1 Cor. 14:35. (If she may not ask questions, certainly she may not speak.)
- (e) This is asserted in the prohibition of 1 Tim. 2:12.

(4) Asking Questions during Instruction

The following reasons for this prohibition may be cited:

- (a) This is explicit in 1 Cor. 14:35.
- (b) This is implicit in 1 Tim. 2:11 in the command that women learn with quietness.

(5) Leading in Prayer

- (a) This is the implication of the prohibition of tongues-speaking. Since tongues-speaking was an inspired form of prayer (1 Cor. 14:14-16), and this is forbidden to women in the assembly, certainly all uninspired prayers are forbidden.
- (b) This is the direct assertion of 1 Tim. 2:8.

C. The Remaining Questions

(1) Leading in Praise

By praise I mean the musical praise, i.e. singing. Examples of leading in praise would clearly include song leading, solo singing, and choir leading in the assembly. By discussing these common functions, I do not assume their legitimacy. I am not arguing that any or all of these practices are proper. My discussion of them merely assumes that they are common practice.

The Bible clearly forbids women to lead the formal praise of the church for the following reasons:

(a) The three main components of worship are prayer, proclamation, and praise. Leadership in the first two are clearly forbidden. By analogy leading in praise is also forbidden.

(b) As the leading of the worship of God's people, such things clearly violate the broad principle forbidding leadership to women.

© It is difficult to believe that if leading in prayer or even asking questions is forbidden by Paul, that he would have permitted a woman to sing solos or do these other things, especially in light of the following.

(d) Col. 3:16 identifies the goal of the church's singing as "teaching and admonishing." (Didaskontej kai nouqetontej). Leading in song, then, is to lead in teaching the church--something explicitly forbidden in 1 Tim. 2:12. Similarly Eph. 5:19 identifies singing as speaking. To sing a solo is to speak in the church. Such speaking (the same Greek word is used) is forbidden in 1 Cor. 14:34.

(e) It is also relevant to note that in 1 Cor. 14:14-16 that tongues-speaking which is forbidden to women in the church is described not only as a form of prayer, but also of singing. The prohibition on women tongues' speakers, then, is a prohibition of women singing in tongues. If women are forbidden to sing to the congregation even with the extraordinary gift of tongues, then women of ordinary gifts are certainly wrong to do so.

(2) Congregational Singing

All of this may raise the question in some minds as to whether on such principles women should even participate in congregational singing. Such a question must be dismissed as misguided for the following reasons.

(a) Col. 3:16 and Eph. 5:17 are general commands addressed to the whole church.

(b) All of the exemplary applications noted under (B.) above are activities in which one person acts in a way distinct from the whole assembly. They are not--as congregational singing in contrast is--activities in which the whole assembly acts together.

© The principle at stake is leadership. Since all are singing, one fails to see how

joining in such singing is leading.

(3) Speaking in Business Meetings

Matt. 18:15-20 and 1 Cor. 5:4, 5 identify business meetings as meetings of the church. Thus, the prohibitions and commands of 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2 are directly applicable to them.

(4) Voting

Such assertions raise the question of the legitimacy of women participating in congregational votes. Several considerations lead me to conclude that voting in church meetings is the duty of women.

(a) Voting unlike all of the exemplary applications noted under (B.) above is not an act of individual, but a joint congregational act.

(b) Voting understood within the framework of biblical church government by elders is not an act of leadership, but of obedient submission first to Christ and His Word and then to His appointed leaders.

© Those matters for which there is biblical precedent for congregational votes require that all church members men and women participate. Such matters are two: church discipline and the recognition of office-bearers. Church discipline requires the participation of the whole church. Cf. Matt. 18:17; 1 Cor. 5:4, 5, 13; 2 Cor. 2:6. The recognition of office-bearers is also the duty of female church-members. Is it, we ask, a woman's duty and privilege to recognize the gifts of Christ to his church, to which gifts she must render willing obedience and submission? If so, then she must participate in that congregational action in which that recognition takes place. Explicit evidence for such participation is found in Acts 6:1-7. There in v. 2 "the congregation of the disciples" (το πλῆθος τῶν μαθητῶν) is the number or multitude of the disciples. That multitude in verse 3 are given the task of searching out qualified men from among themselves. That this number included both men and women is clear from Acts 5:14 where the same Greek word (πλῆθος) is used to describe both men and women being added to the church. Cf. also 1:14, 8:3, 12. (The term brother, in v. 3 is used generically to address the whole congregation and does not imply that only men were present.)

