

Godly Men and Women in the Church and the World

An Instructional Guide for Use in the Church

REFORMED
EPISCOPAL



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Foreword

This instructional guide has its genesis in the orthodox, Scriptural stance of the Reformed Episcopal Church (REC) on matters pertaining to the roles and relationships of godly men and women in the church and the world. The REC has engaged a progressively crumbling moral culture in the USA as well as around the world with that truth that is personified in Jesus Christ, Who is the way, the truth, and the life (Jn 14:6). Cultural issues addressed have included the ordination of women, human sexuality, marriage and family, sanctity of human life, and women in military combat. Published stances by the REC on these matters include resolutions on Christian Sexual Ethics (1990), Sanctity of Human Life (1990), Women in Combat (2017), and Conscription of Women (2021).

Interestingly, it was in developing the REC resolution against the Conscription of Women that the main impetus for this guide emerged. The committee appointed by the Presiding Bishop to develop that resolution noted that the movement for conscripting women in the US military reflected a deep lack of understanding among the population of the Scriptural roles of godly men and women in both the church and the world around them. Accordingly, the committee recommended to the REC Bishops that better teaching be developed by the REC on this topic for use in the churches. The Presiding Bishop appointed a Committee on Godly Men and Women, and tasked it to develop such teaching materials. Having first met in January of 2022, this guide is the product of that committee.

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CHAPTER I - Pre-Assumptions

The Rev. Dr. Charles Erlandson

Introduction

While it might seem as if a discussion of a biblical view manhood and womanhood would be a straightforward affair, it's now clear that what Christians believe about anthropology, the theology of who man is, has become a contentious issue in a way it was not in previous ages. For this reason, to embark on a presentation of the biblical view of man, including manhood and womanhood, it's first necessary to clearly articulate the presuppositions of the authors of this book.

This first chapter in the book will, therefore, define the presuppositions of the Reformed Episcopal Church, presuppositions that are also held by a large number of other Christians. The presuppositions that this chapter will present are four:

1. The Authority of Scripture
2. Biblical Hermeneutics
3. The Authority of the Church
4. Biblical Anthropology

The Authority of Scripture

Anglican beliefs all have their origin in God's revelation of Himself to His people in the Bible. After all, Anglicanism is not a different religion from Christianity but is simply a particular way of being Christian. Despite the fact that everything in church and culture today is "contested," there is, indeed, an Anglican view of Holy Scripture, even if a significant minority of Anglicans today reject this view.

To begin with, Anglicans have always believed that the Bible is the inspired, infallible Word of God. This was the assumption of virtually every Christian who ever lived, until the late nineteenth century. Anglicans speak of *inspiration*, the idea that God divinely "breathed out" the words of the Bible, which has its origin from God. We also hold to *infallibility*, or the belief that the inspired books of the Bible faithfully communicate God's truth to us without fail. *Inerrancy* is a more recent term which means that the Bible is without error: sometimes inerrancy refers to the original autographs or manuscripts which are believed to be without error, even on a small scale.

While all Anglicans should affirm the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible, we are not required to adhere to some theory about the original manuscripts. Neither should we be afraid to acknowledge that the various manuscripts we have for the biblical text differ in small ways that

do not affect points of theology. Virtually no one was overly concerned about minor textual variants until the modern age.

This book begins, first of all, with the assumption that the Bible is the inspired, inerrant, authoritative Word of God. Most of the problems the Church is experiencing today in terms of how Christians think about biblical anthropology is, at root, a disagreement about the nature and authority of the Bible, as well as how to interpret the Bible. For this reason, we must all acknowledge and clearly express our presuppositions up front.

Because of the dominance of liberal Anglicanism in The Episcopal Church, sometimes people think that Anglicans or Episcopalians don't read their Bibles – and guess what? They're right! Too often this has been true. But Anglicans love, or should love, their Bibles. A high view of the Bible is the authentic Anglican view, even though some liberal Anglicans no longer believe this, and is affirmed by several Anglican formularies or standards.

Article VI of the 39 Articles, an Anglican standard of belief or “formulary,” reads: “Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.”

Contained within this statement is the belief, first, that Holy Scripture contains everything necessary to salvation: if it's not contained in Scripture or can't be proved by Scripture, it's not *necessary* to salvation. Second is the statement that if it can't be proved from Scripture, then it's not a required belief. Third is the implied belief that if a doctrine or practice is contained in Holy Scripture or may be proved from Scripture and is necessary to salvation, then this doctrine or practice must be believed.

This high view of Holy Scripture as the inspired and authoritative Word of God was the unbroken belief of the catholic church until the nineteenth century, with the exception of occasional heretical teachers. The rejection of the Scriptures as the binding Word of God is at the root of the formation of both GAFCON and the ACNA as faithful responses to the heretical beliefs and immoral actions of The Episcopal Church and other churches. GAFCON is the Global Anglican Future Conference composed of conservative Anglicans worldwide. The ACNA is the Anglican Church in North America, a fellowship of orthodox Anglican churches and groups in North America outside of the mainline Anglican bodies.

GAFCON's “Jerusalem Declaration” states: “We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God written and to contain all things necessary for salvation. The Bible is to be translated, read, preached, taught and obeyed in its plain and canonical sense, respectful of the church's historic and consensual reading.” Likewise, the ACNA's “Theological Statement” reads: “We confess the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired Word of God, containing all things necessary for salvation, and to be the final authority and unchangeable standard for Christian faith and life.”¹

¹ Sentence 1.

Anglicans have, until recently, loved their Bibles! Even before the English Reformation took place, some Anglicans thought it was important to translate it into English. John Wyclif published an English Bible in the 1380s, and William Tyndale published his in 1526. Although Henry VIII resisted the English Reformation in many ways, he commissioned an English Bible, the Great Bible, which was published in 1539. Several other important editions of the Bible in English appeared, most notably the Geneva Bible in 1560.²

Most famously, the beloved King James Version of the Bible (the Authorized Version) was first published in 1611 and was the primary Bible in the English language until the 1970s and the proliferation of other translations. The King James Bible has had a greater influence on modern English than any other book.

Biblical Hermeneutics

In previous decades, simple assumptions were often made about the ease with which the Bible could be interpreted. In the contemporary context, however, it is clear that it is not only the nature and authority of Scripture that must be considered but also the hermeneutics by which Scripture is interpreted. A majority of Christians believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God and is uniquely authoritative. Why, then, are there so many different Christian denominations and interpretations of many parts of the Bible, and why do some Anglicans disagree about issues such as homosexuality and the roles of men and women?

The answer lies in the hermeneutics we employ. *Hermeneutics* is the science and art of interpreting the Bible. What we believe about hermeneutics will largely govern what we think the Bible says. Since so many Christians believe in the inspired and authoritative nature of Scripture, the more pressing question for orthodox Christians of all traditions is the question: “Who are the authoritative interpreters of Scripture?”

It’s not just a question of what hermeneutic tools we employ, as important as these are, but also the question of who we consider to be the most authoritative and trustworthy interpreters of Scripture. Different Christians give different answers to these questions. Roman Catholics believe that the Roman Catholic magisterium is the infallible and authoritative interpreter of Scripture while others will cite their church tradition’s normative confessions, such as The Westminster Confession of Faith for Presbyterians. For academics, the most trustworthy and authoritative interpreters are likely to be certain modern and contemporary theologians and Bible scholars, and for many, the most authoritative, if only implied, authority is the autonomous individual Christian.

Even a heretical Christian group such as the Jehovah’s Witness has essentially the same Bible we have (with the notable exception of John 1:1). Our differences with Jehovah’s Witnesses and with other Christians stem from our different methods of interpretation, which in turn proceed from who we believe to be the authoritative interpreters of Scripture.

² The Geneva Bible is also, more humorously, called “The Breeches Bible,” because of its translation of Genesis 3:9.

Anglican Biblical Interpretation

It's perilous to articulate an "Anglican" view of anything: everything in church and culture today is "contested." Despite this possible objection, we are assuming that there is, indeed, an Anglican view of Holy Scripture, even if a significant minority of Anglicans today reject this view. In terms of Anglican biblical interpretation, it's helpful to think in terms of two primary sources of interpretation: the patristic consensus and the English Reformation.³

The first, and more fundamental and Catholic, focus of Anglican biblical interpretation is the patristic consensus, or what the early Church universally believed and practiced. This patristic consensus is summarized in the Vincentian Canon: "Now in the Catholic Church itself we take the greatest care to hold that which has been believed everywhere, always and by all."⁴ While this is an ideal that is not always easy to approximate, it is still the noble and laudable goal of all Catholic Christianity. The patristic focus of interpretation, therefore, includes the following: the three Creeds, the first four (some would say seven) Ecumenical Councils, the writings of the Church Fathers, other early Church writings, and the ancient liturgies.

The second Anglican focus of interpretation is our own Anglican tradition, especially the formularies of the English Reformation: The Book of Common Prayer, the Thirty-nine Articles, and the Ordinal. The Prayer Book, in particular, is our Anglican connection with the patristic, Catholic church, in terms of the three-fold office, the Creeds, the Church year, the lectionary, the sacraments, the liturgy, and the theology incarnated into her liturgies and services. It's also important to remember that the English Reformers made frequent appeals to the Church Fathers and the ancient church, and an emphasis on the patristic consensus is an important part of Anglicanism.

In summary, we need both "eyes" of the Anglican biblical vision: the foci of the English Reformation and the patristic consensus, which together create a focused and three-dimensional biblical interpretation.

A Hermeneutic Lens

We can also formulate a hermeneutic lens by which we can gauge various matters of belief and practice, including such contentious issues as the presence of Christ in the Eucharist, the practice of infant baptism, and, in this book, the role of men and women.

As Reformed Catholics, Anglicans should read the Bible with the whole ("Catholic") Church as our best interpreter. Since this may seem like an overwhelming undifferentiated mass of sources, we need an additional lens for helping us prioritize biblical interpreters. In evaluating

³ These are our primary authoritative interpreters of Scripture, but this is not to say they are the only sources of interpretation. As we'll discuss in a moment, the Church must have a living teaching authority, which resides in her bishops and the synods gathered around bishops.

⁴ *Commonitorium*, Chapter 4.

ancient manuscripts, we desire the most ancient, the most numerous, and the most widely distributed manuscripts. By this standard, the New Testament is the gold standard since we have an unparalleled number of early manuscripts for the New Testament texts.

Reading with the entire Church implies that to the degree that a doctrine or practice is ancient, universal, and continuous, it is likely to be the most authentic biblical doctrine or practice. Such a consensus is possible to approximate on a fair number of doctrines and practices, while less possible for others.

Special attention should be given to the beliefs and practices of the unbroken Church, before the East-West schism of 1054 and the Protestant Reformation in the Western Church. The most important testimony of all is the earliest and most widespread testimony of the patristic era. For this reason, when interpreting Scripture, we should first look at the patristic consensus we have described above.

One of the assumptions of a Reformed Catholicism, such as Anglicanism, is that an unusually large consensus of the Church has already decided the issue of the roles of men and women. In spite of the many things Christians have disagreed about over the centuries – the nature of the Church and its sacraments, the nature of Christ’s presence in the Eucharist, infant baptism, the authority of the bishop of Rome, the *filioque*, the place of Mary in the life of the Church, the nature of the atonement, and many other things – the Church has manifested an unusually large consensus over time and space concerning the issue of the relationship of men and women.

We can take this even a step further. One of the chief arguments against keeping an ancient teaching or practice of the Church is that it is not clearly stated in proof-texts taken from the New Testament. But such a hermeneutic tends to divide the Old and New Testaments and potentially dismisses two-thirds of the biblical evidence, and it betrays a modern way of reading the Bible that is neither organic nor holistic. A better way of reading what appears to be an argument from silence in the New Testament is to follow the progression of belief and practice in this way:

1. What did God say in the Old Testament?
2. What did God say in the New Testament?
3. What were the relevant beliefs and practices of the early Church in the first several centuries?
4. What did the English Reformers teach and practice (especially in the official formularies)?
5. When did Christians first reject the beliefs and practices of the early Church?

When seen in light of this hermeneutic, as we shall see in the remainder of this book, the traditional, complementarian understanding of men and women is the authentic Christian and biblical one.

The Teaching Authority of the Church

One of the most significant sources of misinterpretations of the Scriptures is the belief that the Bible can be read in isolation from the Church. While each individual Christian has the right, and even obligation, to read the Bible, no individual has the authority to make authoritative interpretations of the Bible apart from the Church when it comes to matters of theology and practice that affect all (2 Peter 1:20).

