

Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture

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One of the basic issues in the discussion of the role of women in Scripture concerns the questions of headship, submission, and equality in male/female relationships. The answers to these questions are foundational to determining whether or not women should be ordained as elders and pastors in the church.

In the evangelical Christian community, the issue of headship/submission/equality lies at the heart of the fundamental differences between the two major proactive groups in the ordination debate.⁽¹⁾ The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood,⁽²⁾ representing those who oppose women's ordination, ultimately bases its biblical argument on the premise that the divine plan in creation affirmed equality of the sexes in spiritual status but included role distinctions involving the headship of man over woman. This ordinance of male headship is reaffirmed after the Fall in Genesis 3, and is binding both in the home and the church, throughout Scripture and still today. Those holding this position have been referred to as "patriarchalists," "hierarchalists," or (their preferred self-designation) "complementarians."

The second group, Christians for Biblical Equality,⁽³⁾ representing evangelicals who support women's ordination, argue that the divine plan at Creation affirmed full equality of the sexes without any male headship or female submission. Genesis 3 is typically seen to provide a description of the perversion of the divine ideal, and this "curse" is removed by the gospel, both in the home and in the church. Those holding this view have been referred to as "Christian feminists" or (their preferred self-designation) "egalitarians."

These two positions on the question of headship/submission and equality have been widely represented within the Adventist Church as well. In this chapter, I will argue that both positions maintain important elements of biblical teaching that must be heeded and, at the same time, that both groups may have overlooked or misinterpreted aspects of the relevant biblical passages.

In our discussion, we will pay particular attention to the foundational opening chapters of Scripture, Genesis 1-3, which have been widely recognized as of seminal character and determinative for the biblical role of women. Then we will briefly trace the divine pattern of

headship/submission/equality throughout the Old Testament and New Testament and draw implications for the issue of ordination of women to ministry.

In the Beginning⁽⁴⁾

Before the Fall (Genesis 1-2)

Gen 1:27 describes the Creation of humankind: "So God created man [humankind, *ha 'adam*] in His image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." It is crucial to note the equal pairing of male *and* female in parallel with *ha 'adam* in this verse. There is no hint of ontological or functional superiority/inferiority or headship/submission between male and female. Both are "equally immediate to the Creator and His act."⁽⁵⁾ Both are given the same dominion over the earth and other living creatures (vv. 26 and 28). Both share alike in the blessing and responsibility of procreation (vv. 29-30). In short, both participate equally in the image of God.

The narrative of Gen 2:4b-25 provides a more detailed account of the creation of man than the terse summary statement of Genesis 1. Over the centuries the preponderance of commentators on Genesis 2 have espoused the hierarchical interpretation, a view that has been reaffirmed in a number of modern scholarly studies.⁽⁶⁾ The main elements of the narrative which purportedly prove a divinely-ordained hierarchical view of the sexes may be summarized as follows: (a) man is created first and woman last (2:7, 22), and the first is superior and the last is subordinate or inferior; (b) woman is formed for the sake of man—to be his "helpmate" or assistant, to cure man's loneliness (vv. 18-20); (c) woman comes out of man (vv. 21-22), which implies a derivative and subordinate position; (d) woman is created from man's rib (vv. 21-22), which indicates her dependence upon him for life; and (e) the man names the woman (v. 23) which indicates his power and authority over her.

On these points Phyllis Tribble asserts that "although such specifics continue to be cited as support for traditional interpretations of male superiority and female inferiority, not one of them is altogether accurate and most of them are simply not present in the story itself."⁽⁷⁾ Let us look at each point in turn.

Man created first. It has been asserted that because man was created first and then woman, "by this the priority and superiority of the man, and the dependence of the woman upon the man, are established as an ordinance of divine creation."⁽⁸⁾ A careful examination of the literary structure of Genesis 2 reveals that such a conclusion does not follow. Hebrew literature often makes use of an *inclusio* device or envelope construction

in which the points of central concern to a unit are placed at the beginning and end of the unit.⁽⁹⁾ This is the case in Genesis 2; the entire account is cast in the form of an *inclusio* or "ring construction,"⁽¹⁰⁾ in which the creation of man at the beginning of the narrative and that of woman at the end correspond to each other in importance. The narrator underscores their equal importance by employing precisely the same number of words (in Hebrew) for the description of the creation of the man as for the creation of woman. As Trevor Dennis puts it, "the writer has counted his words and been careful to match the lengths of his descriptions exactly."⁽¹¹⁾ The movement in Genesis 2, if anything, is not from superior to inferior, but from incompleteness to completeness. Woman is created as the climax, the culmination of the story. She is the crowning work of Creation.⁽¹²⁾

Two subpoints of this first argument relate to Adam's priority in speaking and being spoken to in the narrative. It has been claimed that Adam's headship over his wife before the Fall is revealed in that God addresses Adam, and not Eve, and also in that Adam does the speaking in the narrative of Genesis 2, not Eve. However, these points fail to take into account the movement of the narrative from incompleteness to completeness and climax, as noted above. As part of the process of bringing Adam to realize his "hunger for wholeness,"⁽¹³⁾ his need for a partner, God speaks to Adam, warning him not to eat of the forbidden tree. Such information was crucial for the human being to avoid transgression and to be a free moral agent with the power of choice. But the divine impartation of such knowledge to Adam before Eve was created does not thereby reveal the headship of Adam over his partner. Likewise, that only Adam speaks in Genesis 2 does not reveal his pre-Fall headship over Eve any more than only Eve speaking outside the Garden (Genesis 4) reveals Eve's headship over Adam after the Fall.⁽¹⁴⁾

Woman formed for sake of man. Genesis 2:18 records the Lord's deliberation: "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him *'ezer k'negdô* (KJV--"a help meet for him"; RSV--"a helper fit for him"; NASB--"a helper suitable to him"). These words have often been taken to imply the inferiority or the subordinate status of woman. For example, John Calvin understood that woman was a "kind of appendage" and a "lesser helpmeet" for man.⁽¹⁵⁾

The word *'ezer* is usually translated as "help" or "helper" in English. This, however, is a misleading translation, because the English word "helper" tends to suggest an assistant, a subordinate, an inferior, whereas the Hebrew carries no such connotation. In fact, the Hebrew Bible most frequently employs *'ezer* to describe a superior helper--God himself as the "helper" of Israel.⁽¹⁶⁾ This is a relational term, describing a beneficial relationship, but in itself does not specify position or rank, either

superiority or inferiority.⁽¹⁷⁾ The specific position intended must be gleaned from the immediate context, here the adjoining *k^enegdô*.

The word *neged* conveys the idea of "in front of" or "counter-part,"⁽¹⁸⁾ and a literal translation of *k^enegdô* is thus "like his counterpart, corresponding to him."⁽¹⁹⁾ Used with 'ezer, this term indicates no less than equality: Eve is Adam's "benefactor/helper," one who in position is "corresponding to him," "his counterpart, his complement."⁽²⁰⁾ Eve is "a power equal to man";⁽²¹⁾ she is Adam's "partner."⁽²²⁾

Woman came out of man. It has been argued that since woman came out of man, since she was formed from man, she has a derivative existence, a dependent and subordinate status. That her existence was in some way "derived" from Adam cannot be denied. But derivation does not imply subordination. Adam also was "derived"—from the ground (v. 7), but certainly we are not to conclude that the ground was his superior. Again, woman is *not* Adam's rib. The raw material, not woman, was taken out of man, just as the raw material of man was "taken" (Gen 3:19, 23) out of the ground.⁽²³⁾ Samuel Terrien rightly points out that woman "is not simply molded of clay, as man was, but she is architecturally 'built' (2:33)." The verb *bnh*, "to build," used in the Creation account only with regard to the formation of Eve, "suggests an aesthetic intent and connotes also the idea of reliability and permanence."⁽²⁴⁾ As the man was asleep while God created woman, man had no active part in the creation of woman that might allow him to claim to be her superior or head.⁽²⁵⁾

Woman created from man's rib. While this argument has been used to support the hierarchical view of the sexes, the very symbolism of the rib points rather to equality. The word *tsela'* can mean either "side" or "rib."⁽²⁶⁾ Since *tsela'* occurs in the plural in v. 21 and God is said to take "one of" them, the reference is probably to a rib from Adam's side. By "building" Eve from one of Adam's ribs, God appears to be indicating the "mutual relationship,"⁽²⁷⁾ the "singleness of life,"⁽²⁸⁾ the "inseparable unity"⁽²⁹⁾ in which man and woman are joined. The rib "means solidarity and equality."⁽³⁰⁾ As Ellen White puts it, "Eve was created from a rib taken from the side of Adam, signifying that she was not to control him as the head, nor to be trampled under his feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an equal, to be loved and protected by him."⁽³¹⁾ This interpretation is further confirmed by the man's poetic exclamation when he sees the woman for the first time (v. 23): "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh!" The phrase "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" indicates a person "as close as one's own body."⁽³²⁾ It denotes physical oneness and "a commonality of concern, loyalty and responsibility,"⁽³³⁾ but does not lead to the notion of woman's subordination or submission to man.

Man named woman. Some argue that in man's naming of woman (v. 23) is implied man's power, authority, and superiority over her. True, assigning names in Scripture often does signify authority over the one named.⁽³⁴⁾ But such is not the case in Gen 2:23. In the first place, the word "woman" (*'ishah*) is not a personal name, but only a generic identification. This is verified in v. 24, which indicates that a man is to cleave to his *'ishah* ("wife"), and further substantiated in Gen 3:20, which explicitly records the man's naming of Eve only after the Fall.

Moreover, Jacques Doukhan has shown that Gen 2:23 contains a pairing of "divine passives," indicating that the designation of "woman" comes *from God*, not man. Just as woman "was taken out of man" *by God*, with which the man had nothing to do, so she "shall be called woman" a designation originating in God and not man. Doukhan also indicates how the literary structure of the Genesis Creation story confirms this interpretation.⁽³⁵⁾ The wordplay in v. 23 between *'ish* (man) and *'ishah* (woman) and the explanation of the woman being taken out of man are not given to buttress a hierarchical view of the sexes, but rather to underscore man's joyous recognition of "his second self."⁽³⁶⁾ In his ecstatic poetic utterance the man is not determining who the woman is, but delighting in what God has done, recognizing and welcoming woman as the equal counterpart to his sexuality.⁽³⁷⁾ After the Fall Adam *did* give his wife the name Eve, probably signifying his exercise of headship authority over her; such was not the case at Creation.