II. The Role of Women and the Officers of the Church

Introduction:

Several foundational assumptions of this discussion of women and the offices of the church must be stated at the outset for the sake of clarity.

(1) There is a divinely ordained form of government for the post-apostolic, visible, local, church revealed in the Bible. God has not left this matter to human wisdom or general

revelation.

- (2) This government includes specified and defined offices. Cf. 1 Tim. 3:1.
- (3) These offices are that of elder and deacon. In saying this I assume that the New Testament terms, shepherd, elder, and overseer refer to one and the same office in the church.

A. The Office of Elder

1. The Foundational Consideration

An elder is a ruling officer with authority over the Church. There are five descriptions of or analogies to this office in the Bible which confirm this statement.¹ This is seen from the following five descriptions of the office in the New Testament. The elder is an ...

- (a) Overseer (1 Tim. 3:1; Tit. 1:7)
- (b) Shepherd (Acts 20:28,29; Eph. 4:11)
- © Teacher (Eph. 4:11; 1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:9)
- (d) Parent (1 Tim. 3:4, 5)
- (e) Governor (Heb. 13:7,17 with Acts 7:10 and 23:24)

The common element in each of these descriptions includes at least this. An elder is a ruling officer with authority over the church.

2. The Scriptural Argumentation

There are four Scriptural arguments which demand the conclusion that women ought not to hold the office of elder:

- a. *The clear precedent of Scripture*
- b. *The argument from the obvious assumption of Scripture*
- c. *The argument from the explicit assertion of Scripture*
- d. *The argument from the necessary deduction from Scripture*

a. The clear precedent of Scripture.

No women were chosen in Acts 6; or any of the other clear passages of Scripture to any office in the church (Matt. 10).

¹I owe much of this material to Pastor Greg Nichols unpublished notes on ecclesiology.

b. The argument from the obvious assumption of Scripture

Here the key passage is 1 Tim. 3:1-13. The assumption of this passage is that only men may hold the offices of elder and deacon. This assumption is evident in four ways in this passage: (1) The term, "overseer," used in v. 1 and v. 2, is masculine. (2) The qualification, "the husband of one wife," stated in v. 2 assumes that elders will be anhr (adult males or husbands). (3) The qualification of vv. 4 and 5 assumes that the elder is the head of a home. This a woman is forbidden to be. (4) The explicit mention of "women" in v. 11 in distinction from deacons and elders assumes that elders and deacons will be men.

"Biblical feminists" respond to this argument by saying that these qualifications also assume that elders will be married and have children. But, they go on to say, Paul certainly did not mean to exclude single or childless men from the eldership. Even, so they would argue, he did not mean to exclude women.

How should we respond to this objection? We admit that Paul did not mean to exclude single or childless men from the eldership. However, it is one thing for Paul to state qualifications that are occasionally irrelevant for some who may be elders. It is completely different when he states qualifications which no woman has ever met or can meet. Furthermore, this objection does not deal with the distinction assumed in v. 11 between elders and deacons, on the one hand, and women on the other.

c. The argument from the explicit assertion of Scripture

There is a passage which clearly and directly asserts that women may not be elders and grounds that assertion on universal and perpetual arguments. That passage is 1 Tim. 2:8-3:7. Is it a coincidence that Paul deals with the role of women in the church immediately before he takes up the qualifications for elders? Surely the idea that this is mere coincidence is impossible! 1 Tim. 2:9-15 makes the transition smooth into 1 Tim. 3:1-7. We must not allow the uninspired chapter division to obscure this. 1 Tim. 2:9-15 is introductory to ch. 3:1-7. In such a context and connection, the prohibition of teaching and authority over men in the church contained in v. 12 and the demand for the subordination of women in the church in v. 11 amounts to an explicit prohibition of female overseers of the church. Furthermore, it is the teaching of 1 Tim. 2:9-15 which explains how Paul can assume without comment that only adult males may be considered for the offices of elder and deacon. That assumption grows out of his preceding teaching.