A better way of understanding what the Bible itself teaches about reading and interpreting the Bible is that the Word of God (the Bible) and the people of God (the Church) always go together and must not be separated. If we think for a moment about the way we got the Bible, this will become clear. First, the Bible was written by the people of God for the people of God. This is most obvious in the Old Testament but even in the New Testament it should be quite clear. The majority of the books of the New Testament are letters written to churches or church leaders. Likewise, the book of Acts is all about how the Holy Spirit worked in the early Church, and the book of Revelation is written to seven first-century churches.

The books of the Bible were also faithfully transmitted, or passed down, by the Church from generation to generation. The Church confirmed the canon of the Bible, that is, the determination of which books are truly the inspired Word of God. Until the late twentieth century, the Bible was also translated by the Church.

If you asked most Christians what the Bible says is the “pillar and ground of truth” they will say either “Jesus” or the Bible. But St. Paul’s inspired words are actually: “I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15). The *Church* is the pillar and ground of truth, not individual Christians.

Once again, we must recognize that although the Bible is uniquely the inspired Word of God, the real issue is often “Who are its authoritative interpreters?” The Anglican answer, along with the Bible itself and Christians for 2000 years is “the Church.” Since Anglicanism is a Catholic Christian tradition, endeavoring to hold to the authentic Christian teaching and practice that has been from the beginning, Anglicans are willing to look at the entire record and history of the Church’s interpretation of Scripture. Where this tradition of interpretation manifests a great deal of unanimity across time and space, and to the degree it was present from the beginning, it is more likely to be the genuine Christian tradition.

Article 20 of the 39 Articles places the authority of the Church in the context of the authority of the Scriptures:

The Church has power to decree rites or ceremonies and authority in controversies of faith; and yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything contrary to God’s word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another. Wherefore, although the Church is a witness and a keeper of Holy Scripture: yet, as it ought not to decree anything against the same, so besides the same ought it not to enforce anything to be believed for necessity of salvation.

The Church can decree rites and ceremonies and has the authority to decide theological issues, as long as whatever it decrees or rules is not contrary to Scripture. Also, the Church must look at the entire Scriptures, and not pit, for example, the Old Testament versus the New.

This living teaching authority of the Church inheres in the entire Church, but especially in the authoritative teachers within the living and local Church: the bishops and presbyters who have been ordained for just such a purpose. Bishops are the chief teachers in the Church, but they do so in conjunction with the presbyters and synods gathered around them in their diocese.

In their consecration vows, bishops must be “persuaded that the Holy Scriptures contain all Doctrine required as necessary for eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.” They vow to be “determined out of the same Holy Scriptures to instruct the people committed to your charge; and to teach or maintain nothing, as necessary to eternal salvation, but that which you shall be persuaded may be concluded and proved by the same.” They vow to “faithfully exercise yourself in the Holy Scriptures, and call upon God by prayer for the true understanding of the same; so that you may be able by them to teach and exhort with wholesome Doctrine, and to withstand and convince the gainsayers.” And they vow “to banish and drive away from the Church all erroneous and strange doctrine contrary to God's Word.” Priests and deacons take similar vows.

In this way, the hermeneutic norms we've been discussing, the patristic consensus and the English Reformation, are applied in a living and local way for Anglicans today.

Biblical Anthropology

Now that we understand what the Anglican view of the Bible is and who its most authoritative interpreters are, and we have an Anglican method of interpretation, it's time to define the particular theological issue that is at the heart of this book: anthropology. Anthropology is the study of man, and the Bible has a clear theology of anthropology. While it might seem as if anthropology, and, therefore, a study of biblical manhood and womanhood, is not among the most important issues of the day, this is not true. Instead, anthropology is ground zero in the spiritual battle today.

In the early Church, the primary battle the Church had to confront was the question: “Who is God?” This question had two essential aspects: Christology and Trinitarianism. In the Reformation, the spiritual battle shifted to the question of: “How does God relate to man?” This involved a host of related questions, such as the questions of authority, soteriology, ecclesiology, and the sacraments.

But today the battleground has shifted to anthropology, or the question: “Who is man?” Is man who God says he is or who man says he is? Does existence precede essence, as existentialists say? Does reality, including man, have any fixed inherent meaning?

So devastating is the spiritual battle over anthropology that there is not a Christian tradition that isn't experiencing devastating battles within it regarding anthropology: Roman Catholics, Orthodox churches, Anglicans, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, non-denominational churches, and all others. And there are very few families, if any, not impacted by these anthropological issues.

A list of issues related to anthropology includes abortion, divorce, homosexuality, same-sex attraction, transgenderism, pornography, marriage, romance, dating, feminism, child abuse, sex-trafficking, critical theory, philosophy, theology, entertainment, politics, education, women's ordination, and the proper relationship of men and women in the Church and in the home.

While issues such as abortion, divorce, homosexuality, transgenderism, and male-female relationships may not seem to be directly related, they are. Attitudes towards each of these issues are based on deeply held assumptions about the meaning of what it means to be human and the meaning of the male-female relationship, as well as our assumptions about whether or not certain things are inherent part of God's created order. That the Church has especially struggled with these issues in the same historical era is no coincidence but is due to a shift in our understanding of what God has said about these issues.

Facilitating these changes in the Church and in the interpretation of the Scriptures is the functional, egalitarian belief that God did not ordain a specific male-female relationship as an integral part of His creation but that traditional male-female roles are merely cultural, and, therefore, temporary. This, however, as we will explore in this book, is not the biblical view of anthropology.

At the heart of understanding anthropology of the Bible is the theological truth that when God created the world, He ordered it with an inherent, God-given meaning which man must be faithful in receiving. When God created the world and filled it, He didn't simply create a collection of unrelated creatures that self-organized in random ways. Instead, He created His world with an inherent order that reflected His own nature and design. The entire world is, therefore, a sacramental revelation of God, but most especially man, who is uniquely made in the image of God.

When God created man, He created him in His image. As we will see in our discussion of the relation of men to women in the Old Testament, from the beginning, God made man the head of the woman. This male headship was then also ordained by God in the life of His people Israel, so that throughout the Old Testament men are both the heads in God's house and also in the households of men.

Contrary to the arguments of egalitarians, who usually argue that male headship is a consequence of the Fall, God ordained that Adam was the head of Eve before the Fall. God continued to ordain this male headship in the Old Covenant when He made the patriarchs the heads His covenant family, instituted father-son male genealogies, and ordained only male priests. The male headship which God ordained from the beginning and which He commanded to be a part of His holy people was received by the early Church, having been clearly ordained

again by God in the New Testament. Furthermore, this male headship was accepted by the early Church and all Christians until the late twentieth-century.

Therefore, to claim that God has not ordered things this way and to assert that male headship is culturally determined and a result of the Fall is not only an inaccurate reading of Scripture but also a *disordering* of what God has so clearly ordered. If, in fact, male headship is God-ordered then we should expect that when this order is received and lived out, mankind will be blessed. Sadly, the Fall of man in Genesis 3 has disordered and distorted the image of God in man, especially in male-female relationships. But we should not let this obscure God's original and continuing design.

We should also highlight the fact that if male headship in human households and the house of God is God-ordained, then not only is it not a sinful way of being human: it is, instead, the one, true way of being human. Furthermore, this means that for women to have a subordinate and inferior role to men in families and in the Church does *not* mean that they are morally or essentially inferior to men.

This is a crucial point for egalitarians, especially, to understand. Male and female together constitute the image of God, and if God has ordained that they do this precisely by being *different* in both nature and roles, then to disorder this God-given image is to obscure God's revelation of Himself to mankind. Egalitarians usually argue that men and women are interchangeable in their roles. It is in the *difference* between men and women that love is most powerfully manifested, the marital love of which St. Paul speaks in Ephesians 5:22-33 and which is sacramentally and typologically connected to Christ and the Church.

Wives manifest their love for their husbands when they submit to them and are subject to them, and husbands manifest their love for their wives when they serve them and love them as they do themselves. More than this, when the wife submits to her husband in love, she manifests the love of the Church for her Husband, Christ. And when the husband serves his wife, he reveals the love of Christ.

So then, both husbands and wives are of equal value to God and equally a part of the image of God, but the way they image God and His love is from within their different God-given roles in which the husband is the head of the wife. While the wife is "under" submission to her husband in terms of earthly roles and hierarchy, she is in no way inferior to her husband in her essence, her being, or her worth.

This God-given male headship extends from human households to God's house. We must insist that inferiority in God-given role in no way implies an ontological inferiority in essence or worth. If we accepted this kind of theological thinking, represented by egalitarian proponents of women's ordination, then we must also accept a theology that says that because parents are superior to their children in their God-given roles then they must also be superior in their essence and worth before God and men. But few believe this. Likewise, we would be forced to accept that the governing authorities whom we are commanded to obey are not only superior to their citizenry in authority and position but are also ontologically superior and of greater worth. Finally, such a theology would severely distort the Body of Christ, for it would mean that

because the ordained clergy are heads of churches and “superior” to the laity that they must also be of greater worth and essence than the laity. If such a conclusion is found objectionable, as it should be, then the proper response would not be to abolish all notions of headship, authority, and hierarchy in the Church but to understand both the headship of clergy and also the equal value of the laity.

To believe that men and women have no God-ordained inherent relationship is to lay the serious charge before the universal Church for 2000 years that it has utterly failed in her task to love her Husband Christ and obey His will that men and women stand in an egalitarian relationship to one another.

To believe that the Church has been wrong on this issue for 2000 years is to believe, as Mascall says, that “the Christian Church throughout its existence has had a grossly inadequate understanding of the effects of Christ’s redemptive work; it has entirely failed to see one of the most important consequences of the restoration of the human race by Christ.”⁵

We can summarize the presuppositions of this work in the following 4 statements:

1. The Bible is the inspired, infallible Word of God that is authoritative in the lives of Christians.
2. The Bible always has its authoritative interpreters, which for Anglicans is the Catholic teaching and practice of the entire Church as embodied especially in the patristic consensus and English Reformation.
3. The Bible and the Church must always go together, and the Church has a living teaching authority.
4. The authentic biblical anthropology, universally held by the Church until the late twentieth century is the complementarian view that together men and women are the image of God in their God-given roles of male headship and female submission.

Now that our presuppositions have been clearly presented, we can proceed to a biblical and theological discussion of God’s divinely ordained ordering of the relationship between men and women.

⁵ *Why Not?*, 116.

CHAPTER II - Trinitarian Order

The Ven. W. Scott Thompson

Introduction

The logical and obvious starting point in studying biblical manhood and womanhood seems to lie in the creation of humans. What does the creation account in Scripture tell us of the reason, method and purpose surrounding the creation of man and woman? Indeed, that is the topic of a separate chapter of this course. Regardless of where we find ourselves today in male/female purposes and relationships, we need to know the intent of the creator. His unchanging decrees for mankind as revealed in Holy Scripture must be the authoritative touchstone from which we proceed.

But are there yet even more primal headwaters in which to set our theological anchor in these matters? If we are to acknowledge God as the creator of mankind, which He most certainly claims to be, and are to ground the development of our roles and responsibilities in the very purposes for which He created us, we should first consider knowledge of Him more deeply. Knowing God Himself can illuminate His work in creation and inform our understanding of it, particularly the creation of man and woman.

Background

The creation account tells us that humans, men and women, are created in the image of God. This should immediately beg the question: What is God like, and how are we the image of any of that? It is, of course, far beyond the scope of this course to be exhaustive in the knowledge of God. We actually know less of God than many of us like to admit. That is because so much of God is unknowable to us. God tells us that as the heavens are higher than the earth, so His ways are higher than our ways, and His thoughts higher than our thoughts (Isa 55:9).¹ St. Paul, speaking of God's omnipotence in salvation, asks "oh man, who are you to reply against God" (Rom 9:20).

We group revelation of God into two general categories—*natural* revelation and *special* revelation. Natural revelation teaches us about God through His creation. St. Paul tells us in Rom 1:18-20 that no human can claim ignorance of God because the evidence of God is seen in what He has created. Scripture expects us to observe the cosmos and see God's handiwork in it, knowing that the cosmos we observe demands a creator, and that that creator must be one of unimaginable power and wisdom. The magnificence of the cosmos reflects the magnificence of its creator.

¹ All biblical quotations in this document are from the *New King James Version (NKJV)* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1982).

But if we had only natural revelation as a source, we would have little knowledge of God Himself. Just as a painting can tell us something of the painter, it is only through study of the painter himself (especially what he says of his own work) that we gain a more complete understanding of the person behind the work. But God has seen fit to give us Holy Scripture, through which He reveals Himself to humanity in the written word, directly inspired by Himself. This revelation of God in Holy Scripture we call special revelation.