In light of the foregoing discussion, there is nothing in Genesis 2 to indicate a hierarchical view of the sexes. The man and woman before the Fall are presented as fully equal, with no hint of headship of one over the other or a hierarchical relationship between husband and wife.

After the Fall (Genesis 3)

When God comes to the Garden after Adam and Eve sinned, he initiates an encounter that constitutes nothing less than "a legal process," a "trial punishment by God."⁽³⁸⁾ God begins the legal proceedings with an interrogation of the "defendants," and the defensive and accusatory responses by Adam and Eve (vv. 9-14) indicate the rupture in husband-wife and divine-human relationships that has occurred as a result of sin. Following the legal interrogation and establishment of guilt, God pronounces the sentence in the form of curses (over the serpent and the ground, vv. 14, 17) and judgments (for the man and the woman, vv. 16-19).

The judgment pronounced upon the woman is of particular concern (v. 16):

- (a) I will greatly multiply your pain [labor] in childbearing;
- (b) in pain [labor] you shall bring forth your children;
- (c) yet your desire shall be for your husband,
- (d) and he shall rule over you.

The meaning of the last two enigmatic lines (v. 16c and d) of the divine sentence upon the woman is crucial for a proper understanding of the nature of God's design for sexual relationships throughout the rest of Scripture.

Five major views have been advanced in the history of scriptural interpretation. The first, and perhaps the most common, position maintains that the subordination of woman is a Creation ordinance, God's ideal from the beginning, but as a result of sin this original form of hierarchy between the sexes is distorted and corrupted and must be restored by the gospel.⁽³⁹⁾

The second major interpretation also views subordination as a Creation ordinance but sees in Gen 3:16 not as a distortion but a reaffirmation of subordination as a blessing and a comfort to the woman in her difficulties as a mother. The meaning of v. 16c-d may be paraphrased: "You will have labor and difficulty in your motherhood, yet you will be eager for your husband and he will rule over you (in the sense of care for and help you and not in the sense of dominate and oppress you)."⁽⁴⁰⁾

The third major view contends that the subordination of woman to man did not exist before the Fall, and the mention of such a subordination in Gen 3:16 is only a *description* of the evil consequences of sin—the usurpation of authority by the husband (to be removed by the gospel)—and not a permanent *prescription* of God's will for husband-wife relationships after sin.⁽⁴¹⁾ Proponents of this position underscore the culturally-conditioned nature of this passage and vigorously deny that it represents a divinely ordained normative position for sexual relationships after the Fall.

A fourth major position concurs with the third view that the submission of wife to husband is part of the evil consequences of the Fall and did not exist as a Creation ordinance. But in the fourth view, Gen 3:16 is to be understood as *prescriptive* and not merely *descriptive*. It presents God's normative pattern for the relationship of husband and wife after the Fall.⁽⁴²⁾

A final view agrees with the second that v. 16c-d is a blessing and not a curse, but differs in denying that subordination of woman to man is a Creation ordinance. This position also argues, in effect, that even in Genesis 3 no hierarchy or headship in the sexes is either prescribed or described.⁽⁴³⁾ In this view the word for "rule" (v. 16d) is often translated "to resemble" or "to be like," emphasizing the equality of husband and wife.⁽⁴⁴⁾ Another variation of this view argues that man "rules" or "predominates" only in the area of sexuality, i.e., "female reluctance is overcome by the passion they feel toward their men, and that allows them to accede to the males' sexual advances even though they realize that undesired pregnancies (with the accompanying risks) might be the consequence."⁽⁴⁵⁾

These major positions are summarized in the following chart:

Man-Woman Relationships in the Beginning (Genesis 1-3): Major Views

Creation (Genesis 1-2)	Fall (Genesis 3)	Divine Judgments on Eve (Gen 3:16)
1. Hierarchical (Subordination of woman)	Perverted	Subordination Restored
2. Hierarchical (Subordination of woman)	Continues	Subordination Reaffirmed
3. Equality (With no subordination of woman)	Ruptured Relationship	Description of sinful consequences (to be removed by gospel), husband usurps authority
4. Equality (With no subordination of woman)	Ruptured Relationship	Permanent prescription of divine will for harmony after sin, husband "first-among-equals"
5. Equality (With no subordination of woman)	Continues	Blessing of equality (no headship or hierarchy)

In assessing the true intent of this passage, we must immediately call into question those interpretations which proceed from the assumption that a hierarchy of the sexes existed before the Fall (views 1 and 2). The analysis of Genesis 1-2 has shown that no such subordination or subjection of woman to man was present in the beginning.

Furthermore, view 3 (Gen 3:16 only descriptive, not prescriptive) appears to be unsatisfactory because it fails to take seriously the judgment/punishment context of the passage. As already noted, Gen 3:16 comes in a legal trial setting. God's pronouncement is therefore not merely a culturally-conditioned description; it is a divine sentence. Just as God destines the serpent to crawl on its belly (v. 14), just as God ordains that woman's childbirth is to involve her "going into labor" (*'itstsabôn*, v. 16), just as God curses the ground so that it will not produce crops spontaneously but require man's cultivation and "hard labor" (*'itstsabôn*, v. 17), just as humankind will inevitably return to dust in death (v. 19)—so God pronounces the sentence upon Eve with regard to her future relationship with Adam. Just as none of the other judgments were removed or reversed at the Cross, but stay in force until the consummation of salvation history, so this judgment remains in force until the removal of sinful world conditions at the end of time. This is not to say that it is inappropriate for humankind to seek to roll back the judgments/curses and get back as much as possible to God's original plan—by advances in obstetrics to relieve unnecessary hard labor during delivery; by agricultural and technological advances to relieve unnecessary hard labor in farming, by scientific and medical advances to delay the process of death. In the same way it is not inappropriate to return as much as possible to God's original plan for total equality in marriage, while at the same time retaining the validity of the headship principle as necessary in a sinful world to preserve harmony in the home.

The divine origin and prescriptive nature of the judgment upon Eve is underscored by the Hebrew grammar of God's first words in the legal sentence: "I will greatly multiply." The use of the first-person singular "I" refers to the Lord Himself, who is pronouncing the judgment, while the emphatic Hebrew infinitive absolute construction implies "the absolute certainty of the action." Carol Meyers rightly concludes that the judgment upon Eve represents a "divine prescription" and not just a description, a divine "mandate" and "divine oracle."⁽⁴⁶⁾

According to Gen 3:16c-d a change is instituted involving the subjection/submission of the wife to the husband. The force of the last line (v. 16d) is difficult to avoid: "he [your husband] shall rule over you." The word *mashal* in this form in v. 16d means "to rule" (and not "to be like") and definitely implies subjection.⁽⁴⁷⁾ Theodorus Vriezen correctly concludes that woman's position after the Fall is one of subjection to her husband: "this is considered as a just and permanent punishment in Gen iii."⁽⁴⁸⁾ Umberto Cassuto aptly paraphrases and amplifies the divine sentence: "measure for measure; you influenced your husband and caused him to do what you wished; henceforth, you and your female descendants will be subservient to your husbands."⁽⁴⁹⁾

Ellen White clearly adopts this interpretation.

In the creation God had made her [Eve] the equal of Adam. Had they remained obedient to God—in harmony with His great law of love—they would ever have been in harmony with each other; but sin had brought discord, and now *their union could be maintained and harmony preserved* only by submission on the part of the one or the other. Eve had been the first in transgression; and she had fallen into temptation by separating from her companion, contrary to the divine direction. It was by her solicitation that Adam sinned, and she was now placed in subjection to her husband. Had the principles enjoined in the law of God been cherished by the fallen race, this sentence, though growing out of the results of sin, *would have proved a blessing to them*; but man's abuse of the supremacy thus given him has too often rendered the lot of woman very bitter and made her life a burden."⁽⁵⁰⁾

The word *mashal* "rule" employed in v. 16 is not the same word used to describe humankind's rulership over the animals in Gen 1:26, 28, where the verb is *radah*, "to tread down, have dominion over."⁽⁵¹⁾ A careful distinction is maintained between humankind's dominion over the animals and the husband's "rule" over his wife. Furthermore, although the verb *mashal* does consistently indicate submission, subjection, or dominion, "the idea of tyrannous exercise of power does not lie in the verb."⁽⁵²⁾ In fact, in many passages *mashal* is used in the sense of servant leadership, to "comfort, protect, care for, love."⁽⁵³⁾

The semantic range of the verb *mashal* thus makes it possible to understand the divine sentence in v. 16 as involving not only punishment but blessing, just as the sentence pronounced upon the serpent and man included an implied blessing.⁽⁵⁴⁾ That the element of blessing is especially emphasized in this verse appears to be confirmed by recognizing the probable synonymous parallelism between v. 16c and v. 16d.⁽⁵⁵⁾ God pronounces that even though the woman would have difficult "labor" in childbirth—an ordeal that would seem naturally to discourage her from continuing to have relations with her husband—"yet," God assures her, "your desire shall be for your husband." The meaning of the Hebrew word *ʾšhûqah*, "strong desire, yearning,"⁽⁵⁶⁾ which appears only three times in Scripture, is illuminated by its only other occurrence in a context of man-woman relationship, i.e., Cant 7:11 (Hebrew).⁽⁵⁷⁾ In this verse, the Shulamite bride joyfully exclaims, "I am my beloved's, and his *desire* [*ʾšhûqah*] is for me." Along the lines of this usage of *ʾšhûqah* in the Song of Songs to indicate a wholesome sexual desire, the term appears to be employed in Gen 3:16c to indicate a positive blessing accompanying the

divine judgment. A divinely ordained sexual yearning of wife for husband will serve to sustain the union that has been threatened in the ruptured relations resulting from sin.

If Gen 3:16d is seen to be in close parallelism with v. 16c, the emphasis upon blessing as well as judgment seems to accrue also to man's relationship with his wife. The husband's "rule" over his wife, even though it grows out of the results of sin, may be regarded as a blessing in preserving the harmony and union of the relationship.⁽⁵⁸⁾ As is implied in the semantic range of *mashal*, and becomes explicit in the Song of Songs, this is not to be a "rule" of tyrannous power, but a servant leadership of protection, care, and love. In modern idiom, the husband is to lovingly "take care of" his wife.

We thus conclude that of the suggested interpretations for Gen 3:16 described above, view 4 is to be preferred, in that there is a normative divine sentence announcing a subjection/submission of wife to husband as a result of sin. This involves, however, not only a negative judgment but also (and especially) a positive blessing (as suggested in view 5) designed to lead back as much as possible to the original plan of harmony and union between equal partners.