d. The argument from the necessary deduction from Scripture

The force of both 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2 is that the divine order of male headship (1 Cor. 11:3 "the head of the woman is the man") which has its typical and characteristic expression in marriage is also regulative for the meetings of the church.

Hence, any leadership role in the meetings of the church is prohibited. The clear and necessary inference is that a ruling office in the church would also be prohibited. It would defy all reason to apply the divine order to the meetings of the church and not to the offices of the church. Failure to see this inference would produce the total anomaly of an elder (whose distinctive task and identity is that of leading and teaching the church) who is forbidden to speak, teach, lead in prayer, ask questions or in any way lead in the worship of the assembled church.

3. The Concluding Refutation

"Biblical feminists" have attempted to make a case from supposed examples of feminine leadership in the early church and feminine usefulness in the modern church. The following specific arguments require brief rebuttal.

a. Phoebe in Rom. 16:2 is sometimes cited as an instance of a female elder.

Romans 16:1 and 2 reads as follows: "I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea; that you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and that you help her in whatever matter she may have need of you; for she herself has also been a helper of many, and of myself as well." The word, helper, is said to mean a chief leader by some.¹

Two conclusive responses may be made to the argument constructed on the basis of the use of this word in this passage. First, lexically, the word, helper, means patroness. Remember the women who supported Jesus (Mk. 15:40, 41) as an example of what this word designates. Second, contextually, if the word designates an elder or a leader, it results in the nonsense of Paul saying that Phoebe was his leader. Third, the passage appears to define the word by its admonition to *help* Phoebe, because she was a *helper* of many. This parallelism seems to define the word to mean helper.

b. Junia in Rom. 16:7 is sometimes cited as an example of a female apostle.²

¹Cf. Gundry's argument to this effect, op. cit., pp. 101f, who says she was a chief leader. Note Hurley, op. cit., p. 123 in response to this.

²Cf. Scanzoni, op. cit., p. 63f, who says that Junias (Junia) was a woman and an apostle.

Two conclusive responses may be made to this argument. First, it is not certain that this person was a woman. The grammatical form used here may be either masculine or feminine. Second, it is not certain that this person was an apostle. The word translated "outstanding" could mean "well-known", i.e. "well-known by the apostles."

c. Conversions in Church History

The argument is frequently brought that God has sanctioned the preaching of women by honoring such preaching with conversions. God, however, often uses defective means to achieve his purposes. In Phil. 1:15-18 Paul rejoiced in preaching of Christ that he viewed as proceeding out of ugly and evil motives.¹ This means that he thought it might do good despite its defects. Even so God may decree to do good through the preaching of women which violates his law.

B. The Office of Deacon

Should Women hold the office of deacon? Our outline in dealing with this subject must take up two points:

1. *The Preliminary Consideration: The Character and Identity of the Office of Deacon*
2. *The Main Discussion: Does the Scripture permit women to hold such an office?*

1. The Preliminary Consideration: The Character and Identity of the Office of Deacon.²

a. The Mention of the Office

The word *diakonoj* and its relatives are used many times in the New Testament (approximately 120). Only three of these times are certainly used of the office of deacon. Those occurrences are Acts. 6:1-7; 1 Tim. 3:8-13; Phil. 1:1; and perhaps Rom. 12:7. Feminists would add Rom. 16:1, 2.

b. The Analogy of the Office

¹Cf. Dabney's argument on this point, op. cit., pp. 98, 99.

²Again I want to credit Pastor Greg Nichols for much helpful material utilized in this section.