Since we humans are persons, that dimension of God's revelation of Himself as a person is most germane. God not only reveals Himself as a person, but as three persons, yet one God. That God is one God, and that he is the only God, is revealed throughout Scripture, but perhaps most forcefully expounded in what is called the Shema (Hebrew: *Hear*). "Hear, O Israel; the LORD our God, the LORD is one" (Deut 6:4). And yet Scripture reveals that within this one Godhead there are three Persons—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, or Holy Ghost. It is in the revelation of God as three persons that we will find some important attributes of God pertaining to Godly manhood and womanhood.

Trinitarian Overview

The term "Holy Trinity" is not found in Scripture. The revelation of the three persons of the Holy Trinity is surely found there, but the term is not. Rather, the term Holy Trinity is a construct largely of the discipline of Systematic Theology. Without giving us a name for it, God reveals Himself throughout Holy Scripture in the context of three persons.

In the Old Testament (OT) we find references to the persons of the Trinity in prophecies and story accounts which are less clear than the light of the New Testament (NT). We read that "the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters" in the creation account of Gen 1. We read in that same account the plural reference "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness" (Gen 1:26). There are such passages as the Servant Songs of Isaiah where we find all three persons.

Behold My Servant Whom I uphold,
My Elect One *in whom* My soul delights!
I have put My Spirit upon Him;
He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles, (Isa 42:1).

In this passage we hear the first person of the Trinity speaking direct verbal prophecy through Isaiah regarding the second person of the Trinity, His Servant, the Messiah (Hebrew: *anointed one*). And upon this Messiah God will put the third person of the Trinity, His Spirit.

When we come to the NT the trinitarian references crystalize. None other than Jesus Himself refers to "God the Father" (Jn 6:27). Jesus is accused of blasphemy because by this proclamation He was saying that He was God (Jn 10:36). St. Paul repeatedly speaks of "God the Father" (Gal 1:1, 3), and more specifically that God the Father is the "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Cor 1:3, 11:31).

Perhaps the clearest NT confirmation of Jesus as the Son of God comes at His baptism, where God speaks from heaven “this is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Mt 3:17. see also Lk 3:22, Mk 1:11, and Jn 1:32-34). The same testimony by God the Father comes at the transfiguration of Jesus (Mt 17:5, Mk 9:7, Lk 9:35, see also 2 Peter 1:17). Further, God’s testimony to His Son is an unmistakable establishment of God as the Father of the Son.

The Holy Spirit, in all the accounts of the baptism of Christ, including the record of John the Baptist (Jn 1:32-34), is visibly seen in bodily form as a dove coming down upon Jesus. So the Baptism of Jesus is one of the clearest trinitarian events in all of Holy Scripture. Further, the discourses of Jesus to the disciples in the upper room relate the coming of the Spirit upon them after the departure of Jesus. In Jn 14:15-18 Jesus promises the coming of “another Helper (comforter, advocate, Gr. *Paracletos*),” the “Spirit of truth,” Who will be with them forever. The coming and work of the Spirit is further expounded by Jesus in Jn 16:5-15. The Spirit will guide them and tell them of things to come, and He will glorify Jesus.

In both testaments we have descriptions of the persons of the Trinity in terms of things that only persons do. God the Father *creates* (Gen 1-2) and *elects* (Mal 1:2-3, Eph 1:4) and *sends* His Son (Jn 3:16). God the Son *speaks* as the Word (Gr. *Logos*, Jn 1:1-3). St. John takes us behind the scenes of the Genesis account, and we find that the Father’s words of Ex Nihilo creation are spoken through His Son, who is the Word (*logos*) personified, and who is to be *listened to* (Mt 17:5). Jesus demonstrated righteous *anger* in the cleansing of the temple (Mt 21:12-13, Mk 11:15-17, K 19:45-46), and Jesus *wept* (Jn 11:35). As we have already seen, the Holy Spirit *guides* the Apostles, he is *sent* by the Father (Jn 14-16) and by the Son (Jn 16:7). The Holy Spirit has *wisdom* and *knowledge* (Isa 11:2). The Holy Spirit can be *quenched* (1 Thess 5:19) and *grieved* (Eph 4:30). All these things are attributes of persons.

Trinitarian Order

Having established that the Holy Trinity is three persons, there comes the question of how these persons relate to each other, and this question is the heart of our quest to see how the image of God in humans is an image of the Holy Trinity.

Equality Within the Trinity

The Holy Scripture reveals that God is eternal, with no beginning or end, and unconstrained by time and temporal matters. From the Apostles until the present time, orthodox Christian Churches have held this doctrine. The great “I AM” assertion of Ex 3:14 implies an ultimate existence, without beginning or end, and without causality. Likewise, we are to believe that the three persons of this Trinitarian God are co-eternal, co-immutable (unchangeable) and full partakers of all the attributes of God. All three of our Anglican creeds (Apostles’, Nicene, and Athanasian creeds, and especially the Athanasian Creed) attest to this.

It is worth at least the briefest foray into early church history to appreciate the origin and laborious birth of this creedal theology. Just as it is clear from the NT Epistles that the Apostles faced early heresy in several forms, so the early church after the Apostles continued the spiritual

battle. Most of these battles were Christological in substance. Wrestling with the truth that God has come among us as man, and as both fully God and fully man, spawned heresies too numerous to treat herein. One of the earliest ones, and one that was a very substantial impetus to our Nicene Creed, is Arianism.

Arius was a presbyter in Alexandria under Bishop Alexander. A dispute between Bishop Alexander and Arius broke out in 318 A.D. Arius claimed there to be a real difference in essence between the Father and the Son. He spoke of the Son as a created being, and stated that “there was a time when he was not.” Arius’ wrote and circulated his views in publication titled “The Banquet.”

The Council of Alexandria convened in 321 A.D. and excommunicated Arius, but his strong following continued and schism approached in North Africa. In 325 A.D., the Roman Emperor Constantine convened the Council of Nicaea with some 300 Bishops, predominately from the Eastern Church. Significantly, the creed approved by the Council of Nicaea employed the Greek term *Homoousios* (same substance) and specifically rejected the term *Homoiousios* (similar substance) in defining the relationship between the father and Son. Despite the results of the councils, Arianism raged on up to the Council of Constantinople in 381A.D. There were other controversies with other heretics addressed by other councils, and it was at the Council of Chalcedon in 451A.D. where the finishing touches on our Nicene Creed were finalized.

So we follow the Scripture, the Apostles, and the early Church in affirming that each person of the Trinity is fully and truly God. Each is fully eternal, immutable, and shares equally in the divine substance. E. Harold Brown, a nineteenth century Anglican theologian, states it well in terms of the deity of the Son: “It is hardly necessary to observe that the orthodox fathers held that the Son was begotten of the Father from all eternity, so before all time deriving His Divine Essence from His Father... This eternal generation they held to be a proof that He was of one substance and eternity with the Father”²

Subordination Within the Trinity

Now we come to the heart of the matter of the Holy Trinity as touches the image of God in man. The question before us is this. Given the established equality of each of the three persons of the Holy Trinity, can it be determined that there is any degree of subordination among the three? If there is, then the Holy Trinity gives us an instructive example of subordination or submission among equals. If there isn’t, then the Holy Trinity portrays an egalitarian example of relationships in which there can be no subordination. Both of these possibilities bear on humanity in the image of God. If God’s Trinitarian relationships include subordination among equals, then should not the relationships of those in his image reflect that likeness? And if not, then an egalitarian relationship is presented to us as the ideal.

The term “subordination,” with respect to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, is somewhat of a theological hot potato. Some theologians strongly insist that there can be no subordination of

² Edward Harold Brown, D.D., *An Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion* (New York: H.B. Durand, 1865; reprint, Classical Anglican Press, n.p., 1998), 67.

any kind within the Trinity without collapsing the Scriptural doctrines of equality among the persons of the Trinity. Craig A. Carter opines from this position. “The point of saying that the Father and the Son are one (*homo*) in being or substance (*ousia*) is to protect divine simplicity and unity and to rule out all forms of subordinationism.”³ Those embracing the anti-subordination argument are anxious to protect the unity and equality of the Trinity, as Carter has done, and this can be respected since we Anglicans clearly subscribe to the Nicene *homoousios* doctrine. However, a staunch anti-subordination stance seems to close the door to any attempt to conceive of subordination among equals.

It is important to tenets of godly manhood and womanhood that the Christian feminist movement has long used the egalitarian (anti-subordination) view in support of their arguments for women’s ordination and other initiatives in the church and the world. The idea that there is no subordination among the persons of the Trinity leads to an insistence on equality of men and women in all aspects of life. Similarly, this sort of rationale feeds some aspects of gender issues and “rights” obsessed civil libertarianism. While we can respect the zeal of the anti-subordination stance to protect Trinitarian unity, we cannot agree to the doctrine. The fact is, it simply isn’t true.

“Order” Within the Trinity

One of the reasons that “subordination” is the theological hot potato mentioned earlier is the modern definition. Most modern dictionary definitions of subordination include some language to the effect of placing someone or something in a lower or inferior class or position. That connotation does not apply either to the persons of the Trinity or to the humans who are made in God’s image. Rather, the sense of subordination among the Trinity is more one of humility, respect, and a voluntary assumption of role to carry out that will of God that is united among the three. We find, for example, that Jesus “made Himself of no reputation, taking on the form of a bondservant, ...He *humbled* Himself and became *obedient* to the point of death” (Phil 2:7-8).

One of the signal passages in Scripture that has to do with subordination among humans (men and women, parents and children, slaves and masters, etc.) is found in Ephesians, chapters 5 and 6 (see also Col 3:18-4:1; 1 Pet 2:13-3:7). When we look at St. Paul’s instructions for relationships among these groups, we do not find the term “subordination”. What we read with regard to husbands and wives is to *submit*, be *subject to*, *love* (your wives), show *respect*. Children are to *obey* and *honor*, and parents are not to provoke. Slaves are to *obey* in Christlikeness, and masters are warned that there is *no partiality* with God. This is the sort of language that can be applied to the relations of the persons within the Holy Trinity, as Paul does in describing the incarnate Christ in Philippians above. I am not suggesting semantics games here, but perhaps the term *subordination* can be set aside, and Scriptural terms put in its place.

A term largely used in these discussions today is *order*. That is to say, the persons of the Trinity stand in some order to one another. Turning again to Browne’s treatment of the early

³ Craig A. Carter, *The Decline of Nicene Orthodoxy* (First Things, Jan 2022 - Number 319, Institute on Religion and Public Life, New York, NY), 30

church fathers on this, we read: "...the relation of the Father to the Son they held to constitute a priority of *order*, though not of *nature* or *power*. They held, that is, not that the Son was, in His nature as God, in any degree different from, or inferior to the Father; but that, as the Father alone was the source and fountain of Deity, the Son having been begotten, and the Spirit proceeding, so there was a subordination, without diversity, of the Son to the Father, and of the Spirit to the Father and the Son."⁴

The Father stands as Father to the Son, and the Son as Son to the Father. This is an order of being begotten of the Father. The Father is God, and the Son is God, but the Father is not the Son, nor is the Son the Father. The Son stands in order as the begotten of the Father. The Spirit stands in the order of processing (or spirating) from the Father and the Son.

Order and Equality Together Within the Trinity

The problem at the root of denying order (or subordination) is the problem of confusing it with inferiority. How can two equals submit one to the other? Browne faced this question in the 1800s. "It may be difficult to conceive of priority of order, without being led to believe in superiority of nature."⁵ In his day this difficulty caused as much turmoil within the church as it perhaps does today, for he writes that some high Anglicans, "unable to distinguish between priority of order and superiority of nature, were led to the assertion of the heretical doctrine of the inferiority of the nature of the Son."⁶

But forms of order, obedience, and submission among equals are quite common. We see this in the workplace, for one example. The boss, or perhaps the owner of the business where we may work, may issue instructions which we as employees must obey. Failure to follow such directions could result in termination of employment. But my obedience does not demean me in relation to the boss. As a person, and as a human being, I stand equal to him in value before God. My life is just as precious before God as his. St. Paul is clear that there is no partiality with God (Rom 2:11, Eph 6:9, Col 3:25. See also 1 Peter 1:17). The same analogy could be drawn of military personnel in various hierarchical ranks. The Admiral and the Seaman stand before God without partiality. In this temporal world one must obey the other, but the obedience of the Seaman cannot demean him. He may be inferior in temporal rank, but not in eternal human worth. Of course, these are temporal human examples, so where do we see the Trinitarian precursors of submission or order among equals?