Two final points must be underscored with regard to Genesis 3. First, although in Genesis 3 the husband is assigned the role of "first among equals"⁽⁵⁹⁾ to preserve harmony and union in the marriage partnership, this does not contradict or nullify the summary statement of Gen 2:24 regarding the nature of the relationship between husband and wife, clearly written to indicate its applicability to the post-Fall conditions. God's ideal for the nature of sexual relationship after the Fall is still the same as it was for Adam and Eve in the beginning—to "become one flesh." The divine judgment/blessing in Gen 3:16 is to facilitate the achievement of the original divine design within the context of a sinful world, and it is thus appropriate for marriage partners to seek to return as much as possible to total egalitarianism in the marriage relationship.

Second, the relationship of subjection/submission prescribed in v. 16 is *not* presented as applicable to man-woman relationships in general. Genesis 3 provides no basis for suggesting that the basic equality between male and female established in Creation was altered as a result of the Fall. The context of Gen 3:16 is specifically that of marriage: a *wife's* desire for her husband and the *husband's* "rule" over his wife. The text indicates a submission of wife to husband, not a general subordination of woman to man. The servant headship of the husband prescribed in this passage (v. 16 d) can no more be broadened to refer to men-women relationships in general than can the sexual desire of the wife (v. 16c) be broadened to mean the sexual desire of all women for all men. Any attempt to extend

this prescription beyond the husband-wife relationship is not warranted by the text.

The Old Testament Pattern

Beyond Genesis 3, the divine pattern for man-woman relationships established in Eden remains God's consistent plan throughout the rest of the Old Testament. The submission of the wife to her husband's "headship among equals" in the home is assumed in precept and practice, but this does not bar women from positions of influence, leadership, and authority over men in the covenant community. We will briefly survey the Old Testament pattern of headship/submission/equality, first as it applies to husband-wife relationships in the home (physical family), and then as it affects men-women relationships in general in the covenant community of Israel.

Headship/Submission/Equality in Husband-Wife Relationships

Immediately after the record of divine judgment upon the first couple, Adam exercises his new "headship" role by naming his wife Eve (Gen 3:20). The headship of the husband is again demonstrated in the life of Abraham and Sarah (Gen 18:12), with Sarah referring to her husband as "my lord" (*adonî*). The husband's "headship" in the marriage is likewise indicated by the frequent use of *ba'al* ("lord"--both as a verb and a noun) to identify the husband.⁽⁶⁰⁾

The attendant headship assigned to the man in the husband/wife relationship in Gen 3:16 seems clearly reaffirmed in the Mosaic legislation concerning unfaithful wives in Num 5:11-31. Verse 29 summarizes, "This is the law of jealousy, when a wife, under [the headship of] her husband, goes astray and defiles herself." Another law indicating the headship function of the husband is found in Num 30:3-16, where the husband has the right to revoke legal commitments (vows) of his wife.

There is little question that in ancient Israel (and throughout the ancient Near East) a patriarchal structuring of society was the norm, and the husband/father was the titular head of the ancient family. In marital/familial situations the husband/father assumed legal responsibility for the household. His leadership and legal headship are evidenced in such concerns as genealogy, family inheritance and ownership of property, contracting marriages for the children, initiating divorce, and overall responsibility in speaking for his family.

While recognizing the clear Old Testament evidence for the husband headship principle in marriage, we must hasten to underscore that such

headship does not override the basic equality between the marriage partners, nor does it imply the husband's ownership, oppression, domination, or authoritative control over the wife.⁽⁶¹⁾ Nor does the husband headship prevent husbands and wives from coming as close as possible to the original egalitarian design for marriage. This is revealed in the descriptions of the day-to-day relationships between Old Testament husbands and wives, in which the "ancient Israelite wife was loved and listened to by her husband, and treated by him as an equal."⁽⁶²⁾ "The ancient Israelite woman wielded power in the home at least equal to that exercised by the husband . . . ; she participated freely and as an equal in decisions involving the life of her husband or her family."⁽⁶³⁾ (See Jo Ann Davidson's chapter dealing with biblical women for a survey of recent narrative studies verifying these conclusions.)

The most extensive and penetrating Old Testament presentation of the divine ideal for husband-wife relationships in the post-Fall setting is in the Song of Songs.⁽⁶⁴⁾ In parallel with Gen 2:24, the lovers in the Song are presented as full equals in every way. Canticles "reflects an image of woman and female-male relations that is extremely positive and egalitarian."⁽⁶⁵⁾ The keynote "of the egalitarianism of mutual love"⁽⁶⁶⁾ is struck in Cant 2:16: "My beloved is mine and I am his." The Song of Songs begins and closes with the woman speaking; she carries the majority of the dialogue.⁽⁶⁷⁾ She initiates most of the meetings and is just as active in the lovemaking as the man. She is as eloquent about the beauty of her lover as he is about hers. The woman also is gainfully employed—as shepherdess and vineyard keeper. In short, throughout the Song she is "fully the equal of the man."⁽⁶⁸⁾ As in Gen 2, she is man's "partner . . . , 'the one opposite him.'"⁽⁶⁹⁾

At the same time, in the Song of Songs voices repeatedly speak of post-Fall conditions which impinge upon the couple's relationship (see 1:6; 2:11; 2:15, 3:1-4; 5:6-8; 6:1; 8:6). The way of "woman and man in mutual harmony after the fall"⁽⁷⁰⁾ is likewise portrayed in imagery consonant with the divine norm given in Gen 3:16. Note in particular Cant 2:3:

As an apple tree among the trees of the wood,
so is my beloved among young men.
With great delight I sat in his shadow,
and his fruit was sweet to my taste.

Francis Landry has not failed to catch the intent of the imagery: "The apple-tree symbolizes the lover, the male sexual function in the poem; erect and delectable, it is a powerful erotic metaphor. It provides the nourishment and shelter, traditional male roles—the protective lover, man the provider."⁽⁷¹⁾ Cant 8:5 seems to continue the apple-tree-protector motif:

Who is that coming up from the wilderness leaning upon her beloved?

Under the apple tree I awakened you . . .

The Song of Songs has recovered the true "lyrics" of the "symphony of love" for post-Fall sexual partners. In the garden of Canticles the divine plan for man's post-Fall role in the sexual relationship--*mashal*, "to protect, love, care for"--is restored from its accumulated perversions and abuses outside the Garden of Eden. That this *mashal* is the "rule" of love and not tyrannical power is made explicit in the Song by attributing to the man the "strong desire" (*t'shûqh*) which is connected with the woman in Gen 3:16. As in the divine judgment God promises to the woman that still "Your desire (*t'shûqh*) shall be for your husband," now in the Song the woman says, "I am my lover's and for me is his desire (*t'shûqh*)." She thus joyfully acknowledges the mutuality of love that inheres in the ideal post-Fall relationship even as she is leaning upon, and resting under, the protecting shadow of her lover.

Headship/Submission/Equality of Men and Women

in the Old Testament Covenant Community

While the patriarchal social structure is clearly present in Israel, including patriarchal "heads of the father's houses," and while such patriarchy is presented in a positive light,⁽⁷²⁾ it is significant to note that such patriarchy did not bar women from positions of influence, leadership, and even headship over men in the Israelite community (See chapter 9).

I note particularly the leadership role of Deborah the prophetess and judge (Judges 4-5). Deborah clearly exercised headship functions over men as the recognized political leader of the nation, the military leader of Israel on an equal footing with the male general Barak,⁽⁷³⁾ and a judge to whom men and women turned for legal counsel and divine instruction. There is no indication in the text that such female leadership over men in the covenant community was looked upon as unusual or was opposed to the divine will for women.

Special mention should also be made of the prophetess/musician Miriam, whose influence and leadership capabilities have been under-scored by recent narrative analysis. The headship teaching role of Huldah, even over the king (2 Kgs 22:14-20), is highly significant, especially in light of the availability of male teacher/prophets like Jeremiah at the time. No less significant are the numerous "wise women" of the Old Testament (Judg 5:28-30; 2 Sam 14; 2 Sam 20; etc.), a special class of women who exercise clear headship teaching functions over men.

In short, while the headship principle of Gen 3:16 clearly functions to regulate the Old Testament husband-wife relationship, this principle is not widened in the covenant community in such a way as to cause the rejection of women leaders on the basis of gender--even women leaders exercising headship over men.

The New Testament Pattern

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to examine the relatively low status of women in first-century Judaism and other Mediterranean cultures,⁽⁷⁴⁾ or to look at the New Testament elevation of women's status in radical ways in the Gospels, Acts, and Epistles.⁽⁷⁵⁾ The focus is specifically on the issue of headship/submission/equality in New Testament passages dealing with male/female relationships.

There is a clear distinction between counsel regarding husband-wife relationships and general men-women relationships in the church. Hence we can subdivide this section under the same twofold categorization as the Old Testament discussion.

Headship/Submission/Equality in Husband-wife Relationships

In considering the New Testament position on headship/submission/equality, we will look at the terms for headship and submission, and then briefly investigate the New Testament passages which contain these terms in the context of husband-wife relations.

Terminology. There has been much discussion regarding the meaning of "head" (*kephale*) in its seven occurrences in a metaphorical sense,⁽⁷⁶⁾ with the debate polarizing into two camps. Some have vigorously argued that *kephale* in first-century Greek often means "source" (as in the "head" of a river) and rarely or never "head" (as in superior rank),⁽⁷⁷⁾ while others have just as vigorously argued for the common meaning of "head" (as in superior rank) and rarely or never "source."⁽⁷⁸⁾ While the most responsible treatment of the evidence seems to favor the latter argument, still the best conclusion seems to be to recognize that both meanings appear in first-century secular Greek and are possible in New Testament usage, and thus the immediate context must be the final determiner of meaning.⁽⁷⁹⁾ Two occurrences of *kephale* occur in a context of man-woman relationships: 1 Cor 11:3 and Eph 5:23.

The New Testament term used for "submit" in husband-wife relationships is *hypotasso*, a verb which appears in some form some 39 times in the New Testament (23 times in Pauline Epistles and 6 times in 1 Peter). The root verb (*tasso*) means "order, position, determine," and with the prepositional prefix *hypo* means, in the active voice, "place under,

subordinate, subject, submit"; in the passive voice, "become subject [to someone or something]"; and in the middle voice, "[voluntarily] submit oneself, defer to, acquiesce, surrender one's rights or will."⁽⁸⁰⁾ Seven occurrences of *hypotasso*--all in the middle voice--occur in the context of man-woman relationships: 1 Cor 14:34; Eph 5:21, 24; Col 3:18; Tit 2:5; 1 Pet 3:1, 5.