We looked at five descriptive analogies of the office of elder. There is only one such descriptive analogy for this office. That is the one contained in the word *diakonoj* itself. The analogy is that of a household servant. This analogy is brought out in the following usages of this word: John 2:5, 9; John 12:2. Just as the elder is a ruling officer according to its descriptive analogies, so also the deacon is a serving officer according to its biblical picture. He is a serving officer whose task relates to the temporal needs of the church.

c. The Character of the Office

(1) The Clear Distinction from the Pastorate

The diaconate is distinguished from the pastorate in two clear ways. First, it is distinguished as to teaching. It does not have for its function or task the ministry of the Word. Note, for example, Acts 6:1-4 which distinguishes serving tables from serving the Word. Note especially vv. 1, 2, and 4. The task of the twelve was to serve the Word. The task of the seven was to serve the tables. 1 Tim. 3:1-13 confirms this. Aptness to teach is required of elders (v.2), but is never required of deacons here or elsewhere in the New Testament.¹

Second, the diaconate is to be distinguished from the eldership as to ruling. The deacons are subordinate to the elders. If they are servants, they are servants to the servants of the Word, the Elders. Cf. Acts 6:3, 6. The authority of the Seven was delegated from the Twelve, derived from them. This subordinate position of the deacons is also indicated in other ways. The descriptive analogies for the respective offices indicate this subordinate position. These analogies show that the elder is a ruler, while the deacon is a servant (Phil. 1:1). Further, the order of both Phil. 1:1 and 1 Tim. 3:1-13 indicates the preeminence of the eldership over the diaconate. Finally, centrality of the Word in the church indicates the subordinate role of deacons. The Word rules the Church. Hence, the servants of the Word are its human overseers.

This shows that the relationship between deacons and elders is not that of separate but equal spheres of authority. The deacons and elders are not related as having authority over the church in the temporal and spiritual areas respectively. Rather the deacons are

¹Though Stephen and Philip (2 of the 7 original deacons) did teach, it was no part of their duty as members of the seven. Cf. Acts 6:1-7, 6:8f, 8:5f. There is simply no evidence for the idea that teaching was a part of their diaconal duties. Their advancing to a teaching ministry may, however, be illustrative of 1 Tim. 3:13.

subordinate to the elders in all their work.

Now do you see why this question is more difficult than the one concerning women elders? The office of deacon as a servant office, as an office subordinate to the eldership corresponds more to the subordinate status of women. It is more feasible, thinkable, to have women deacons than women elders, biblically speaking.

Do you, therefore, see the flaw of the church government which gives deacons an equal say in the rule of the church? In some consistories the elders may be out-voted by deacons. Such a system is easy prey for feminism, because it confuses and confounds the roles of deacons and elders.

Having said all this, something else which is very important must be said. Under the elders, the deacons do, however, have administrative authority. This is clear from Acts 6:3 The Greek phrase, *kaqisthmi epi* means to put in charge over.¹ It is also implied by 1 Tim. 3:12's use of the word *proisthmi* to describe one of the necessary qualifications for the office of deacon. Such able management as described by this very word is used to describe the qualification for the eldership in vv. 4 and 5. The listing of such a qualification clearly implies that the office of deacon involves management, leadership. Such management or leadership does not refer to the management of the church as a whole. That is the elder's responsibility, but it does refer to the management of certain important tasks of the church.

I think it is clear that such administrative authority could be problematic for a woman to wield in light of 1 Tim. 2:12.²

(2) The Peculiar Task of the Diaconate

This task is nowhere more clearly summed up than in Acts 6:2-4. That task is clearly according to this passage to administer any task of the church which would distract its pastor-teachers from prayer and the ministry of the Word. The ministry of the Word has the priority of the church. Even acts of love and benevolence are subordinate to that.