A primary example of such order in Holy Scripture lies in the distinct roles the persons of the Trinity fill in the *Ordo Salutis* or order of salvation.⁷ The Father elects (Eph 1:4), the Son redeems (Jn 3:16), and the Spirit enables sanctification (2 Thess 2:13, 1 Pet 1:2). This order becomes more obvious as we review the numerous instances of related works by each person of

⁴ Browne, 67. (Italics his)

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

⁷ The *ordo salutis* is a Latin term meaning the *way of salvation*, and refers to the sequential applications of grace by the Holy Spirit in the work of redemption. See Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 415-417.

the Trinity in Scripture. Further, this order is eternal. It is important to note this because the egalitarian argument readily admits to submission of the incarnate Christ to the Father, but denies that such submission occurs in eternity. Even Carter admits that “the incarnate person Jesus Christ is submissive to the Father in His human nature, as all orthodox Christians have said throughout history.”⁸ The egalitarian argument falls to the ground if there is eternal submission, and not just incarnate submission, among the Trinity.

God the Father is now, has always been, and will always be, a Father. He cannot have become a Father at some point in time because His Son is eternal, and so His Fatherhood is eternal. So, St. Paul can tell us that the elect were chosen by God to be in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4). Eternity is always something that is difficult to get our minds around, but God has known His people, both Jew and Gentile, from eternity to eternity. As a Father, He stands in a certain order with relation to His Son. The Son is begotten of the Father. The Father sends and gives the Son (Jn 3:16) to His people. The Father sends the Holy Spirit upon His Son. The Father gives the elect to His Son (Jn 17:2, 6). A Father is to be honored by a son. God the Father gives the fifth commandment as a Father who is honored by His Son. Perhaps it can be rightly said that God has not always been a creator, for He creates in time. But He has always been a Father, and has always been honored and glorified by His Son and the Spirit. In fact, there is mutual eternal glorification among the Trinity, as Jesus reveals in His high priestly prayer (Jn 17:5).

Jesus was, as John tells us in his prologue to His Gospel, “In the beginning.” (Jn 1:1). We find God the Son, the Word, with God and as God, and that all creation was through Him (Jn 1:1-3). St. Paul tells us that all things were created through Him and for Him (Col 1:16). Creation by the Father, through and for His Son, shows us that creation is a gift from the Father to the Son, as is the church which we saw earlier. We see the eternal order of the Father’s gift to His Son, and the Son who shall redeem that gift by reconciling it to the Father (2 Cor 5:20). The church itself, the Bride of Christ, is a gift of God the Father to the Son (Dan 7:13-14)

The examples of submission to and obedience of the Father by Jesus are numerous in Scripture. Jesus tells us that there are things (the day and hour of the Parousia, the second coming) that the Father knows and the Son does not (Mt 24:35, Mk 13:32). He submits to the will of the Father (Mt 12:50, 26:42, Lk 22:42). Jesus teaches us to pray that His Father’s will be done in the Lord’s Prayer (Mt 6:10). He is sent into the world by the Father (Jn 8:42, 17:18) and His work in the world was the work given to Him by the Father (Jn 17:4b). Jesus does “nothing of Himself,” but only what He sees the Father do (Jn 5:19). Jesus speaks as His Father taught Him (Jn 8:28, 38).

All the above examples are of the incarnate Christ, in which the egalitarians concede submission but deny it in eternity. But the ascension of Christ into heaven argues against the egalitarian stance that Jesus’ submission to the Father is only in His incarnate state and not eternally. Jesus did not return to some previous spiritual state in the ascension, but ascended bodily, as the Apostles and the Angels present testified. Jesus is in Heaven in His resurrected body, and remains the eternal God-Man. As such He serves as an Advocate of His people with the Father (1 Jn 2:1) and intercedes for them (Rom 8:34). That advocacy and intercession on the

⁸ Carter, 30

part of Jesus is to the Father on behalf of the elect the Father has given Him, so we see Jesus in the same order to the Father in eternity as we see in His earthly incarnation.

The Holy Spirit stands likewise in an order to the Father and Son. The Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son (Jn 15:26b), as we confirm in our creeds. The Spirit is *sent* (Jn 15:26a). One who is *sent* stands, by implication, in an order of compliance and obedience to the one who sends him. Further, the Spirit speaks not from His own authority, but of what He hears from the Father and Son (Jn 16:13). It is the Spirit who is to come upon Mary at the conception of Christ, but it is the power of the “Highest” (above all others; one who has the highest status) that will overshadow her (Lk 1:35). So we see there the order of a Trinitarian event. Just as the Spirit had hovered over the waters in creation as God spoke the cosmos into being (Gen 1) through the Son (Jn 1:1-3), so we see God the Son being conceived in the incarnation by the power of the Father through the work and presence of the Spirit.

Yet numerous as these examples are in Scripture, there is no erosion of equality or divine substance among any of the persons of the Trinity. How can there be both absolute equality and yet an order among the persons of the Trinity at the same time? This takes us back to our quote from Brown at the beginning of this section. It may be difficult for us to understand, but it is Scriptural truth that we are bound to accept. There is no inferiority among any of the persons of the Trinity with respect to any other person of the Trinity.

Conclusion

We conclude that the relationships of the three persons of the Trinity are such that they are equally Divine, equal in glory and majesty, coeternal and coessential (of the same essence). At the same time, there is an order among the persons of the Trinity, by which they effect election, atonement, and sanctification of the saints as the bride of Christ.

Why do we ground our study of Godly manhood and womanhood in the Trinity? Because in the relationships among the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit we are given the pattern for our own relationships as human beings who are created by that Trinitarian God. If we are to rightly project the image of God in which we are created, the Trinity schools us thoroughly in that image.

How can God, specifically God the Son, Lord of all creation, humble Himself as St. Paul tells us He does, and being equal with God, make Himself of no reputation, becoming a bondservant, to the point of death on the cross, and yet not consider it robbery of His Divine rights and circumstances (Phil 2:6-8)? Would any of us be able to cast royalty and its privileges aside and accept poverty and death without hesitancy? I doubt it.

But Jesus’ submission to His Father’s will, His zeal to do the work His Father had given Him to do, His joy at being sent by the Father, did not diminish His equality with God the Father one iota. In fact, Paul goes on to tell us that “therefore” (because of what Jesus has done in His humility) God has highly exalted Jesus and given Him the name above all names, and that all will bow and confess His lordship (Phil 2:9-11). And what does St. Paul admonish us, the people of Christ, to do with regard to the example of Jesus’ humbling Himself and becoming a

bondsman? He tells us to “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,” (Phil 2:5). We are to have the mind of Christ in us. The mind of one who, though equal with God, humbled Himself and came among us to teach us to do the same.

Jesus’ commandment is to love one another as He has loved us (Jn 15:12). The amazing extent of Jesus’ love for His people will be expounded in a subsequent chapter. For now we note that love involves humility and submission among equals. There is no partiality with God (Rom 2:11) and we all stand before Him as one in Christ Jesus (Gal 3:28). Yet love “suffers long, ...does not parade itself, is not puffed up, ...bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” (1 Cor 13:4, 7). The love amongst the Persons of the Trinity, especially that between the Father and the Son, teaches us how to love as Christ loved us.

By the power of the indwelling Spirit, may godly men and women have the mind of Christ in them, such that they are enabled to live out the Trinitarian order of the image of God in all dimensions of their human relationships.

Discussion Questions:

1. How is the temporal incarnate Christ obedient to the Father? What Scripture support this?
2. How is the incarnate Christ dependent upon the Holy Spirit? What Scriptures support this?
3. How can we be equal yet subordinate in hierarchical relationships (ex. employer/employee relations)?
4. How does order among the Persons of the Holy Trinity pertain to us in human relationships?
5. How do the Beatitudes (Mt 5:3-11) frame human relationships within a Trinitarian perspective?

CHAPTER III - Creation of Man and Woman

Dss. Canon Annette Johnson

Introduction

To understand the nature of man and woman and what is meant by Biblical manhood and womanhood, we must begin at the beginning. “*In the beginning, God . . .*”, the first four words of the Bible (Genesis 1:1), are key to all that follows.¹

As Christians, we must remember that we are a part of God’s Creation, not our own. God, being the Creator, has the prerogative to set his own rules for how his creation operates, and how his creatures are to function within it. And, God has the exclusive right to deal with his creatures as He sees fit when they disregard his rules. Pride, the source of mankind’s original sin, led to the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, because they disregarded God’s mandate in favor of their own desires.

Throughout Scripture and secular history, we see a clear pattern of the consequences that result from disregarding God’s natural law. The human proclivity has been to superimpose personal or cultural norms and morés over and above those established by God and with the haughty attitude that man knows best. We can see for ourselves the chaos and destruction caused by this attitude in modern culture today. However, in today’s culture, we are expected to accept that women know best, resulting in the extremes of promiscuity and androgynous relationships in society and the Church. Feminism in all of its various manifestations, including Feminine Theology, has only exacerbated the problems.

Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to study God’s intent in the creation of man and woman according to the narrative found in Genesis chapters 1-2. We will focus on the following:

1. The order of Creation
2. Creation of Man
3. Creation of Woman
4. In the Garden
5. Establishment of Authority

¹ All biblical quotations in this document are from the *Authorized King James Version (KJV)*, unless otherwise noted.

Order of Creation (Genesis 1-2:3)

Since our focus for this chapter is to explore the creation of man and woman, our discussion of the order of creation will be brief. Our purpose is not to compare it to scientific theories of evolution and the like, but to view it in relation to mankind's creation.

First, we must address the opening sentence of Scripture, "*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*" (Genesis 1:1). This is not merely an introductory sentence for all that follows. It is a declaration that the heavens and the earth were not in existence for all eternity, nor were they formed out of some primordial, pre-existing soup. They came into being by the power of God's word alone. The Hebrew words used in this sentence are absolute and set the primary foundation upon which the subsequent acts of creation rest. (Keil & Delitzsch)²

Chapter 1 of Genesis proceeds to give a step-by-step description of what was created on each of the first six days of creation. Those steps are as follows:

Day One: Out of the void, God creates light from darkness and separates the day (light) from the night (darkness). Note that this light is not generated by the sun, moon, or stars since they have not yet been formed. This light is generated by the active presence of God. Evening and morning are counted as one day. (*verses 2-5*)

Day Two: God creates the firmament and calls it Heaven. The Hebrew words translated into English as "waters" are more akin to the atmosphere. The separation was to distinguish the waters that supplied rain from those that sat upon the earth. (*verses 6-8*)

Day Three: Two separate but related acts took place on the third day: 1) God separated the dry land (and called it Earth) from the waters (and called it Seas); and 2) God called forth seed-bearing vegetation - grass, herbs, and fruit trees - to grow upon the earth. (*verses 9-13*)

Day Four: God created the sun, moon, and stars to give light upon the earth and set them in the heavens to rule over the day and night; to determine seasons, days, and years; and for signs. (*verses 14-19*)

Day Five: God created the fish of the sea and the birds of the air. He blessed these living creatures and told them to be fruitful and multiply in the sea and upon the earth. (*verses 20-23*)

Day Six: God creates the animals of the earth – cattle, wild animals, and those that creep – each according to its own kind. God also created man – male and female – in his own image and gave them dominion over all the earth. God then blessed the animals and man and told them to be fruitful and multiply. (*verses 24-31*)

At the end of each day, God looked over what he had done and stated that it was good. However, at the end of the sixth day, God saw His work, and "*behold, it was very good;*" i.e., everything perfect in its kind, so that every creature might reach the goal appointed by the Creator

² Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament, public domain

and accomplish the purpose of its existence. The number six is significant in Jewish mysticism. It represents the material world and pertains to the flesh, reproduction, and the land. Therefore, it is a symbol of man's dominion over the Earth and the fruit of the union of man and wife. Notice that nothing new is created after the sixth day. All of the material creation is complete.³

In Genesis Chapter 2, we find the completion of creation is followed by *Day Seven*. God turns from his completed work in the physical realm of earth and heaven and "*all the hosts therein*" to rest on the seventh day. By ceasing all creative work and being thoroughly satisfied with what he had made, God took his rest and blessed and sanctified the totality of what he had created. Resting on the seventh day signifies a union as in marriage. It portrays the concept of completion or perfection in a relationship such as between master and servant, or Creator and Creation, or husband and bride.⁴ And in so doing, God created a marker for sacred time, the Sabbath. Some scholars note that since there is no reference to indicate the end of the seventh day, i.e. evening and morning as in the previous verses, God intended that his perfect creation would continue for all eternity.^{4 5}

Creation of Man (Genesis 2:4-7)

Verses 4-6 of Genesis 2 serve as an introduction to the historical account of the world, which commences at the completion of the work of creation. More importantly, the verses that follow focus on details concerning man's creation not offered in Chapter 1. The process of man's creation is described in detail here, because it explains his relation to God and the surrounding world.