Eph 5:21-33. This is the foundational New Testament passage dealing with husband-wife relations, and the only New Testament passage on this issue that contains both the word *kephale* ("head") and *hypotasso* ("submit"). There is no question that the husband-wife relationship is in view and not men-women relationships in general. Ephesians 5 is part of a series of "Household Codes"⁽⁸¹⁾ providing counsel for proper relationships between various members of domestic households: husbands and wives (Eph 5:22-33), children and parents (Eph 6:1-4), and servants and masters (Eph 6:5-9). Unmistakably in Ephesians 5 the counsel concerns the husband as the head of his own wife.

Although attempts have been made to translate *kephale* as "source" (or a related concept), the pairing of *kephale* with *hypotasso* ("submit") seems to indicate a ranking of relationship, and not the idea of origin or source. This parallels the similar usage of *kephale* as "preeminence" or "superior rank" with reference to Christ in Eph 1:22 and Col 2:10.

The following points emerge clearly from this passage:

- (1) The context of the Pauline counsel for husbands and wives (Eph 5:22-33) is one of "mutual submission," described in v. 21: "submitting to one another in the fear of God."⁽⁸²⁾
- (2) The word *hypotasso*, whether actually present in v. 22 or implied in v. 21 (manuscript evidence is divided here), occurs in the middle voice ("Wives, submit yourselves"), indicating that the wife's submission is a "voluntary yielding in love,"⁽⁸³⁾ not forced by the husband. There is no permission given for the husband to demand that his wife submit to his headship.
- (3) The wife's submission is not a blind yielding of her individuality; she is to submit only "as to the Lord" (v. 22).
- (4) The nature of the husband's headship is paralleled to that of Christ, who "loved the church and gave Himself for it" (v. 25). The husband's "headship" is thus a loving servant leadership. It means "head servant, or taking the lead in serving,"⁽⁸⁴⁾ not an authoritarian rule. It consists of the husband's loving his wife as his own body, nourishing and cherishing her, as Christ does the church (vv. 28-29).

(5) The emphasis in the headship/submission relationship seems underscored in the summary of v. 33: love (of the husband for his wife) and respect (of the wife for her husband).

(6) Though mutual submission is implied between husband and wife, yet this does not quite approach total role interchangeableness in the marriage relation. The term "head" is used only of the husband. As Witherington puts it, "There is a mutuality of submission, but this works itself out in different ways involving an ordering of relationships, and exhortations according to gender."⁽⁸⁵⁾

(7) The respective roles of husband and wife are not defined by the social setting or the qualifications of the partners, but from the model of Christ and his church. Thus they transcend cultural circumstances.

(8) The ultimate ideal for husband-wife relations is still the partnership of equals that is set forth from the beginning in Gen 2:24: "the two shall become one flesh" (quoted in Eph 5:31).

Other *kephale* ("headship") passages. Aside from Eph 5:23, the only other New Testament passage utilizing *kephale* in the context of man-woman relationships is 1 Cor 11:3, part of a passage (vv. 3-16) thematically parallel to Eph 5:22-33. In chapter 15 of this book, Larry Richards has clearly shown how the context in 1 Corinthians 11 is one of wives submitting to the headship of their own husbands, and not the headship of men over women in general. Even though the Greek word *gyne* can mean either "woman" or "wife," and the Greek word *aner* can likewise mean either "man" or "husband," Richards indicates how the context of 1 Corinthians 11 clearly favors the translation "husband" and "wife." Recognizing this context, the RSV and the NRSV correctly translate v. 3: "the head of a woman is her husband." The wearing of the head covering described in 1 Corinthians 11 was a sign of the wife's submission to her husband's headship, not to the headship of all men.⁽⁸⁶⁾ While this passage affirms the headship principle in the marital relation as in Ephesians, it also affirms the mutuality of the marriage partners (v. 11; see chapter 15 for a more detailed discussion of this passage).

Other *hypotasso* ("submission") passages. Aside from Ephesians 5, four more New Testament passages utilize the verb *hypotasso* ("submit") in the context of man-woman relationships: 1 Cor 14:34; Col 3:18; Titus 2:5; and 1 Pet 3:1-7. A final passage utilizes the noun *hypotage* ("submission") from the same verbal root: 1 Tim 2:12. We will look briefly at each in turn.

1 Cor 14:34 states: "Let the wives [*gynaiques*] learn in silence, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to submit themselves

[*hypotassesthosan*], as the law also says." Some have suggested that there is a contradiction between this instruction and 1 Cor 11:2-16, where Paul permitted women to speak in church by praying and prophesying. But such a suggestion fails to recognize that Paul here is meeting a particular situation in the Corinthian congregation. Paul is not addressing women in general in these verses, but certain Corinthian wives, since the same Greek word *gyne* can mean either "woman" or "wife," depending upon the context. This becomes obvious in light of v. 35, in which reference is made to the husbands of these women: "And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home." Because of this contextual indicator, most commentators agree that this passage is speaking of wives and their relationship to their husbands, and not women-men relationships in general.⁽⁸⁷⁾

A recognition of the husband-wife context provides the clue to understanding the exhortation for the wives to "submit themselves [middle voice of *hypotasso*], as the law also says" (v. 34). The law most probably refers here to the Old Testament, as it unquestionably does just a few verses earlier (v. 21). More specifically, it seems likely that Paul is alluding to Gen 3:16, the foundational Old Testament passage prescribing the submission of wives to the headship of their husbands. As Krister Stendahl points out, in 1 Cor 14:34 "it is still Gen 3:16 which is alluded to."⁽⁸⁸⁾

We do not have enough information to be certain of the exact nature of the problem Paul was addressing; v. 35 suggests that the wives were asking questions of their husbands in the worship setting. Paul had just given instructions for prophesying in the church worship (vv. 22-29), and this involved the "testing" or evaluating of the prophetic messages (v. 29), when those not receiving a revelation were to keep silent. It seems that also during this time the wives were to be silent out of respect for their husbands. E. Earle Ellis explains:

I Cor. 14:34-35 represents the application, in a particular cultural context, of an order of the present creation concerning the conduct of a wife *vis-a-vis* her husband. It reflects a situation in which the husband is participating in the prophetic ministries of a Christian meeting. In this context the coparticipation of his wife, which may involve her publicly "testing" (*diakrinein*, 14:29) her husband's message, is considered to be a disgraceful (*aischron*) disregard of him, of accepted priorities, and of her own wifely role. For these reasons it is prohibited.⁽⁸⁹⁾

Sharon Gritz gives a similar assessment: "The prohibition has nothing to do with ecclesiastical authority. Paul's concern here centers in

maintaining the wife-husband relationship even when both spouses participate together in worship. Wives should exercise their gifts in a way that does not involve the violation of their husbands' headship."⁽⁹⁰⁾ In this context, Paul's call for the wives to "be silent" (*sigao*) was a particular silence while their husbands' prophecies were being tested, and did not indicate total silence in the worship service any more than the other calls to silence (also *sigao*) in particular circumstances in the same context (vv. 28-30).

The last three New Testament passages with occurrences of *hypotasso* are all part of "household codes" like Ephesians 5, and all undisputably refer to the submission of wives to their husbands and not women to men in general. The Colossian household code regarding husbands and wives covers basically the same ground as in Ephesians, in an abbreviated form. Col 3:18-19 reads: "Wives [*hai gynaiques*], submit yourselves [*hypotassethe*] to [your own] husbands [*tois andrasin*], as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands [*hoi andres*], love [your] wives [*tais gynaikas*], and do not be bitter towards them." As in Ephesians 5, the counsel to husbands and wives is followed by counsel to children and parents (vv. 20-21).⁽⁹¹⁾

Titus 2:4-5 asks older women to "admonish the young women [*neas*] to be lovers of [their own] husbands [*philandrous*], to be lovers of [their own] children [*philoteknous*], to be discreet, chaste, managing well the home,⁽⁹²⁾ good, submitting themselves [*hypotassomenas*] to their own husbands [*tois idiois andrasin*], that the word of God may not be blasphemed." By adding the possessive pronominal adjective *idios* ("one's own"), this household code emphatically underscores that a wife is to submit to her *own* husband, and not to all husbands.

The household code concerning husbands and wives in 1 Pet 3:1-7 likewise utilizes the possessive pronoun *idios* ("one's own") to underscore that the wife's submission is restricted to her own husband. Verses 1, 5, and 6, which refer to submission, read: "Likewise, wives [*gynaiques*], submit yourselves [*hypotassomenai*] to your own husbands [*tois idiois andrasin*], that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, . . . [vv. 2-4 describe appropriate adornment]. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, submitted themselves [*hypotassomenai*] to their own husbands [*tois idiois andrasin*], as Sarah listened to [*hypekousen*] Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror."

In brief, Peter gives basically the same "household code" counsel found in the Pauline materials, but specifically addresses wives whose husbands are unbelievers. The call to "chaste conduct" (v. 2), inward adornment of a "gentle and quiet spirit" (v.4), and submission to one's own husband (vv.

1, 5-6) is not just a culturally bound strategy for winning the unbelieving spouse; it is behavior "very precious in the sight of God" (v. 4) and an imitation of the Old Testament example of Sarah's submission to her believing husband Abraham (vv. 5-6). To the believing husbands, Peter gives counsel comparable to that of Paul: he urges the husband to "live considerately with" and "give honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel,"⁽⁹³⁾ with whom he is equal partner, "joint heirs of the grace of life" (v. 7).

We turn now to 1 Tim 2:8-15, the final New Testament "submission" passage in a context of men-women relationships. Since this passage has already been examined in detail in chapter 16, we will address only whether the instruction in vv. 11-12 refers to men and women in general or specifically to husband-wife relationships, and to whom the "submission" (*hypotage*) in v. 11 is to be made.

Already with Martin Luther, 1 Tim 2:11-12 was understood as referring to the husband-wife relationship and not to men and women in general.⁽⁹⁴⁾ A number of other commentators since then have contended for the marital reference in this passage.⁽⁹⁵⁾ In the same trajectory of understanding, the Williams version of the New Testament renders vv. 11-12 in this way: "A married woman must learn in quiet and perfect submission. I do not permit a married woman to practice teaching or domineering over a husband. She must keep quiet."⁽⁹⁶⁾

More recently, several scholars have argued cogently that *gyne* and *aner* in these verses should be translated as "wife" and "husband" respectively, and not simply "woman" and "man."⁽⁹⁷⁾ A number of lines of evidence strongly support this conclusion.