¹Cf. Bauer, Arndt, and Gingrich *en loc.*

²It is relevant to note here that the term servant is often used of various, genuine authorities when they are viewed as subordinate to other higher authorities. Note the examples of Paul and the Twelve who are servants of the Word (Col. 1:25; Acts 6:4); the civil authorities who are servants of God (Rom. 13:4); and Timothy and Erastus who are servants of Paul (Acts 19:22). The point is that servant-status and authority-status may clearly co-exist in the Bible. The mere fact that deacons are servants does not mean that they hold no authority in the church and does not mean that because of this that it is appropriate for women to hold such office.

They are subordinate, but they are still essential. There is an order in which the Word has priority because the Word produces every thing else. Hence, the office of deacon is essential, though subordinate.

What are such tasks? Appropriate and common diaconal tasks include benevolence (Acts 6:1, 2); visiting the sick (Matt. 25:44); the care of church property; and the administration of church finances.

d. The Exercise of the Office

This office may be exercised by the deacon personally (obviously), but it also may be exercised representatively. That is to say auxilliary workers may be appointed to perform certain tasks under the supervision of the deacons. In our own church many such workers may be found. There are non-deacons who care for church property; who engage in the administration of church finances; and who care the book rack and book sales, but do all of this under the general oversight of the deacons.

The biblical evidence for this delegation of diaconal authority is twofold. First, the deacon is himself a delegate and representative of the elders. Second, several passages appear to speak of such assistants. Note especially the women mentioned in 1 Tim. 3:11; Rom. 16:1, 2.

2. The Main Discussion: Does the Scripture permit women to hold the office of deacon?

With the nature of the office clearly in mind, we come now to answer the question, Should women be deacons? Our treatment of the answer to this question has two parts:

- a. *The Conclusive Arguments Against Women Deacons*
- b. *The Careful Analysis of Supposed Support*

a. The Conclusive Argument Against Women Deacons

(1) The Assertion of Acts 6:1-7

It is undoubtedly the office of deacon or at least its prototype which appears in Acts 6:1-7. If this is the case, then this passage is decisive against women deacons. Not only were each of the seven men, but the Apostles required that they be such, adult males. Cf. The use of *andraj* in v. 3. It would have been interesting enough if merely the fact that only males were chosen were recorded, but the record demands distinctly that the first prototype deacons be males. This brings us to our second argument...

(2) The Deduction From 1 Tim. 2:12

1 Tim. 2:12 makes explicit what is implicit in 1 Corinthians 14 that women may not have authority over men in the church. The question is, of course, to be raised, do deacons have such authority in the church? Our analysis of the nature of their office could leave us uncertain of the answer, since they are both servants and subordinate authorities. Even if such uncertainty could not be removed from our minds, we should have to refrain from recognizing female deacons. It could not be done in faith. There are, however, two considerations which make clear that deacons wield authority forbidden to women by 1 Tim. 2:12.

First, 1 Tim. 2:11-15 is introductory to the whole of the section on the offices of the church (3:1-13) not just that on the eldership. Our conclusion from this will have to be that Paul regarded the diaconate as wielding such authority as he has spoken of in v. 12 of chapter 2.

Second, Acts 6:1-7 is speaking of a purely, diaconal, administrative, subordinate authority in the church. The work is of just such a nature that we might expect that women would excel at it and be qualified to administer it. But of precisely this kind of administrative authority to serve tables the requirement is that only spiritually qualified adult males may possess it and exercise it in the church.

We conclude that women may not be deacons in light of the prohibitions of 1 Timothy 2 and 1 Corinthians 14. We might have expected this restriction of the diaconate to men when we remember that asking questions and leading in prayer also violate male headship.

(3) The Assumption of 1 Tim. 3:8-13

Just as clearly as vv. 1-7 assume that elders will be males, so also vv. 8-13 of 1 Timothy 3 assume that deacons will be males. Verse 12 assumes this. Verse 11 distinctly and categorically distinguishes women from elders and deacons. Verses 2, 8, and 11 are parallel. Note the repetition of "likewise" from v. 8 and the supply of the verb from v. 2. This parallelism clearly informs us that women will not be elders and deacons. The ✓ precise significance of v. 11 will be examined in a moment, but surely it makes clear that ✓ women and deacons are mutually exclusive.