Man was the crowning glory of creation. All that had been created before man was ultimately for man's benefit. Genesis 2:7 tells us that God formed man directly from the dust, unlike the creation of the other animals which arose from the ground simply by the creative word of God. The Hebrew word translated as "dust" in English does not indicate a clod of mud but the finest material of the earth. Simultaneously, God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. Here we recall the description of man's creation from Chapter 1:27: "*So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.*"

³ Linsley, Alice C. "*Days of Creation: Literal or Figurative?*" August 2009.

<https://jandvongenesi.blogspot.com/2009/07/days-of-creation-literal-or-figurative.html>

⁴ Linsley. "*Days of Creation: Literal or Figurative?*"

Note: "There were seven urns at the wedding in Cana of Galilee where Jesus Christ turned water to wine. In Jewish weddings, the Sheva Brachot (7 marriage blessings) are recited under the *huppah* and the wedding feast lasts 7 days."

⁵ In Hebrew/Jewish numerology the number 7 has special meaning indicating rest, cessation from work, wholeness, completeness, being ripe, order, stability, and holiness. Scriptural examples include: seven days of creation, seven days for Temple dedication, seven Spirits of God, seven feasts of God, seven churches or assemblies in Revelation, seven stars in Yeshua's hand, seven golden lampstands, seven seals, seven trumpets, seven bowls, seven thunders that speak, seven eyes of the Lord, seven horns & eyes on the Lamb, among others. In Jewish thought, on day seven of creation, God rested from His work. He set the seventh day apart as holy, and gave it a name: Shabbat. Seven transcends the natural and moves into the supernatural. Every week begins (and even every day as the day begins at sunset) by RESTING. First, we rest in the finished work of God, then we go to work (perform good deeds). This has been G-d's pattern from the very beginning. Rest, then work. Any other pattern proclaims mankind's desire to rest in the work of his own hands. <https://graceintorah.net/2015/06/15/hebrew-numbers-1-10/>

To quote from Keil & Delitzsch, “The earth does not bring forth his body, but God Himself puts His hand to the work and forms him; nor does the life already imparted to the world by the Spirit of God individualize itself in him, but God breathes directly into the nostrils of the one man, in the whole fulness of His personality, the breath of life, that in a manner corresponding to the personality of God he may become a living soul (*Delitzsch*). This was the foundation of the pre-eminence of man, of his likeness to God and his immortality; for by this he was formed into a personal being, whose immaterial part was not merely soul, but a soul breathed entirely by God, since spirit and soul were created together through the inspiration of God.”

Therefore, we observe the creation of man does not occur through a word addressed by God to the earth. The creation of man occurs by divine decree, “*We will make man in Our image, after our likeness*” (Genesis 1:26). At the very outset, this proclamation establishes the distinction and pre-eminence of man above all the other creatures of the earth.

Immediately after the description of how man was formed, verses 8-15 describe the unique garden made just for him. He was to “*dress it and to keep it*” (Genesis 2:15). This is an essential aspect of man’s purpose which will be discussed later in this article.

Creation of Woman (Genesis 2:20-25)

The only mention of the creation of woman in Chapter 1 is that man was created in two kinds, male and female, implying they were of the same ontological essence. Chapter 2:21-23 supplies the details of the woman’s formation.

As the creation of the man is introduced in Genesis 1:26-27, with a divine decree, so too, that of the woman is preceded by divine declaration, “*It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.*” (Genesis 2:18): i.e., a helping being, in which, as soon as he sees it, he may recognize himself. Man was in need of a helper of his own kind in order for him to fulfill his calling to perpetuate and multiply the race, but also to cultivate and govern the earth. As we shall see when we discuss the Garden, there is a spiritual component to woman’s creation as well.

Since no compatible companion or helper could be found among the animals God brought before Adam⁶ to be named (Genesis 2:20), God caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep. While he was in this state, God opened his flesh, removed a rib, then healed the wound. From Adam’s rib, God formed the woman (Genesis 2:21-22). Immediately upon waking, Adam recognized this new being as part of his own: “*This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh*” (Genesis 2:23). Therefore, Adam called her “Woman” because she was taken out of him (man).

⁶ Note that the name *Adam* is first introduced in Genesis 2:19. It means "red earth". It is the name given to the first man, to remind him of his earthly nature, and perhaps with reference to the color of the earth used in his formation.

The woman was created, not of dust of the earth, but from a rib of Adam, because she was formed for an inseparable unity and fellowship of life with the man. Ontologically, the two are of the same substance. However, relationally, they are different. Their physical, mental, and emotional differences were created in such a way that man and woman do not simply complement each other, but must be able to complete one another. Therefore, they cannot be interchangeable in their relationships. If there is symbolism to be seen in the use of Adam's rib, rather than some other part, it would be to show that as his helpmate, the woman is to work alongside the man for the benefit of both.

The mode of woman's creation was to lay the foundation for the moral covenant of marriage (Genesis 2:24). It forms the root of that tender love with which the man loves the woman as himself, and by which marriage becomes a type of the relationship which exists between the Lord and His Church (Eph 5:32).

In the Garden (Genesis 2:8-17)

After the completion of all the elements of his creation, including man, God establishes a garden "eastward in Eden" where he places Adam. The word "garden" indicates an enclosure. Eden is not the name of the garden, but of the region in which God planted his garden. *Eden* in Hebrew means delight or happiness. Therefore, the meaning of the word *Eden* is naturally associated with the dwelling place of the first man and woman. We also associate *Eden* with the word "Paradise" from the Greek translation in the Septuagint (LXX). The establishment of the garden has spiritual significance for mankind beyond being a beautiful dwelling place.

A significant number of scholars have determined that the establishment of the Garden represents the creation of a sanctuary – sacred ground, a place of worship. This is the place where God could walk with Adam and Eve "*in the cool of the day,*" a place set apart from the larger created world, especially for communing with God. Earlier in the narrative, God granted Adam and Eve dominion over the creation and all the living things therein, making them his appointed "regents" (Genesis 1:28). However, when Adam was placed in the Garden, he was given the particular responsibility to "*dress and keep*" it (Genesis 2:15). This special responsibility adds a priestly dimension to Adam's purpose. According to the narrative in Chapter 2, this occurred before Eve ⁷ (the woman) was formed. Being created to be Adam's helpmate, however, some scholars have designated her as the first deaconess to serve alongside him in the Garden sanctuary. Her work may have been to help "dress" the Garden, but it was Adam's role to "keep it" holy. Just as importantly, she became the respondent in the liturgy of the Garden. ⁸

⁷ (Genesis 3:20) – The woman is given her special name by Adam after the Fall. The name *Eve* refers to her being "*the mother of all living*".

⁸ See G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 17 (Downers Grove, Ill: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004); Peter J. Leithart, *A House for My Name: A Survey of the Old Testament* (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2000). Also, James B. Jordan, *Restoring the Office of Woman in the Church, I*, Theopolis Institute, Nov. 11, 2013. <https://theopolisinstitute.com/restoring-the-office-of-woman-in-the-church-i-2/>

Within the Garden, God caused trees to grow that were pleasing to see and good for food. He also placed two unique trees in the midst of the Garden: “*the tree of life,*” whose fruit imparts immortality to those who eat it (cf. Genesis 3:22-24), and the “*tree of the knowledge of good and evil,*” whose fruit conveys moral discernment. These gifts of knowledge and immortality are God's special prerogatives (Genesis 3:5 and 3:22). There was also a river that flowed out from Eden through the Garden to water and nourish it.

As soon as Adam is placed in the Garden, God gives him strict instructions concerning the unique trees he had placed in the midst of the Garden. Verses 16-17 give us God's specific directive: “*And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*” (Genesis 2:16-17) This was the beginning of man's spiritual development. The two trees were sacramental in nature, i.e., outward and visible signs of graces offered by God. One was to transform man's earthly nature into the spiritual essence of eternal life; the other was to train his spirit through the exercise of obedience to the word of God. Through obedience to the prohibition, God intended that man would learn to recognize the fact that all that is opposed to the will of God is an evil to be avoided. Through voluntary resistance to such evil, the full development of choice originally imparted to him would be transformed into the actual freedom of a deliberate and self-conscious choice of good. By obedience to the divine will, man would have attained a godlike knowledge of good and evil in accordance with his own likeness to God. It is important to note that only Adam received these instructions from God. It was his responsibility to sufficiently instruct Eve of the prohibition – an act of not only husbandly duty, but of priestly duty.

The significance of the Garden cannot be overstated. Scripture begins in the Garden and ends in the Garden (Revelation 21-22). The Tabernacle in the desert (Exodus 25:1-31:17),⁹ as well as Solomon's Temple (1 Kings 6:33–36), were adorned with a Garden motif. God establishes the imperative of setting aside sacred space for worship and communion with him from the very beginning and as the chief purpose of Man.

Establishment of Authority

Along with the physical creation, God established an order by which all of the elements of his design could function together efficiently. Part of that “order” included a hierarchy of authority that would ensure proper oversight so that all could flourish to the glory of God. Man, male and female, was granted dominion over all living things of the earth (Genesis 1:28). However, the man alone was given authority over the woman and over the Garden. The following clues support that assertion:

1. Man was created first, then woman. (*see* I Corinthians 11:7-9, 11-12; Ephesians 5:22-24)

⁹ “The other symbolic dimension is Eden. The tabernacle, like the garden of Eden, is where God dwells, and various details of the tabernacle suggest it is a mini-Eden. These parallels include the east-facing entrance guarded by cherubim, the gold, the tree of life (lampstand), and the tree of knowledge (the law). Thus God's dwelling in the tabernacle was a step toward the restoration of paradise, which is to be completed in the new heaven and earth.” (Revelation 21-22). <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/what-does-the-tabernacle-symbolize/>

2. Man was given the first naming rights, including naming the woman. (Genesis 2:19-20, 23; 3:20)
3. Man was placed in the Garden first. (Genesis 2:15)
4. Headship over the woman as a consequence of the Fall (authority over the Garden was lost). (Genesis 3:16, 22-24) ¹⁰

This order of authority intertwined with creation was intended by God to benefit mankind. Even with the institution of the New Covenant in Christ, that has not changed. Both Jesus and St. Paul appeal to creation in their admonitions concerning marriage and divorce (Matthew 19:4-6; Mark 10:6-9; I Corinthians 11:8-9). Since it has implications for the family and for the Church, it is imperative to understand what is meant by “authority”.

Authority should never be confused with raw power; nor should it ever be confined to a legal-judicial category. According to Monica Miller, “Authority, if it is authentic, is first based in the power to give life. The word “authority” comes from the Latin, *auctor*, which means the author, originator, source, maker of, or creator of something. Authority is essentially life-giving; thus, God possesses authority par excellence. Not only is authority the power to give life, but it is also the moral right of the life-giver to see that his created work is brought to its fulfillment.” ¹¹

God is, and has, the ultimate authority over life. In the economy of his creation, he delegated authority to Man with a blessing saying, “*Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it.*”(Genesis 1:28). Together with Eve, after receiving God’s blessing, they became procreators with God, and were, therefore, eligible to receive this delegated authority as co-regents of God’s creation.

Conclusion

In the story of God’s Creation revealed in Scripture, we see the development of a biblical worldview based on binary logic. This process of thinking is “comfortable with paradox, and approaches truth as concrete and tangible. This logic moves beyond “either-or” to “both-and” while maintaining distinctions between the entities of the binary set. Binary sets are concrete: Creator-creature, life-death, male-female, night-day, sea-land, heaven-earth, east-west, etc. In the Hebrew way of thinking, these attest to fixed patterns in Nature and stand as a witness to the Creator’s

¹⁰ Linsley, Alice C. Biblical Anthropology: “*Hierarchy in Creation: The Biblical View*,” December 2010.

To understand the nature of Eve’s sin, “She who represents the queen over the created order submits herself to the will of a creature who slithers on the ground. In this the original hierarchy or order in creation became inverted. Instead of listening to the Creator, Eve listened to the serpent, basest of creatures. Instead of taking from the tree of life, she took from a tree that brought death . . . Eve’s disobedience did not introduce physical death to the world; it brought spiritual death. This is how the Church Fathers understood the Fall. Such death could be overcome only by God acting in time and space.”