First, as Hugenberger demonstrates, everywhere else in the Pauline writings, and in fact throughout the whole New Testament, where *gyne* and *aner* are found paired in close proximity, the reference is consistently to wife and husband and not women and men in general.⁽⁹⁸⁾

Second, the movement from the plural in vv. 8-10 to the singular in vv. 11-12 seems to highlight the focus upon the wife and her husband, especially in these latter verses.⁽⁹⁹⁾

Third, the reference to the married couple, Adam and Eve, in vv. 13-14, provides a marital context to the passage.

Fourth, the reference to childbirth in v. 15, and the shift back to the plural "they" (probably referring to both husband and wife as parents of the child, or perhaps broadening again to speak of wives in general as in vv. 9-10), certainly provides a marital context.

Fifth, the reference to "submission" (*hypotasso*) in a setting of man-woman relationships elsewhere in Paul always refers to the submission of the wife to her husband. Hugenberger rightly points out that "in the face of this established pattern of usage only the most compelling evidence should be allowed to overturn the presumption that *hypotage* ("submission") in 1 Timothy 2 has to do with a requirement specifically for wives rather than women in general."⁽¹⁰⁰⁾

Sixth, strong parallels with 1 Cor 14:34-36 (a passage dealing with husbands and wives, as discussed above) point to a similar context of husband-wife relationships in 1 Timothy 2. In particular, E. E. Ellis has noted striking verbal and conceptual similarities between the two passages: "to allow or permit" (*epitrepesthai*), "silence" (*sigao, hesychia*), "submission" (*hypotassesthai, hypotage*), "learn" (*manthano*), and the allusion to Genesis 2-3.⁽¹⁰¹⁾

Finally, the most determinative line of evidence supporting the "husband-wife" context of 1 Tim 2:8-15 is found in the extensive verbal, conceptual, and structural parallels between this passage and the household code of 1 Peter 3. Various scholars have recognized that the parallels between these two passages are so impressive that one passage must be dependent upon the other or both go back to a common tradition.⁽¹⁰²⁾ Hugenberger has set forth most comprehensively the extensive parallelism. In a chart displaying the two passages in parallel columns he highlights the detailed verbal correspondences, including the rare New Testament terms for "adornment," "quiet," and "braided" hair.⁽¹⁰³⁾

Both passages have the same structural flow of logic and thought, moving from a discussion of wifely submission, to the specific counsel on her proper adornment, and then to an Old Testament paradigm for proper marital relationships (Adam-Eve, Abraham-Sarah). The only significant difference in order is that Paul puts the additional counsel to husbands first (1 Tim 2:8), while Peter puts it last (1 Pet 3:7). But even this counsel to husbands shows striking linkages between the two passages, since the shared warning of problems hindering prayer life occurs only rarely elsewhere in Scripture. Inasmuch as 1 Peter 3 is a "household code" unambiguously dealing with interrelationships of husbands and wives, it is difficult to escape the same conclusion for the corresponding Pauline passage in 1 Timothy 2.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾

In light of the preceding lines of evidence, Paul here addresses the relationship of husbands and wives and not men and women in general. It would be in harmony with this conclusion to see the "submission" (*hypotage*) called for on the part of the wife (v. 11) as submission to her husband, as in all the other *hypotasso* passages dealing with man-woman

relations, although it must be recognized that the passage does not explicitly state to whom the wife is to submit.⁽¹⁰⁵⁾

The thrust of Paul's counsel in this passage serves to safeguard the headship/submission principle in the marital relation between husband and wife. Paul "do[es] not permit a *wife* (*gynaiki*) to teach--that is, to boss her *husband* (*andros*); she must be *quiet* (*hesychia*)."⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ Hugenberger rightly concludes that "Paul's concern is to prohibit only the sort of teaching that would constitute a failure of the requisite wifely 'submission' to her husband."⁽¹⁰⁷⁾

We must briefly note that in 1 Tim 2:13 Paul is not arguing for a creation headship of man over woman, as has often been assumed. Rather, he is correcting a false syncretistic theology in Ephesus, which claimed that *woman* was created first and *man* fell first, and therefore women were superior to men. Because of this false theology, wives were apparently domineering over their husbands in public church meetings.⁽¹⁰⁸⁾

Conclusion. We have surveyed all of the New Testament passages employing the terms "head" (*kephale*) and "submit" (*hypotasso*). Our conclusion is straightforward and unambiguous: the New Testament writers remain faithful to the Old Testament pattern established in the Garden of Eden. Just as in Genesis 3 the headship/submission principle was established for husband-wife relationships, so the New Testament passages affirm this ordering of roles. But just as the equal partnership was described in Gen 2:24 as the divine ideal for after the Fall as well as before, so the New Testament counsel calls husbands and wives to a loving partnership of mutual submission.

Perhaps the most crucial finding of this survey is that *all* of the New Testament passages regarding "headship" and "submission" between men and women are limited to the marriage relationship.

Headship/Submission/Equality of Men and

Women in the Christian Church

A headship/submission principle is at work in the apostolic church. But it does not consist of male leaders in the headship role and women submitting to the male headship. Rather, according to the New Testament witness there is only one Head--Jesus Christ. He is the "husband" to the church, and all the church--both men and women, as His bride--are to submit to His headship. This is the clear teaching of Ephesians 5.

Neither is there any earthly priestly leader in the early church, no clergy functioning as a mediator between God and the people. The New

Testament clearly presents the "priesthood of all believers" (1 Pet 2:5, 9; cf. Rom 12:1; Heb 13:15; Rev 1:6), in which all Christians are priests ministering for and representing God to the world. Within this priesthood of all believers, there are various spiritual gifts involving leadership functions (Rom 12:3-8; Eph 4:11-15; 1 Cor 12:1-11) that are distributed by the Spirit "to each individually as He will" (1 Cor 12:11), with no mention of any restrictions based upon gender.⁽¹⁰⁹⁾

In the New Testament, the Magna Charta of true biblical equality is contained in Paul's emphatic declaration: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28). This is not merely a statement on equal access to salvation (cf. Gal 2:11-15; Eph 2:14-15). Rather, it specifically singles out those three relationships in which God's original plan in Eden had been perverted by making one group unequal to another: (1) Jew-Gentile, (2) slave-free, and (3) male-female. By using the rare terms "male-female" (*arsenthely*) instead of "husband-wife" (*aner-gyne*), Paul establishes a link with Gen 1:27 and thus shows how the Gospel calls us back to the divine ideal, which has no place for general subordination of females to males. At the same time, Paul's choice of terminology upholds the equality of men and women in the church, without changing the position of the husband as head of the family.⁽¹¹⁰⁾

Within the social restraints of his day, Paul and the early church (like Jesus⁽¹¹¹⁾) did not act precipitously. The inequality of Gentiles was difficult to root out, even in Peter (Gal 2:11-14). Slavery was not immediately abolished in the church (Eph 6:5-9; Col 3:22; 1 Tim 6:1), and yet the principles of the gospel were set forth to begin to lead back to the Edenic ideal (as evidenced in Paul's revolutionary counsel to Philemon). While women may not have immediately received full and equal partnership with men in the ministry of the church, the evidence of women in leadership roles in the early church is sufficient to demonstrate that they were not barred from positions of influence, leadership, and even headship over men.

Examples of women in church leadership/headship roles have been ably presented in Robert Johnston's and Jo Ann Davidson's chapters (chaps. 3 and 9). Deacons included the woman Phoebe (Rom 16:1) and probably the women referred to in 1 Tim 3:11.⁽¹¹²⁾ The evidence points toward Junia as a female apostle.⁽¹¹³⁾ The women at Phillippi, including Euodia and Syntyche (Phil 4:2, 3), are described as the leaders of the local congregation.⁽¹¹⁴⁾ The "elect lady" (2 John 1) may have been an ecclesiastical title; and the one bearing this title, to whom John addresses his second epistle, may have been a prominent woman church leader with a congregation under her care.⁽¹¹⁵⁾ The woman Priscilla assumed an authoritative teaching role over men (Acts 18),⁽¹¹⁶⁾ and women

prophetesses carried out authoritative teaching roles in the early church.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ Paul also mentions other women that ministered together with him as coworkers (*synergos*),⁽¹¹⁸⁾ and his readers are instructed to "submit" (*hypotasso*) to such workers (see 1 Cor 16:16).

In short, there is ample New Testament evidence that nothing barred women in the earliest Christian churches from holding the highest offices of leadership, including authoritative teaching roles that constituted "headship" over men.

Conclusion and Implications

Along with the spate of books and articles representing the "egalitarian" and "hierarchical" positions on women's ordination, a growing body of literature in the evangelical scholarly community realizes that the Bible goes beyond *both* "egalitarian" and "hierarchical" models. These studies of man-woman relationships in the Old Testament and in the earliest churches are showing that throughout Scripture the headship/submission principle remains in effect in husband-wife relationships (in harmony with the view of the "hierarchicalists" but contrary to the views of most "egalitarians"). At the same time, this headship/submission principle does not extend into the man-woman relationships in the covenant community, to bar women from positions of influence, leadership, and even headship over men (in harmony with the views of "egalitarians" but contrary to the views of "hierarchicalists").

An example of this research is the work of Donald Bloesch, who sees Scripture consistently supporting the concerns of *both* "patriarchalism" ("hierarchicalism") and "feminism" ("egalitarianism"). Bloesch states: "As the wife of her husband, the woman is obliged to serve and support him as a helpmate in the Lord. But as a sister in Christ, she has equal spiritual status with her husband."⁽¹¹⁹⁾

Ben Witherington similarly concludes that the New Testament continues biblical patriarchy ("headship") in the home, and at the same time affirms new roles for women in the church that do not preclude women's ordination to ministry. He writes:

The question of women's ordination is not discussed or dismissed in the New Testament, but there is nothing in the material that rules out such a possibility. If the possibilities for women in the earliest churches, as evidenced in the New Testament, should be seen as models for church practice in subsequent generations, then it should be seen that women in the New Testament era already performed the tasks normally associated with ordained clergy in later

times. These roles seem to be clearly supported by various New Testament authors.