Conclusion: The assertion of Acts 6:1-7, the deduction from 1 Tim. 2:12, the assumption of 1 Tim. 3:8-13 confirm that the office of deacon ought not to be held by women. The question remains, what do 1 Tim. 3:11 and Rom. 16:1 mean?

b. The Careful Analysis of Supposed Support

(1) 1 Tim. 3:11

There are several proposed interpretations from which one must choose in the identification of the women mentioned in this text. The NIV and other interpreters give the impression that there are only two alternative interpretations of 1 Tim. 3:11. The NIV in its translation says "their wives", and in the NIV margin we find the reading "deaconesses" i.e. female deacons. The fact is, however, that at least five interpretations have been proposed. Those five interpretations are the women of the church in general, the wives of bishops and deacons, the wives of deacons viewed as their assistants in the office of deacon, deaconesses, that is, female deacons, official female diaconal assistants.

The exegetical data on the basis of which we must choose between these different interpretations is as follows: The syntax of the passage parallels women (v. 11) with deacons (v. 8) and bishops (v. 2). This fact excludes the idea that all women in general are meant and confirms that a special class is under consideration.

The qualifications of the women mentioned in v. 11 parallel those for deacons in v. 8.

Verse 8

1. men of dignity
2. not double tongued
3. temperate
4. not fond of sordid gain

Verse 11

- dignified (same root word)
not malicious gossips. cf. Hurley, p. 231
temperate
faithful in all things

This suggests that their work is diaconal in character.

The word "their" is not in the original. It is simply "women like wise." The absence of such a word suggests that wives are not in view.

Distinct qualifications are listed for women. This suggests that women are not covered in the previous similar qualifications and are not considered for the diaconate itself.

The structure of the passage brackets v. 11 with qualifications for the diaconate. Verses 8-10 have to do with the diaconate. Verses 12-13 return to it. This suggests that the women mentioned are not a third office parallel to elders and deacons, but connected with the diaconate, a subordinate part of it. This also makes perfectly clear that it is not the wives of both bishops and deacons that are mentioned in v. 11. These women whoever they are have a peculiar relationship with the diaconate.

There is a stark contrast between the women of v. 11 and the deacons of v. 8 and v. 12 who must be one woman men. The impression is unavoidable that deacons must be males and that women may not be deacons.

Note that no qualifications regarding ruling are mentioned in v. 11. This contrasts the

women with both the elders (vv. 4, 5) and the deacons (v. 12). This suggests that, whatever tasks these women are entrusted with, they do not involve the exercise of authority over the church.

The probable conclusion is this: It cannot be completely ruled out that the women of v. 11 were the wives of the deacons viewed as their natural and official assistants in office. The parallelism with bishops and deacons, however, and the absence of a modifier like "their" make this most improbable.¹ The identification most in line with the rest of Scripture and the exegetical data noted above is that the women were official diaconal assistants. The culture of the time would have required such a diaconal women's auxiliary. The history of the church confirms that such existed and in fact had become a full-blown office in the church and were called diakonissa. Such deaconesses were always distinct from and subordinate to the deacons in the early church.² If deaconesses are viewed in this way, then they do not differ from the official female diaconal assistants of 1 Tim. 3:11.

(2) Rom. 16:1-2

The term diakonōj is applied here to Phoebe. In the abstract it is possible to translate either as deacon or servant. By itself the passage is inconclusive. The rest of the New Testament makes clear that Phoebe was not a deacon but at most an official female diaconal assistant of the church at Cenchrea. It is likely, however, that she held no official office at all. She was probably a servant of the church in the same way that any number of ladies in our own church who fulfill the roles of church secretary, janitor, etc.

Conclusion:

Because the deacons do possess extensive administrative authority in the church like the eldership, they may not be women. Because the diaconate is a serving office in the church unlike the eldership, they may have official female assistants.

¹The consensus of the early church is against this interpretation, however. Cf. Alford comments *en loc*.

²H. Chadwick, *The Early Church*, (Penguin Books, New York, 1978), pp. 46-49.