<https://biblicalanthropology.blogspot.com/2010/12/hierarchy-in-creation-biblical-view.html>

¹¹ Miller, Monica Migliorino. *Adam & Eve-East of Eden; Woman’s Authority in the Church*; Crisis Magazine, Notre Dame, IN; September 1995.

existence, divine nature, and eternal power. Unlike dualism, where the entities are equal, one entity in the binary set is superior in some visible way to the other.”¹²

In the context of this discussion, the binary set of Male-Female is prominent. By the nature of their distinct creation, they are quite different, yet closely related. Together they define humanity as both-and, not either-or. As a result of their union, more of their kind come forth, both male and female children.

The biblical perspective concerning Male and Female can be seen as somewhat parallel to its perspective of the binary set of Sun and Moon. The two are not equal. (Humans are considered ontologically equal (in their being), but physically and relationally different. These are *distinctions*.) The Sun (which in Hebrew is masculine) is the greater light. The Moon (representing the feminine) *reflects* the greater light. A similar thought is expressed in St. Paul’s first epistle to the Corinthians in chapter 11, verse 7: Man reflects the glory of God, but Woman reflects the glory of man. Each reflects the glory of the greater. This provides the basis for assigning the authority of headship over creation to Adam and to him alone the priestly authority over the Garden (sanctuary). Eve is assigned the authority appropriate to being a helpmate of the same essence.

The Scriptural evidence provides the orderly pattern intended by God by which men and women are to function successfully in relation to one another and in the world. The foundation for the covenant of marriage has its beginning in the creation narrative. God is perceived in a marital relationship with His creation; the giving of the Law by Moses is interpreted as a type of *Ketubah*, (Jewish marriage contract); Christ is seen as the Bridegroom and the Church his Bride. The marriage motif runs throughout the Bible. This has implications for both the family unit and for the Church. These implications will be discussed in greater detail in later chapters.

Discussion Questions

1. How does the binary worldview of the Bible compare to the worldview of the current culture?
2. Compare the attributes of the first Adam to those of Jesus, who is often referred to as the Second Adam.
3. Explain the significance of the Garden in Eden.
4. Eve became a respondent to the liturgy of the Garden. Explain how that relates to the Church.
5. Discuss the difference between the exercise of authority as God intended, and how it is exercised in society today.
6. What was God’s intent by giving the prohibition concerning the Tree of Knowledge to Adam?
7. How was the authority given to Adam and Eve in the Garden altered after the Fall?

¹² Linsley, Alice C. The Binary Worldview of the Bible, July 2017.
<https://jandyongenesisis.blogspot.com/2017/07/the-binary-worldview-of-bible.html>

CHAPTER IV – Man and Woman in the Church (OT)

Dss. Canon Annette Johnson

Introduction

Before we can understand the roles of man and woman in the Old Testament Church, we must first understand the Israelites' unique approach to religion which was the foundation of their whole existence. Israel's religion was distinct from the other religions in the Near East and elsewhere. Frank Moore Cross describes it this way:

“At the heart of biblical religion, . . . is not the imitation of the gods but a celebration of historic events located in ordinary time, events which in theory can be dated, in which historical figures like Moses play a central role. To be sure, in Israelite Epic the hero is a Divine Warrior, Yahweh the god of armies. This is, if you wish, a mythological feature that illuminates history and gives it meaning, direction and a goal. Epic memory and hope gave identity to Israel. Israel's vocation—a nation of slaves, freed by a historical redemption—was to establish a community of justice. In the new Israel, the ethical was not defined by hierarchical structures in a society established in the created order; we do not find justice as equity according to class. Rather, justice is defined in egalitarian terms; it is redemptive, it frees slaves, uplifts the poor, gives justice to the widow and orphan, loves with an altruistic amity both one's neighbor (i.e., fellow member of the kinship community) and the resident alien or client (“sojourner” in the King James Version) *as oneself*. The system of land tenure treats the land as a usufruct [something that can be used by all], a provisional loan from the Divine Landlord, and its largess is to be distributed with a free hand to all in need. Rent and interest and the alienation of the land was prohibited.... The religious obligation laid on the Israelite is “to do justice and love mercy” ([Micah 6:8](#)) in the here and now, not to be preoccupied with ritual and sacrifice or intent on bargaining with the deity for an individual, eternal salvation. According to its prophetic teaching, Israel was to construct a community of social responsibility of justice, of compassion, and of brotherhood.

Israel's religion is historical. It offers no escape from history, but rather plunges the community into the midst of historic time.”¹

From the Biblical record, Jewish history and religion began with the patriarchs: Abraham, his son Isaac, and grandson Jacob, about 4,000 years ago. Their nomadic way of life is described in the Bible. Genesis 12:1-3 relates the summons Abraham received from God to leave his homeland and travel to Canaan to establish a people committed to belief in the One God. God's

¹ Shanks, Hershel, editor. Frank Moore Cross: Conversations with a Bible Scholar, Biblical Archaeology Society: Washington, D.C. (1994). pp 46-48. [Note: The *Shema* (Deuteronomy 6) is often misunderstood as an abstract affirmation of the existence of one God. It is usually translated: “Hear O Israel: the Lord is our God, the Lord is one.” Literally translated, it reads, “Hear O Israel: Yahweh is our God, Yahweh alone.” - Cross]

relationship and promise to Abraham were sealed by the cutting of a covenant described in Genesis 15.

The Anthropological Perspective

Marriage and Ascendancy Patterns

Abraham's lineage was from what Biblical anthropologists classify as Horite-Hebrew. Naturally, Abraham and his kinsmen who followed him continued to adhere to their Horite-Hebrew traditions, including the social structure that determined inheritance, the right to rule, residence, and so forth. Modern scholars would have us believe that the Biblical Hebrew social structure was strictly patriarchal, but was it? Biblical anthropologists say no. Lineages were determined through both the male and female lines. Evidence of this can be found in the Gospels of Luke and Matthew, where both offer two genealogies in tracing Jesus' heritage. Since both the paternal and maternal lines were important, both male and female ancestors are remembered with a particular focus on "righteous" ancestors. Compared to other ancient civilizations, the Biblical Hebrew seem to have been unusually respectful of their women.²

Ancient documents and archaeological discoveries show the Horite-Hebrew were a royal caste of priests that existed before the Aaronic priesthood. (Genesis 14 - Melchizedek, ruler-priest of Salem/Jerusalem, was of this caste.) Kinship analysis used in anthropological research has established that the Hebrew had a distinctive marriage and ascendancy pattern. Within the social structure, wives were essential in the establishment and demarcation of territory. Ruler-priests had two wives, each living in separate settlements at the northern and southern borders of his territory. As an example, Abraham's territory extended from Sarah's home in Hebron to Keturah's home in Beersheba. The wives exercised considerable influence over their respective settlements. All movable property in the settlement, such as tents and flocks, belonged to the wife.³

The two wives of the ruler-priest were both kindred. The first wife was a half-sister chosen in his youth. The second wife was a paternal cousin, usually selected around the time of the man's enthronement. Generally speaking, with two wives, there would be two first-born sons. The ascendancy pattern determined that the proper heir would be the first-born son of the first wife. The first-born son of the cousin wife belonged to the household of his maternal grandfather, and he would serve as a high official in his grandfather's territory. If the cousin bride was a noblewoman (not a concubine), she was given the naming prerogative to name her first-born son after her father. That is why we find names repeated two generations apart in Scripture (i.e., Genesis 4 and 5). Other sons were given gifts and sent away to establish their own territories.

² Linsley, Alice C. "The Social Structure of the Biblical Hebrew (Final)," *Just Genesis*, September 17, 2019. <https://jandyongenesis.blogspot.com/2019/09/the-social-structure-of-biblical-hebrew.html>

³ Linsley, Alice C. "The Social Structure of the Biblical Hebrew," *Just Genesis*, October 6, 2017. <https://jandyongenesis.blogspot.com/2017/10/the-social-structure-of-biblical-hebrew.html>

Daughters were able to petition to receive an inheritance. If there was no male heir at the time of a landowner's death, his land went to the ranking daughter.^{4 5}

Right to Rule

Gender was much less critical in determining one's rank and authority than was the reputation and antiquity of the person's clan. For instance, the clans of Edom were especially respected, and those who ruled from them were known for their wisdom. (Genesis 36:31; Jeremiah 49:7). Various accounts from Scripture illustrate that Hebrew women, particularly the wives and daughters of high-ranking priests, ruled their households and exercised considerable influence. They had servants, managed real estate, owned property, and made wise investments. Some are listed by name in the Genesis king lists, indicating their importance.

Residence

Where people lived was usually determined by one's status within the societal structure. Where married couples lived was dependent upon the social position of the groom. Widows were divided into two groups: those eligible to remarry, and those ineligible to remarry. If a widow was eligible to remarry, she would usually return to her mother's house (Ruth 1:8). Widows ineligible to remarry would return to their father's household (Gen. 38:11, Tamar). In some cases, such as Anna (Luke 2:36-38), widows were permitted to live a life of prayer and fasting at shrines or within the Temple compound. Frequently, sent-away sons went to live in the household of their maternal uncle, as in the case of Jacob and Laban (Genesis 28:5). In this system, the clan affiliation of an individual was not necessarily linked to where they lived.

Governance

As alluded to above, positions of governance were more likely to be determined by someone's ability and clan affiliation rather than whether they were male or female. The clans were often known by their reputation for producing certain types of people. Some clans were known for producing wise rulers, others for prophets, and others for mighty warriors. Examples of women who held positions of authority include Anah, who is listed as a clan chief in Edom; Huldah, who served as a royal adviser to the king (see 2 Kings 22); Deborah, who ruled over Israel during the time of the Judges (Judges 4-5); Salome Alexandra, one of two women who ruled as queens over Judea; and Bathsheba, queen-mother under her son Solomon, who sat on her own throne at Solomon's right hand (I Kings 2:19).

⁴ Linsley, Alice C. "The Social Structure of the Biblical Hebrew," *Just Genesis*, October 6, 2017. <https://jandyongenesis.blogspot.com/2017/10/the-social-structure-of-biblical-hebrew.html>

⁵ Note: **Error! Main Document Only.** Only the ruler-priest caste was allowed more than one wife. Endogamy was practiced to establish territory and preserve hereditary bloodlines.

Religion

Of course, the ultimate authority for the Hebrews was God, YHWH. The roots of the Hebrew religion appear to have originated in the Upper Nile region, the same area where Abraham's ancestors lived. Archaeological and anthropological evidence shows the priesthood to be the oldest known religious institution and that it began in the same region. Further, evidence shows that the priesthood was from the beginning and always continued to be exclusively the work of men, and only certain men who belonged to priestly castes. Genesis shows these priestly lines descending from Cain, Seth, Ham, and Shem.

However, this does not mean that women did not play a role in religious practice. During the Exodus, Moses set up two structures, one without and one within the Israelite camp. The first, known as the "tent of meeting," was erected outside the camp (Exodus 33:7-11). The other, the Tabernacle, was erected in the center of the camp. From the text in Exodus 38:8 and I Samuel 2:22, a group of women was set apart for service at Moses' tent of meeting in the Sinai desert, and a later group served at the Tabernacle when it was located in Shiloh. The bronze mirrors of these women were used in making the bronze basin and stand at the entrance. This basin was used for cleansing before entry into the tent. These women may have acted as guardians of the entrance and to ensure those entering were spotlessly clean (especially face and feet). Because of Eli's reaction to his sons' behavior in 1 Samuel 2:22 and 25, it is speculated that these women may have been virgins dedicated to the Lord. Elsewhere in Scripture, we learn women served as singers and musicians in temple service (e.g., [Ezra 2:65](#); [Neh. 7:67](#); cf. [2 Chron. 35:25](#)).⁶

As we consider the role of men and women in religious worship and practice, an important cultural principle should be addressed. The roots of this principle have been lost in present-day culture, since we have moved so far away from the concept of hunter/gatherer and agrarian referents. However, remnants of this important principle can still be found in traditional Church doctrine and practice. Biblical Anthropologist and Anglican, Alice C. Linsley, explains it this way:

"Primitive societies are characterized by division of labor. Universally hunting is a male task whereas cultivation of plots near residences is a female task. Both hunting and cultivation require physical strength, but the spiritual danger associated with bloodletting requires that hunting be undertaken by the physically stronger. Among every primitive society that has been studied, anthropologists have noted the belief that there is power in the blood, and this power is spiritual and potentially dangerous. Those who carry the young and tend the home fires are not to be exposed to the blood shed in war and hunting. The division of labor applies to the sacrifice of animals."⁷

This brings us to an important anthropological principle that states: "**The older the trait, the wider the distribution.**" Since this anxiety about the shedding of blood is universal, we conclude that it is also very old. It is in fact primeval, and from the first day that man shed blood, the priesthood has existed to address this

⁶ Mowczko, Marg. "Women who served at the entrance of the tent of meeting", July 2019. <https://margmowczko.com/women-entrance-tent-of-meeting-tabernacle/>

⁷ See Leviticus 17.

anxiety.