At the same time, note that there is no evidence in the New Testament material investigated in this study of any sort of radical repudiation of the traditional family structure. Headship comes to mean head servant, or taking the lead in serving, but this is not quite the same as some modern notions of an egalitarian marriage structure.⁽¹²⁰⁾

One more example will be cited. Sharon Gritz, in her recent study of 1 Tim 2:9-15 in its larger religious and cultural context, concludes that this passage is dealing with husband-wife relations. She then draws the broader implications:

This interpretation eliminates any contradiction between this passage and other biblical materials. It restates the teaching of 1 Cor. 14:34-36. It also permits the exercise of spiritual gifts by all women, both married and single. Thus, 1 Tim. 2:9-15 does not contradict Jesus' relation with and teachings about women nor Paul's relationship with women coworkers and his affirmation of their participation in the worship of the church (1 Cor. 11:2-16). All women do have the right to enter the ministry as God so calls and equips them. The New Testament examples verify this. The normative principle underlying 1 Tim 2:9-15 is that marriage qualifies a married woman's ministry. A wife's commitment and obligations to her husband should shape her public ministry.⁽¹²¹⁾

Our conclusions coincide with these recent studies. We have found that the biblical witness is consistent with regard to the divine ideal for headship/submission/equality in man-woman relationships. Before the Fall there was full equality with no headship/submission in the relationship between Adam and Eve (Gen 2:24). But after the Fall, according to Gen 3:16, the husband was given a servant headship role to preserve the harmony of the home, while at the same time the model of equal partnership was still set forth as the ideal. This post-Fall prescription of husband headship and wife submission was limited to the husband-wife relationship. In the divine revelation throughout the rest of the Old Testament and New Testament witness, servant headship and voluntary submission on the part of husband and wife, respectively, are affirmed, but these are *never* broadened to the covenant community in such a way as to prohibit women from taking positions of leadership, including headship positions over men.

Endnotes

1. For a succinct overview of the recent debate over the ordination of women in evangelical churches, see Stanley J. Grenz, *Women in the Church: A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1995), 13-35.
2. This group was organized in Danvers, Massachusetts in December 1987 and published its manifesto on the relationship between the sexes (called the "Danvers Statement") in November 1988. A major collection of essays propagating this position is: John Piper and Wayne A. Grudem, eds. *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991).
3. This group was organized in 1987 under the special impetus of its founder, Catherine Clark Kroeger, and received its formal nonprofit organization status in 1988. From the first CBE (Christians for Biblical Equality) conference in the summer of 1989 came the position document entitled "Statement on Men, Women and Biblical Equality." Representative publications include Catherine Kroeger and Richard Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2:11-15 in Light of Ancient Evidence* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992); and Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, *Good News for Women: A Biblical Picture of Gender Equality* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997).
4. The material in this section is a revision and adaption of parts of my two articles, "The Theology of Sexuality in the Beginning: Gen 1-2," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 26 (1988): 5-24; and "The Theology of Sexuality in the Beginning: Gen 3," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 26 (1988): 121-131.
5. Helmut Thielicke, *The Ethics of Sex* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 7.
6. See, for examples, Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church: A Biblical Study on the Role of Women in the Church* (Berrien Springs, MI: Biblical Perspectives, 1987), 31, 71-79; Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 3/1 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1960), 300; Barth, 3/2, 386-387; Stephen B. Clark, *Man and Woman in Christ: An Examination of the Roles of Men and Women in the Light of Scripture and the Social Sciences* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Books, 1980), 23-28; Jerry D. Colwell, "A Survey of Recent Interpretations of Women in the Church" (Master's thesis, Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary, 1984); Susan T. Foh, *Women and the Word of God: A Response to Biblical Feminism* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1979), 61-62; S. H. Hooke, "Genesis," *Peake's Commentary on the Bible* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1962), 179; James B. Hurley, *Man*

and *Woman in Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 206-214; Edmond Jacob, *Theology of the Old Testament* (New York: Harper, 1958), 156-157; Piper and Grudem, 99.

7. Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978), 73.

8. C. F. Keil, *The First Book of Moses (Genesis)* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949), 1:89.

9. For discussion of this construction, see especially the following: James Muilenburg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88 (1969): 9-10; Mitchel Dahood, *Psalms*, Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1966), 1:5; Phyllis Trible, "Depatriarchalizing in Biblical Interpretation," *Journal of American Academy of Religion* 41 (1973): 36.

10. Muilenburg, 9.

11. Trevor Dennis, *Sarah Laughed: Women's Voices in the Old Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994), 13. Both Gen 2:7 and 2:21b-22 contain 16 Hebrew words describing the creation of man and woman, respectively.

12. Dennis notes: "Indeed, [her creation] represents the high point of the whole story of the Garden" (16).

13. This is the phrase coined by Sakae Kubo, *Theology and Ethics of Sex* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1980), 19.

14. As we will see below, the interpretation of Genesis 2 set forth here does not contradict Paul's reference to this passage in 1 Tim 2:13.

15. John Calvin, *Commentary on Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n.d.), 217-218.

16. Exod 18:4; Deut 33:7, 26; Ps 33:20; 70:5; 115:9, 10, 11.

17. R. David Freedman argues that the Hebrew word 'ezer etymologically derives from the merger of two Semitic roots, *zr*, "to save, rescue" and *gZR* "to be strong," and in this passage has reference to the latter: woman is created, like the man, "a power (or strength) superior to the animals" ("Woman, A Power Equal to Man," *Biblical Archaeology Review*, Jan-Feb. 1983, 56-58).

18. Ludwig Kohler and Walter Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testament Libros*, 2d ed. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1958; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951), 591; Samuel L. Terrien points out that the semantic

range of *neged* includes connotations of "vigor, courage, efficiency, adventurousness, and presence," and that "the verbal root *nagad*, 'to go ahead,' suggests achievement, pioneering, risk, and deliberate thrust into the unknown" (*Till the Heart Sings: A Biblical Theology of Manhood and Womanhood* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985], 11).

19. *The New Brown, Driver, and Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Lafayette, IN: Associated Publishers and Authors, 1981), 617 (hereafter cited as BDB).

20. Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, trans. D.M.G. Stalker (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 1:149.

21. Freedman, 56-58. Freedman notes that in later Mishnaic Hebrew *k^eneged* clearly means "equal," and in light of various lines of Biblical philological evidence he forcefully argues that the phrase '*ezer k^enegdô* here should be translated "a power equal to him."

22. Ibid., 56; Gen 2:18, NEB. As we will see below, Paul's allusion to woman being created "for the man, and not man for the woman" (1 Cor 11:9) does not contradict the interpretation set forth here.

23. Tribble, 101.

24. Samuel Terrien, "Toward a Biblical Theology of Womanhood," in *Male and Female: Christian Approaches to Sexuality*, ed. Ruth T. Barnhouse and Urban T. Holmes, III (New York: Seaburg, 1976), 18. Terrien also notes that "the use of the verb 'to build' for the woman implies an intellectual and aesthetic appreciation of her body, the equilibrium of her forms, and the volumes and proportions of her figure" (*Till the Heart Sings*, 12).

25. As we will see below, Paul's argument that "man is not from woman, but woman from man" (1 Cor 11:8) does not contradict the interpretation set forth here.

26. BDB, 854. Numerous theories have been propounded to explain the meaning of the rib in this story. For example, J. Boehmer suggests that the "rib" is a euphemism for the birth canal which the male lacks ("Die geschlechtliche Stellung des Weibes in Gen 2 und 3," *Monatschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* 79 [1939]: 292); Paul Humbert proposes that the mention of the "rib" explains the existence of the navel in Adam (*Etudes sur le récit du Paradis* [Neuchâtel: Secrétariat de l'Université, 1940], 57-58); and Gerhard von Rad finds the detail of the rib answering the question why ribs cover the upper but not lower part of the body (*Genesis: A Commentary*, trans. John H. Marks [London: SCM,

1972], 82). Such suggestions appear to miss the overall context of the passage, with its emphasis upon the *relationship* between man and woman.

27. Claus Westermann, *Genesis* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1974), 230.

28. Raymond Collins, "The Bible and Sexuality," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 7 (1977): 153. It may be that the Sumerian language retains the memory of the close relationship between "rib" and "life," for the Sumerian sign signifies both "life" and "rib." See Samuel N. Kramer, *History Begins at Sumer: Thirty-nine Firsts in Man's Recorded History* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1959), 146. This is not to say, however, that the detail of the rib in Genesis 2 has its origin in Sumerian mythology. The story of Creation in Genesis 2 and the Sumerian myth in which the pun between "lady of the rib" and "lady who makes live" appears (James B. Pritchard, ed. *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 3d. ed. [Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1969], 37-41) have virtually nothing in common.

29. Keil, 1:89.

30. Tribble, "Depatriarchalizing," 37.

31. Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 46. Peter Lombard makes a similar remark: "Eve was not taken from the feet of Adam to be his slave, nor from his head to be his ruler, but from his side to be his beloved partner" (quoted in Stuart B. Babbage, *Christianity and Sex* [Chicago: InterVarsity, 1963], 10); a similar statement is attributed to other writers as well.

32. Collins, 153.

33. Walter Brueggemann, "Of the Same Flesh and Bone (Gen 2:23a)," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 32 (1970): 540.

34. For examples of the Oriental view of naming as the demonstration of one's exercise of a sovereign right over a person, see 2 Kgs 23:34; 24:17; Dan 1:7. Cf. *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, 3:502.

35. See Jacques Doukhan, *The Genesis Creation Story* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews Univ. Press, 1978), 46-47. For other lines of evidence disaffirming man's authoritative naming of woman in Gen 2:23, in contrast to his authoritative naming of the animals in Gen 2:19-20, see especially Tribble, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, 99-100; and Gerhard

Hasel, "Equality from the Start: Woman in the Creation Story," *Spectrum* 7, no. 2 (1975): 23-24.

36. White, 46.

37. See Barth, 3/2:291; Tribble, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, 100.

38. Ibid., 96.

39. Calvin, for instance, sees woman's position before the Fall as "liberal and gentle subjection," but after the Fall she is "cast into servitude" (172). Keil similarly understands the original position of man-woman as rule/subordination rooted in mutual esteem and love, but he argues that after sin the woman has a "desire bordering on disease" and the husband exercises 'despotic rule' over his wife" (103). Hurley concurs with a pre-Fall hierarchy of the sexes and a post-Fall distortion, but argues that Gen 3:16 should be interpreted along the lines of the similarly worded statement of God to Cain in Gen 4:7 (218-219). Just as God warned Cain that sin's *desire* would be to *control* him, but he must *master* it, so woman's desire would be to control/manipulate man and the husband must master her desire. Cf. a similar position in Bacchiocchi, 79-84.

40. Clark, 35. Clark does not rule out view two as a possibility, but he more strongly favors view one. See also Ambrose, *De Paradiso* 350 (quoted in Clark, 677): "Servitude, therefore, of this sort is a gift of God. Wherefore, compliance with this servitude is to be reckoned among blessings."