When archaic man took life in the hunt, the spiritual leader of the community offered prayers for the sacrifice of the animal. The ritual act of sacrifice and prayer is apparent from the beginning. The sacrifice gave the community life, and the prayer protected it from bloodguilt. The prayers and the sacrifice of the hunt were performed according to sacred law. The spiritual leader symbolizes prayer, sacrifice, and law. This observed and well documented reality stands behind the Church's tradition of a male priesthood."

[To extend this principle further, the "bloodwork" of women was to bring forth life. The blood associated with men in killing and sacrifice was never to mix with the blood associated with women and childbirth. In her article, "Blood and Gender Distinctions," Linsley explains this in more detail. - *aj*] ⁸

The Book of Leviticus lists the specific regulations regarding tithes, offerings, and blood sacrifices that God communicated to Moses and commanded of His people Israel in connection with specific circumstances and life events. These offerings and sacrifices were required of both men and women; although, some were gender specific as in offerings and purity requirements following childbirth. God also established specific "Feasts of the Lord" which were to be observed and celebrated at set times. With each feast, God specified whether it was to be celebrated in convocation at the Tabernacle (meaning all were to participate together), or within "all your dwellings," (meaning in the home among family). The celebrations which were observed over a period of time included both communal celebrations and home observances (Leviticus 23). Keep in mind that Leviticus addressed the situation of the Israelites at the beginning of their sojourn to the Promised Land.

In the Book of Deuteronomy, we find these regulations regarding offerings and sacrifices reiterated with additions and revisions to accommodate a people who were about to settle in their permanent home (Deuteronomy 26:15-19). One such revision is this, "*Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty: Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee.*" (Deuteronomy 16:16-17). This regulation did not necessarily exclude women or children from attending the festivals, but men were required to attend and present their offerings and sacrifices on behalf of themselves and their families. In fact, the entire family was expected to attend the Feast of Tabernacles (also called the Feast of Booths), since this was a time for learning and instruction in the Torah. Women were, however, exempted from some regulations, especially those that were time sensitive, because purity laws took precedence after childbirth or during monthly cycles. Their care of infants and small children in the home was also allowed leniency from requirements they would otherwise have been expected

⁸ Linsley, Alice C. "The Origins of the Priesthood," August 2007.

<https://jandyogenesis.blogspot.com/2007/08/primeval-origins-of-priesthood.html>

See also, "Blood and Gender Distinctions," July 2014. <https://jandyogenesis.blogspot.com/2008/09/pleromic-blood-and-gender-distinctions.html>; "Why Women Were Never Priests," April 2009.

<https://jandyogenesis.blogspot.com/2009/04/why-women-were-never-priests.html>; and other related articles.

to observe. As Rachel Levine puts it, women were not exempt from the “thou shalt nots”, but they were exempt from the “thou shalt” that were time-related.⁹

The nomadic lifestyle of the early Hebrews ended after their exodus from Egypt when they settled in the Promised Land of Canaan. There, they settled into villages and became craftsmen and farmers. Their religion became more structured. Yet, the distinctive pattern of marriage and ascendancy continued through to the time of Jesus. We will look more closely at the daily lifestyle of the Israelites leading into the first century and the New Covenant era.

Lifestyle

Housing and Economy

During the time of the Biblical Judges, archaeological evidence shows that Israelite villages were built on hilltops with populations of less than 400 people. The villages usually had no walls; however, as alluded to above, they were part of regional chiefdoms which provided security. The villages were subjects of the major towns located on the north-south axis that marked the boundaries of the region.

Families lived in nuclear households, usually with relatives living in clusters of houses around a common courtyard. (This arrangement dovetails with the social structure of the Israelites discussed above and was essential in their daily religious practices.) These nestled houses were made of mudbrick with a stone foundation and possibly a second story of wood. There were three to four rooms within the living space with more sleeping space on the roof or in a loft. One of the rooms may have been used as a courtyard for their domestic sheep and/or goats.¹⁰

Since the landscape was too rocky to be practical for large herds of animals, farming became a staple of the economy. The thick overgrowth of trees and brush was burned off in order to construct terraces where they planted wheat, lentils, beans, barley, millet, and orchards. These terraces were within an hour’s walk from the village.¹¹

Despite the upheavals experienced by the Israelites through time, especially their exile to Babylon, their lifestyle changed very little leading up to the Christian era. Villages had grown to modest-sized towns of 2,000 – 5,000 people. The landscape accommodated more pasture areas for cattle, wine and oil industries flourished, and fishing was an important industry in the northern part of the country. The larger urban areas were known for their craftsmen, especially Jerusalem.

⁹ Levine, Rachel D. “*Women in First Century Judaism*,” Yavo Digest, Vol. 1, No. 4, 1987.

http://www.webbpage-hnpv.com/yavo/1_4_Levine_WomenInJudaism.html

¹⁰ Biblical Archaeology Society, “*Daily Life in Ancient Israel*,” Bible History Daily. September 2021.

<https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/ancient-cultures/ancient-israel/daily-life-in-ancient-israel/>

See also, King, Philip J., and Lawrence E. Stager, *Life in the Ancient World: “Of Fathers, Kings and the Deity,”* Biblical Archaeological Society: Washington, D.C., 2013. pp. 22-26.

https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/life_in_the_ancient_world.pdf?

¹¹ “*Daily Life in Ancient Israel*”

Within this context, we have a better understanding of what daily life was like for a typical Jewish household.¹²

Home and Family

Although the man was the authority figure in the home, the woman was looked upon as the one who sanctified the home. She was considered an equal partner in running the household. Among her numerous responsibilities were cultivating produce and gathering water for the family's sustenance, as well as maintaining the religious and ritual aspects of daily life. For instance, the wife was responsible for making sure the tithe (the priest's share as mandated in Scripture) was separated out and given as prescribed. She made sure the household utensils were ritually pure and the food was prepared according to kosher law. Even though the husband presided over religious services in the home, it was the mother who "lighted the lights" (candles or lamps) and recited the opening prayer to begin worship.¹³

The familial unit which lived in the nestled houses around the common courtyard included the ancestral or patriarchal household known as the "house of the father" along with his wife and unmarried children, as well as extended family: sons and their wives, grandsons and their wives, slaves, servants, aunts, uncles, widows, orphans, and perhaps a Levite hired to serve the family unit. Non-kin, or sojourners, also might be included as part of the household. As the household grew, it became a clan or tribe. This extended family, as a social unit, served as the basis and pattern for understanding the higher levels of Israelite social structure – the political and the divine.

When the monarchy was established in Israel, the king functioned as the father over the land and its people. In return for their loyalty and allegiance, the people expected protection and aid in times of distress. The king, as sovereign and proprietor of the land, presided over his "house" which included the families and households of the whole kingdom. Hence, the southern kingdom of Judah is referred to as the "House of David." (See David's prayer in 2 Samuel 7:24-29.)

However, at the top of the social order for Israel is Yahweh (God). It is the Divine Lord that serves as the ultimate "father" over His chosen people, the children of Israel. They are bound to Him through covenant as His kindred.¹⁴

Education

Both boys and girls were taught to read and given instruction in the Torah. Although, most boys received a formal education at the elementary level in local schools while the girls learned at

¹² Gafni, Prof. Isaiah. "Jewish Life in Palestine at the Beginning of the Christian Era," (no date given)
Reprint from [A Historical Atlas of the Jewish People](#) edited by Eli Barnavi and published by Schocken Books.
<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/their-love-for-tilling-the-soil-is-truly-great/>

¹³ Levine.

¹⁴ King and Stager, Life in the Ancient World: "Of Fathers, Kings and the Deity."

home. Some were taught writing, too. The more talented or affluent among the boys went on to study Jewish law with a master. Since the Torah was essential to all Jewish life, the girls had to learn the applicable laws that pertained to the home's religious standards. From numerous references in the Mishnah, women also attended special public classes in the synagogues and listened to rabbinic sermons. Fathers were the ones most involved with their son's education, but rabbinic records show they also taught their daughters as well.¹⁵

Community Life

The Apocryphal Book of Judith (probably composed during the Hellenistic period, 323-31 BC) provides evidence of the beginnings of community organization. Josephus records that villages were administered by a group of seven judges, which likely formed the basis for what became the "seven town elders" during the Talmudic period (approximately 500 BC-400 AD). Both men and women were eligible to serve on this panel of judges/elders. These officials were given authority to buy and sell public property, including the synagogue. They could also levy taxes for the construction of synagogues, buying Torah scrolls, maintaining public property, and paying the salaries of village officials. These officials might have included a market inspector, a synagogue officer (who in some places was also the town leader), city guards, and schoolteachers.¹⁶

Synagogue

Initially, the synagogue was not intended to be a house of prayer but was used as a place of learning and gathering. In fact, the Hebrew for synagogue, *Bet Knesset*, means a House of Assembly. The synagogue functioned as the town hall, charitable foundation, an inn for wayfarers, site of the local rabbinical court, school, and other community functions. The first rabbis were teachers of religious texts, not celebrants of religious rites. It was not until after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 AD that the synagogues began to function as the place for communal prayer and worship.¹⁷

Contrary to previous thought, archaeological evidence has shown that there was no architectural division within the synagogue to divide the men from the women. This feature did not become standard until the early Middle Ages. According to Levine, "the Mishnah [*the first section of the Talmud* -ed.] provided that a woman could be one of the seven called each Sabbath to publicly read from the Torah scroll . . . the Jewish form of worship in the synagogue did not depend on an official functionary; any person learned in the order of prayers could lead the congregation." (After the destruction of the Temple, there was no appropriate place for priests to offer sacrifices.) Since all Jewish people were obligated to pray and learn the Torah, men, women, and children participated in synagogue activities. (e.g., Acts 18:26).¹⁸

¹⁵ Levine; See also, Gafni.

¹⁶ Gafni.

¹⁷ Gafni.

¹⁸ Levine.

In the Temple

From Scriptural accounts and the Jewish law codes, it is understood that the Temple was a restricted sacred place in terms of where men and women were allowed to go and how they functioned within its inner walls. As discussed above, the Aaronic Priesthood and the Levitical Priesthood (what we might consider as the Diaconate) were restricted to men only. Further, only those descended from Aaron could serve as Priests; and only those of the tribe of Levi could serve as their “assistants.” Only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies where the Ark of the Covenant was housed, and then only one day of the year. Only Priests could enter the Holy Place, the vestibule to the Holy of Holies. Only those who were ritually pure (cleansed), Priests and Levites, could go into the Inner Court where the Altar of Sacrifice was placed. Others who had been ritually purified could enter the Court of Israel, which was just outside the Court of the Priests and the Inner Court. This is where the men would present their offerings and sacrifices.

The women generally stayed within what became known as the Court of the Women; although, anyone except non-Jews/Gentiles was allowed in this area of the Temple complex. They did not avail themselves of the ritual baths to comply with the laws of ritual purity since that would require undressing and immersing themselves. It would have been considered brazen and immodest for a woman to reveal herself to all those inside the Court. Therefore, when a woman brought an offering to the Temple, one of the Priests would come out to her to accept it. However, as mentioned above, there were opportunities for women to serve within the Temple compound as “serving women” at the entrance, dedicated women engaged in prayer and fasting, or singers/musicians. ¹⁹

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to explore the life of men and women and their roles in Old Testament times. It is evident that their belief and faith in the One High God permeated every aspect of their lives. They exercised a division of labor that not only complimented each other, but also completed their obligations as members of God’s chosen people under His Covenant. The home was considered a sacred place and was the center of worship for the family outside of the Tabernacle or Temple.

Neither men nor women were excluded from any aspect of their culture strictly on the basis of being a man or being a woman except with respect to the Priesthood. That exclusion, however, was not seen as a degradation for being a woman, but as an elevated status for her blood work in bringing forth new life as opposed to killing to offer a blood sacrifice. For an Israelite woman, it was also an acknowledgment that she might be the one to bring forth the seed of the Messiah as promised by God in the Proto-Gospel (*Proto-Evangelium* - Genesis 3:15), or at least be a part of his bloodline.