41. Gilbert G. Bilezikian, *Beyond the Sex Roles: A Guide for the Study of Female Roles in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 54-56; Collins, 19; Patricia Gundry, *Woman Be Free!* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977), 60-63; Mary Hayter, *The New Eve in Christ: The Use and Abuse of the Bible in the Debate about Women in the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 107, 113-114; Paul K. Jewett, *Man as Male and Female: A Study of Sexual Relationships from a Theological Point of View* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 114; William E. Phipps, *Genesis and Gender: Biblical Myths of Sexuality and Their Cultural Impact* (New York, 1989), 51-52; Elizabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza, "Interpreting Patriarchal Traditions," in *The Liberating Word: A Guide to Nonsexist Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. Letty M. Russell (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976), 48-49; Leonard Swidler, *Biblical Affirmations of Women* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1979), 80; Thielicke, 8; Tribble, "Depatriarchalizing," 41.

42. See Francis Schaeffer, *Genesis in Space and Time: The Flow of Biblical History* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1975), 93-94; cf.

Theodorus C. Vriezen, *An Outline of Old Testament Theology*, 2d rev. ed. and enl. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1970), 399.

43. John H. Otwell, *And Sarah Laughed: The Status of Women in the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977), 18.

44. Within this same general "feminist" perspective, Carol L. Meyers provides a drastic sociological reinterpretation in which the whole Genesis 3 story is derived from a Palestinian social condition requiring more intense agricultural work and increased childbirths. According to Meyers, the story does not concern the "Fall" at all; Gen 3:16 calls for woman to increase both (*agricultural*) labor (*'itsabôn*) and *procreation*, while the man is also to increase his labor, in fact "predominate" (*mashal*) over the woman, i.e., do more agricultural work than she, because she has the responsibility of childbirths that he does not. This whole reinterpretation assumes the nonhistorical character of Genesis 3 and a much later hypothetical *Sitz im Leben* ("Gender Roles and Gen 3:16 Revisited," in *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. Carol L. Meyers and M. O'Connor [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983], 337-354).

45. Carol Meyers, *Discovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988), 117.

46. See the discussion in Meyers, 99; also 110-111.

47. See *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (TWOT), 1:534. Recent attempts by some feminists to translate *mal* as "to be like" or "to resemble" instead of "to rule" face insurmountable lexical/grammatical/contextual obstacles. It is true that (following BDB nomenclature) the root *mshl*^I in the *Niph'al* does signify ("to be like, similar,") but in Gen 3:16 the root *mshl* is in the *Qal*. Both *mshl*^{II} ("to use a proverb") and *mshl*^{III} ("to rule") occur in the *Qal*, but the context of Gen 3:16 seems to clearly preclude the idea of "use a proverb" (*mshl*^{II}). That *mshl*^{III} "to rule" is intended in this passage is confirmed by the use of the accompanying preposition *b^e*, the normal preposition following *mshl*^{III} (cf. BDB, 605), and other Hebrew words of ruling, governing, restraining (*mlk*, *rdh*, *shlt*, *'sr*, etc.), and never used with *mshl*^I or *mshl*^{II}. Tempting as they may be, arguments based largely on the meaning of ancient Semitic cognates (where *mashal* does consistently mean "to resemble") cannot be allowed to override the biblical context, grammar, syntax, and usage. Suggestions of the retrojection of the meaning "to rule" back into the Fall narrative by later redaction, under the influence of an Egyptian cognate, although appealing, unfortunately rest on speculation without textual support.

48. Vriezen, 399.

49. Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1989), 1:165.

50. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 59; emphasis supplied.

51. BDB, 921-922; *TWOT*, 2:833.

52. John Skinner, *Genesis*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1930), 53.

53. See, e.g., 2 Sam 23:3; Prov 17:2; Isa 40:10; 63:19; Zech 6:13. See Robert D. Culver, "Mshal III," *TWOT*, 1:534: "*Mashal* usually receives the translation 'to rule,' but the precise nature of the rule is as various as the real situations in which the action or state so designated occur." Specific examples follow to support this statement. Note, e.g., that the first usage of *mashal* in Scripture is in reference to the two great lights created by God (Gen 1:16)--they were to "dominate" (*Tanach*; New Jewish Version) the day and night.

54. Hurley has rightly pointed out how in each of the divine judgments in this chapter there is a blessing as well as a curse (216-219). In the curse upon the serpent appears a veiled blessing in the *Protoevangelion* (3:15): "the warfare between Satan and the woman's seed comes to its climax in the death of Christ" (Hurley, 217). For persuasive evidence in favor of this traditional interpretation, in contrast to the modern critical tendency to see here only an aetiological reference, see Walter C. Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 35-37. Likewise, in the curse of the ground and the "toil" that is the punishment of Adam, there is at the same time a blessing in that God promises the ground will continue to yield its fruit and man will still be able to eat of it. Furthermore, the term *ba'bûr* employed in v. 17 probably means "for the sake of" (KJV) and not "because of" (RSV), inasmuch as the meaning of "because" is already expressed by *kî* earlier in the verse. The ground is cursed "for his [Adam's] sake"--that is, the curse is for Adam's benefit. Though it did result from Adam's sin, it also is to be regarded as "a discipline rendered needful by his sin, to place a check upon the indulgence of appetite and passion, to develop habits of self-control. It was a part of God's great plan for man's recovery from the ruin and degradation of sin" (White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 60).

55. Otwell cogently argues that the normal structure of Hebrew parallelism is followed here in that Gen 3:16*a* and *b* are in parallel and 3:16*c* and *d* are likewise in parallel. As the first two parallel members of this verse duplicate content with regard to childbearing, so "we may

expect . . . that 'he shall rule over you' parallels 'your desire shall be for your husband'" (18). Otwell's argument is strengthened by the use of the conjunctive *waw* which serves to unite v. 16*a-b* with *c-d*, and is best translated by "yet" (RSV).

56. See BDB, 1003; *TWOT*, 2:913.

57. The only other occurrence of this word in the Hebrew Bible is Gen 4:7, which has no reference to a man-woman relationship. Despite the similarity of grammar and vocabulary, the latter verse must not be held up as a standard of interpretation for Gen 3:16, which involves a completely different context. Those who interpret Gen 3:16 by means of 4:7 generally hold to the hierarchy of the sexes as a creation ordinance, and therefore must find something *more* than subordination in 3:16. But it hardly seems justified to compare the experience of Eve with the picture of sin as a wild animal crouching in wait for his prey (Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1975], 75). For a discussion of the possible reasons for similar wording between the widely different contexts of Gen 3:16 and 4:7, see Cassuto, 1:212-213.

58. See Ellen White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 59.

59. Hasel, "Equality from the Start," 26. Note the parallel relationship of God the Father and Christ after the Incarnation (1 Cor 3:23; 11:3; 15:27-28).

60. As a verb: Gen 20:3; Deut 21:13; 22:22; 24:1; Isa 54:1, 5; 62:4-5; Jer 3:15; 31:32. As a noun, Gen 20:3; Exod 21:3, 22; Deut 22:24; 24:4; 2 Sam 11:26; Joel 1:8; Prov 12:4; 31:11, 23, 28; Esth 1:17, 20. The meaning of this word must not be pressed too far, however, for it often may simply denote polite respect.

61. Of course the Bible does depict occasions in which the husband usurps power and exploits his wife, treating her as inferior, as chattel, or even a nonperson, but these cases are not cited approvingly.

62. Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1961), 40.

63. Otwell, 111-112.

64. For evidence that the Song of Songs is a unified song of two lovers (Solomon and the Shulamite) who are bride and groom, and after the marriage ceremony (in the chiasmic center of the book) become husband and wife, see Richard M. Davidson, "Theology of Sexuality in the Song

of Songs: Return to Eden," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 27 (1989): 1-19.

65. Swidler, 92.

66. Ibid. See also the discussion of the equality/mutuality theme in Phipps, 94-95. Phipps is probably correct in asserting that "Nowhere in ancient literature can such rapturous mutuality be paralleled" (94).

67. The count may vary, depending upon the interpretation of the sometimes ambiguous first-person statements. Donald Broadribb counts 207 poetic lines in the Song and attributes 118 of these to women ("Thoughts on the Song of Solomon," *AbrNahrain* 3 [1961-1962]: 18).

68. Tribble, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, 161.

69. McCurley, 101.

70. Tribble, "Depatriarchializing," 48.

71. Francis Landy, "The Song of Songs and the Garden of Eden," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 98 (1979): 526.

72. See Guenther Haas, "Patriarchy as an Evil That God Tolerated: Analysis and Implications for the Authority of Scripture," *Journal of Evangelical Theological Society* 38 (1995): 321-336. This is not to deny that the Old Testament does depict many incidents of gross inequalities for women perpetrated by men under the patriarchal system, but these situations were never the divine norm. They rather reflect perversion of the divine ideal set forth in Genesis 1-3. Note, e.g., the "texts of terror" concerning women as analyzed by Phyllis Tribble, *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984).

73. There is evidence that Deborah as a "judge" was in fact an elder of Israel. See Deuteronomy 1, which melds together Exodus 18 (the appointment of judges) and Numbers 11 (appointment of the 70 elders), with the implication that the two chapters are referring to the same office.

74. On this issue, see especially the syntheses by Ben Witherington, III, *Women in the Earliest Churches*, Society for New Testament Studies, Monograph Series (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1988), 5-23; Hurley, 58-78; Gregory E. Sterling, "Women in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds (323 bce-138 ce)," in *Essays on Women in Earliest Christianity*, ed. Carroll D. Osburn (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1993),

1:41-92; and Randall D. Chesnutt, "Jewish Women in the Greco-Roman Era," in *Essays on Women in Earliest Christianity*, 1:93-130.

75. On this issue, see the chapters by Jo Ann Davidson and Robert Johnston; cf. the surveys by Witherington, 128-182; Grenz, 71-80; and the excellent summary in Clarence Boomsma, *Male and Female, One in Christ: New Testament Teaching on Women in Office* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 21-26.

76. 1 Cor 11:3; Eph 1:22; 4:15; 5:23; Col 1:18; 2:10, 14.

77. See especially Berkeley and Alvera Mickelsen, "What Does *Kephale* Mean in the New Testament?" in *Women, Authority and the Bible*, ed. Alvera Mickelsen (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1986), 97-110; Gilbert G. Bilezikian, "A Critical Examination of Wayne Grudem's Treatment of *Kephale* in Ancient Greek Texts," in *Beyond Sex Roles* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 215-252; Catherine Kroeger, "The Classical Concept of Head as 'Source,' in *Equal to Serve: Women and Men in the Church and Home*, ed. Gretchen G. Hull (Old Tappan, NJ: F. H. Revell, 1987), 267-283; and Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 502-503. The impetus for this position seems to come from the study by S. Bedale, "The Meaning of *Kephale* in the Pauline Epistles," *Journal of Theological Studies* 5 (1954): 211-215.

78. See Wayne Grudem, "Does *Kephale* ('Head') Mean 'Source' or 'Authority Over' in Greek Literature? A Survey of 2,336 Examples," *Trinity Journal* 6, New Series (1985): 38-59; and idem, "The Meaning of *Kephale* ('Head'): A Response to Recent Studies," Appendix 1 in Piper and Grudem, 425-468; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "Another Look at *Kephale* in 1 Corinthians 11:3," *New Testament Studies* 35/4 (1989): 503-511. Cf. Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. and adapt. W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich; 2d. ed., rev. F. W. Gingrich and F. W. Danker (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1979), 431, where *kephale* is seen "in the case of living beings, to denote superior rank."

79. See Kenneth V. Neller, "'Submission' in Eph 5:21-33," in *Essays on Women in Earliest Christianity*, 1: 251-260. See also Richard S. Cervin, "Does *kephale* Mean 'Source' or 'Authority Over' in Greek Literature? A Rebuttal," *Trinity Journal*, New Series 10 (1989): 85-112. Cervin recognizes both the meaning "source" and "authority over" outside the New Testament (the latter only in the Septuagint and the *Shepherd of Hermas*), but suggests that in the Pauline usage, *kephale* means neither "source" nor "authority over" but rather denotes "preeminence." I also avoid the use of the phrase "authority over" to describe headship and lean rather toward the denotation of "preeminence."

80. See Bauer, 855. Cf. James W. Thompson, "The Submission of Wives in 1 Peter," in *Essays on Women in Earliest Christianity*, 1: 382-385; Neller, 247-251.

81. For a succinct discussion of the New Testament "household tables" or *Haustafeln* in recent literature and in Ephesians 5, see Witherington, 42-61. Other New Testament "household codes" include Col 3:18-4:1; 1 Tim 2:8-15; 6:1-2; Titus 2:1-10; 1 Pet 2:18-3:7.

82. Scholars debate whether the phrase "submitting to one another" means that all parties in the discussions that follow (wives-husbands, children-parents, and slaves-masters) should have an attitude of submission to one another, or whether this means that in each of the relationships discussed, the one in inferior rank should submit to the one in superior rank. Regardless of what position is taken on this point, the context of Ephesians 5 indicates that the husband's role is one of a submissive servant leader (as we note below).

83. Bauer, 855.

84. Witherington, 220.

85. Ibid., 56.

86. See *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* 6:754, and numerous other commentators (some cited by Richards) who support this interpretation of 1 Cor 11:3.

87. See, for example, Carroll D. Osburn, "The Interpretation of 1 Cor. 14: 34-35," in *Essays on Women in Earliest Christianity*, 1:219-242; Sharon Gritz, *Paul, Women Teachers, and the Mother Goddess at Ephesus: A Study of 1 Timothy 2:9-15 in Light of the Religious and Cultural Milieu of the First Century* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1991), 88-90; William Orr and James Walther, *I Corinthians: A New Translation* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976), 312; J. Massingbyrde Ford, "Biblical Material Relevant to the Ordination of Women," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 10 (1973): 681; E. Earle Ellis, "The Silenced Wives of Corinth (1 Cor. 14:34-35)," in *New Testament Textual Criticism: Its Significance for Exegesis*, ed. Eldon J. Epp and Gordon D. Fee (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1981), 218; Mary J. Evans, *Woman in the Bible: An Overview of All the Crucial Passages on Women's Roles* (Downers Grove, IL: InverVarsity, 1983), 100.

88. Krister Stendahl, *The Bible and the Role of Women: A Case Study in Hermeneutics*, trans. Emilie T. Sander (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), 29. See also the interpretation of *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*,

6:793: "The Scriptures teach that, on account of her part in the fall of man, woman has been assigned by God to a position of subordination to her husband (see Gen. 3:6, 16)."

89. Ellis, 218.

90. Gritz, 89.

91. See the helpful discussion of husband-wife relationships in the Colossian household code by Witherington, 47-54. The same basic points emerge from this passage as from Ephesians 5.

92. For a very helpful discussion showing that this is the meaning of the Greek and not that the wives should stay at home, see Stanley N. Helton, "Titus 2:5--Must Women Stay at Home?" in *Essays on Women in Earliest Christianity*, 1: 367-376.

93. There is no support for interpreting "the weaker vessel" in terms of intelligence or moral capabilities. The context of physical suffering and submission seems to indicate that what is intended here is the wife's physical weakness compared to her husband, or her submissive role relative to her husband's headship.

94. *Commentaries on 1 Corinthians 7, 1 Cor 15, Lectures on 1 Timothy, Luther's Works* 28, ed. H. C. Oswald (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 1973), 276.

95. See bibliography in Gordon P. Hugenberger, "Women in Church Office: Hermeneutics or Exegesis? A Survey of Approaches to 1 Tim 2:8-15," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 35 (1992): 350-351.

96. Charles B. Williams, *The New Testament: A Translation in the Language of the People* (Chicago: Moody, 1937).

97. The most comprehensive presentation of evidence and critique of alternate views is Hugenberger, 350-360. See also B. W. Powers, "Women in the Church: The Application of 1 Tim 2:8-15," *Interchange* 17 (1975): 55-59; C. K. Barrett, *The Pastoral Epistles in the New English Bible* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), 55-56; Gritz, 125, 130-135; N. J. Hommes, "'Let Women Be Silent in Church': A Message Concerning the Worship Service and the Decorum to Be Observed by Women," *Calvin Theological Journal* 4 (1969): 13. Cf. M. Griffiths, *The Church and World Mission* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 196; R. Prohl, *Woman in the Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1957), 80; F. Zerbst, *The Office of Woman in the Church* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 1955), 51.

98. Hugenberger, 353-354. In the Pauline writings, besides the "headship" and "submission" passages we have already looked at above, the following passages are in view: Rom 7:2-3; 1 Cor 7:2-4, 10-14, 16, 27, 29, 33-34, 39; 1 Tim 3:2, 3, 11-12; 5:9; Titus 1:6. In the rest of the New Testament, the only exceptions to this are where the terms occur in listings of individuals that stress the mixed nature of the group being described. Hugenberger concludes his lexical survey: "In summary, besides the use of *aner* and *gyne* in lists (where the terms are generally found in the plural) there are no examples where *aner* and *gyne* bear the meanings 'man' and 'woman' when the terms are found in close proximity" (354).

99. As we will argue from the parallel passage in 1 Peter 3 below, the context of the entire passage seems to be that of husbands and wives, but vv. 11-12, moving to the singular for both *gyne* and *aner*, focus more directly on a wife's role vis-a-vis her husband.

100. Hugenberger, 355.

101. Ellis, 214.

102. E.g., E. G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, 2d ed. (London: Macmillan, 1946), 432-435; M. Dibelius and H. Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972), 5. The interdependence and/or commonality of these two passages should not be surprising when it is remembered that according to available evidence both Paul and Peter wrote them about the same time (early A.D. 60s), Peter from Rome, and Paul just after having left Rome.

103. Hugenberger, 355-358.

104. This probably also implies that the setting of 1 Tim 2:8-15 is not primarily the church worship, but the home. See the careful argumentation by Powers, 55-59, and Hugenberger, 357-358.

105. Another alternative is that the submission is to the message of the gospel, as argued by Nancy Vyhmeister in chapter 16.

106. Translation of Hugenberger, 356. Italics and supplied Greek words his.

107. Ibid., 358. Hugenberger shows how this interpretation also indicates another parallel with 1 Peter 3. In both passages, the apostles are counseling the wives not to "teach" their husbands. Paul explicitly uses the words "teach" and "play the boss over" (1 Tim 2:12), while Peter (1 Pet 3:1) expresses the same warning with the synonymous phrase

"without a word" (*aneu logou*), thus addressing "the very real danger of a wife vaunting herself over her husband with her superior knowledge" (ibid.).

108. For a careful analysis of the evidence for these conclusions, see Hommes, 5-22; Gritz, *passim*; and Nancy Vyhmeister's chapter in this book.

109. See the excellent discussion of spiritual gifts and equality in Grenz, 188-192. It should be noted that the qualifications for elder/bishop in 1 Tim 3:2 and Titus 1:6, are *not* gender exclusive, despite the claims of many hierarchalists. Both 1 Tim 3:1 and Titus 1:6 introduce the ones eligible for this office with the pronoun *tis* "anyone," not *aner* "man." The phrase "husband of one wife"—literally "of-one-wife husband," with the word "one" (*mias*) put first in the phrase—is clearly emphasizing monogamy and not gender exclusiveness. This is confirmed a few verses later by 1 Tim 3:12, where the same phrase is used in the qualifications for a deacon, an office held by women in NT times (Rom 16:1).

110. For discussion of Gal 3:28, see Jan Faver Hailey, "'Neither Male and Female' (Gal. 3:28)," in *Essays on Women in Earliest Christianity*, 1:131-166; Grenz, 99-107; Witherington, 76-78; Boomsma, 31-41.

111. While Jesus treated women and Gentiles in a way that was revolutionary for His day (see Jo Ann Davidson's chapter on this), yet He did not ordain as one of His disciples either a Gentile or a woman. But this pattern was no more normative for the future roles of women in church leadership than for future roles of Gentiles.

112. See Barry L. Blackburn, "The Identity of the 'Women' in 1 Tim. 3:11," in *Essays on Women in Earliest Christianity*, 1: 302-319.

113. Along with Johnston's discussion, see also the evidence presented by Witherington, 114-115, and Grenz, 92-96.

114. See especially A. Boyd Luter, "Partnership in the Gospel: The Role of Women in the Church at Philippi," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 39 (1996): 411-420; and J. Paul Pollard, "Women in the Earlier Philippian Church (Acts 16:13-15; Phil 4:2-3) in Recent Scholarship," in *Essays on Women in Earliest Christianity*, 1:261-280.

115. See Grenz, 91-92. Another alternative is that the "elect lady" refers symbolically to the church; see Ellen White, *Acts of the Apostles*, 554.

116. See especially Wendell Willis, "Priscilla and Aquila--Co-Workers in Christ," in *Essays on Women in Earliest Christianity*, 2:261-276.

117. See Gary Selby, "Women and Prophecy in the Corinthian Church," in *Essays on Women in Earliest Christianity*, 2:227-306.

118. See, e.g., the seven women mentioned in the list of Rom 16:1-16.

119. Donald G. Bloesch, *Is the Bible Sexist? Beyond Feminism and Patriarchalism* (Westchester, IL: Crossway, 1982), 55.

120. Witherington, 219-220.

121. Gritz, 158.