¹⁹ Levine.

It should be noted that the Horite-Hebrew, ancestors of Abraham, believed in the One High God-Father, father of the God-Son. This belief was the root of the Israelite religion and remnants of it can be seen throughout the Old Testament, especially in connection to the prophetic anticipation of the coming Messiah. Religious beliefs that developed after the Israelites' exile in Babylon, and subsequently with the influence of Greco-Roman culture, changed into what is recognized today as Judaism. The core beliefs of Abraham and his ancestors are not the same as those found in Judaism. ²⁰

Linsley writes:

“Religious traditions such as that of the Horite Hebrew develop in a traceable way from great antiquity. Such traditions are passed down through families, clans, and tribes. The core belief of Christianity concerning the Son of God can be traced to Abraham and his Horite Hebrew ancestors, long before Judaism. In this sense, Christianity isn't original, but what it lacks in originality, it makes up for in antiquity and herein rests its authority.” ²¹

Discussion Questions

1. List some of the differences between Israelite families and Christian families today.
2. What observations did you make about men and women in the Old Testament compared to men and women of today?
3. In what ways does the blood work of men and women influence practices in the Church today, or does it?
4. Does the Church acknowledge bloodlines in relation to marriage? If so, how?

²⁰ See Linsley, Alice C. “*The Talmud vs the Doctrine of the Lord*,” Just Genesis, August 2010. <https://jandyongenesis.blogspot.com/2010/08/talmud-vs-doctrine-of-lord.html>

²¹ Linsley, Alice C. “*Solar Imagery of the Proto-Gospel*,” Just Genesis, July 2011. <https://jandyongenesis.blogspot.com/2011/07/solar-imagery-of-proto-gospel.html>

CHAPTER V – Man and Woman in the Church (NT)

The Rev. Dr. Charles Erlandson

An Overview of the Biblical Teaching on the Relationship of Men and Women

The clear teaching of the New Testament is that, although men and women are equal in the eyes of the Lord, God has ordained that only men should be ordained to the three offices of bishop, presbyter, and deacon. While these offices are withheld from women (and from the vast majority of men as well, we might add), women are permitted to serve in the Church in almost every other possible way.

Before we present the New Testament teaching on the relationship of men and women in the Church, we must first understand the biblical view of men and women in its entirety. The Old and New Testaments are equally Scripture, and it's not possible to comprehend the New Testament without a thorough knowledge of the Old. Whenever we read the Old and New Testaments together, we should pay attention to both the continuity and discontinuity in them. The New Covenant fulfills the Old: we should, therefore, expect that the New Testament begins with the assumptions, principles, and worldview of the Old Testament, even as it transforms and fulfills them.

The relationship between men and women presented in the Bible, both Old and New Testaments is one of *complementarianism*. God created men and women in a complementary relationship of male headship and female submission in which both are of equal value but do not have interchangeable roles, a relationship which is held together by love. Unfortunately, many of those who are egalitarians neglect a proper study of the Old Covenant as commanded and ordered by God and fulfilled by the New Covenant.

Contrary to the claims of egalitarians, when God created Adam and Eve, He created them with an inherent God-given relationship which is complementarian and in which the man is the head of his wife. At the heart of understanding anthropology of the Bible is the theological truth that when God created the world, He ordered it with an inherent, God-given meaning which man must be faithful in receiving. Adam's headship over Eve is demonstrated by Adam having been created first (a truth confirmed by St. Paul in 1 Timothy 2:12-13 and 1 Corinthians 11:7-9) and by Eve's having been created in Genesis 2 from Adam and for him, and not just after him (confirmed by St. Paul 1 Corinthians 11:9).

This conclusion of complementarianism from Genesis 2 is confirmed by God's continuing to divinely order His people Israel in the Old Testament through male headship. The headship of males in the family is demonstrated by the fact that the Old Testament genealogies are preserved through the male line from father to son, beginning with Adam. Fathers were also the ones who celebrated the Passover and were to especially teach their sons its meaning and the ones who circumcised sons and redeemed their firstborn sons. When God gave Moses His divine Law for the good of Israel and to teach her about God, He ordained that only males should be priests, and when He gave Israel kings, He gave them male kings.

It is this God-ordained ordering of males and females that was received and fulfilled in the New Testament. This fulfillment is not a destruction of what God had previously ordained but the completion and perfection of it through His Son. Just as God did not destroy the human race in the Flood but redeemed it, He did not destroy the covenant He had created in the Old Testament but redeemed it in the New. We should expect, then to see fulfillment in the New Testament, and not a radical reversal of God had previously ordered.

The original writers and recipients of the New Testament were largely Jewish. They would, naturally, have begun with the assumptions which God had revealed to His people for 2000 years since the time of Abraham. In many ways, therefore, the New Covenant in Christ fulfilled the Old Testament types in ways that did not involve a radical repudiation of what God had ordered in the Old Covenant. For example, the Jewish Sabbath became the Christian Lord's Day; circumcision became baptism; the Passover and other feasts became the Holy Communion; Jesus is the new High Priest, Temple, and sacrifice.

We should expect, therefore, that the God-ordained male-female relationships of the Old Covenant are fulfilled in the New Covenant, and not radically reversed. If God intended to fundamentally change what He had commanded in the Old Covenant, and not just fulfill and redeem it, He would have had to overturn the assumptions of the Old Covenant in a clear, sustained, and forceful way.

What we will find in our examination of the New Testament passages is that far from clearly and forcefully overthrowing the male headship of the Old Covenant, at every place possible, God renews His original ordering of the world.

The New Testament Teaching on Men and Women in the House of God

The main passages that teach about the roles of men and women in God's household are 1 Timothy 2:8-15, 1 Corinthians 14:34-37, 1 Timothy 3, and Titus 1.

1 Timothy 2:11-14 and 1 Corinthians 14:34-37

Before we begin our discussion of 1 Timothy 2 and 1 Corinthians 14, we should place them in their larger context. First, we should remember that when Paul wrote his letters to Timothy and the church at Corinth, he expected Timothy and others to understand what he meant. An issue such as whether or not women should be ordained is not only a theological issue but also a very practical one: Timothy and other church leaders needed to know who could validly be ordained. Given the unbroken biblical record of male headship from Genesis on, as well as 2000 years or more of an unbroken practice of male headship in both human households and in the house of God prior to the writing of the New Testament, how would Timothy and other early Christians have been likely to understand what Paul presents about male headship and male ordination?

It would have been impossible for them to have read Paul's letters in any other way than in terms of male headship in the Church. In fact, if Paul had intended to permit women to be ordained, he would not only have had to not write things that sound like male-only headship and ordination – he would have to go to exceedingly great lengths to persuade his first-century audience that women could now be heads of households and ordained leaders in the house of God. Certainly, new applications of the Scriptures emerge in every generation, but it would undermine confidence in the early Church and her transmission of the faith to us if her members universally misread passages such as the Pastoral Epistles that are so important.

The second thing to keep in mind is that in Paul's Pastoral Epistles, he is writing to Timothy and Titus about how to order the house of God. Here we should also remember how God ordered His house in the Old Covenant with male priests, kings, and fathers as heads of households, as well as the New Testament acceptance of this male headship.

Paul writes in 1 Timothy 2:11-14: "Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression."

Paul's commandment that women should learn with all submission seems obvious enough. The fact that women should learn in silence is clearly related to the very next verse where Paul does not allow women to teach or have authority over men and where the commandment for women to be silent is repeated. If women are not permitted to teach authoritatively in the church, then in terms of teaching, they must, of course, be silent. The fact that women were expected to learn is itself important because this was not usually the case in the first-century Israel. After the women had learned, they were, indeed, to teach, but in the home to children or other women (see, for example, Titus 2).

If Paul wanted to overturn the long-standing tradition in God's people and in God's house of having male-only teachers and was intending in this passage that women could also teach in the churches, he would first have had to institute women teachers and leaders in the churches. But he did not do this, and that he did not is clear from the way Paul teaches in this passage and others.

The plain sense of this Scripture is clear – that "submission" means "submission." First, Paul commands that women learn in silence, which means that men must be teaching and women listening. This is clearly a form of women submitting to men. Paul also commands that women should not teach men, confirming women's submission to men in the matter of teaching. Second, Paul does not allow women to have authority over men. Third, Paul gives theological and biblical reasons for why women should be submissive: Adam was formed first, and the woman was deceived.

1 Timothy 2:11-14 is, therefore, a straightforward and clear teaching by the apostle Paul that women are not allowed to teach in the churches but are to be submissive and silent before authoritative male teachers.

1 Corinthians 14:34-37

1 Corinthians 14:34-37 provides support for what Paul taught in 1 Timothy 2. Paul writes:

Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church. Or did the word of God come originally from you? Or was it you only that it reached? If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord.

The similarities between what Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 2 and what he writes in 1 Corinthians 14 serve as confirmation that what Paul taught when writing to the church in Ephesus, over which Timothy was appointed head, is also what he wrote to a different church, the one at Corinth. In both epistles, Paul commands that women keep silent in the churches. The fact that Paul's command here in 1 Corinthians 14 is more clearly in the form of a command confirms that what Paul writes in 1 Timothy 2 is also a command, and not merely a suggestion.

Paul commands that women in churches be submissive, as he did in 1 Timothy 2, again confirming that this is Paul's consistent teaching in the churches he was ordained to lead. One intriguing difference is that in 1 Corinthians 14, Paul adds "as the law also says." Other teachings Paul includes in 1 Corinthians 14 that he does not in 1 Timothy 2 are his commandment that if women want to learn something they ask their own husbands at home (verse 35), that it is shameful for women to speak in church (verse 35), and that what Paul says are commandments from the Lord (verse 37).

Paul's inclusion of the command for women not to speak in the churches, as well as that they should be submissive, strongly supports male headship of the church. These additional elements in 1 Corinthians 14 all confirm, rather than undermine, the view that Paul's clear intention and command is for men to be the heads of the churches and for women to not teach but to be submissive in the churches.

Taken as a whole, Paul grounds his prohibition on women teaching authoritatively in the churches on four things: the practice of the Church, the commandments of the Scriptures, the general moral code, and the commandment of the Lord.

First, Paul forbids women teaching authoritatively in the churches based on the practice of the Church, when he says: "as in all the churches of the saints" (verse 33b) and "Or did the word of God come originally from you? Or was it you only that it reached?" (verse 36). Second, Paul argues from Scripture, saying, "as the law also says" (verse 34).

Third, Paul argues from the general moral code when he teaches: “it is shameful for women to speak in church” (verse 35).

Fourth, Paul frames all that he says as the commandment not just of himself but of the Lord when he writes: “the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord” (verse 37).

Together, 1 Timothy 2 and 1 Corinthians 14 present the clear and inspired teaching of Paul that women cannot teach authoritatively in the churches but must instead be submissive to the male headship with whom God has invested authority in His house.

1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1

1 Timothy 2 must be read not only in the context of 1 Corinthians 14, with which it has many similarities, but also with 1 Timothy 3, the very next chapter in Paul’s epistle. Because of the similarities of 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, Titus will be discussed as well.

In 1 Timothy 3, Paul lays out the qualifications for both overseers (or bishops) and deacons. The relevant passages for each are 1 Timothy 3:2-5 and 1 Timothy 3:11-12.

Paul says, regarding overseers, in 1 Timothy 3:2-5:

A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?)

The first thing to notice in this passage is that the overseer or bishop must be the husband of one wife. Paul’s assumption is that the bishop is a male, since he explicitly mentions husbands. That Paul assumes bishops are only males is confirmed when Paul commands that the bishop “rules his own house well.”

Paul’s first letter to Timothy makes the connection between the households of men and the household of God. He tells Timothy: “I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15). Paul writes his letter as a father to his son who is passing on the traditions of the faith, as fathers did in Old Testament Israel, writing: “To Timothy, a true son in the faith” (1:2) and “This charge I commit to you, son Timothy” (1:18). Paul also writes in 2 Timothy: “To Timothy, a beloved son (1:2) and “You therefore, my son . . .” (2:1).¹

¹ Paul writes to Titus in the same striking way, as father to son in a household, “You therefore, my son . . .” (1:4).

In chapter 2, Paul orders his household, which is the household of God, and part of his teaching to his son is that which we saw in 1 Timothy 2 about women learning in silence with all submission and not teaching or having authority over men. Paul continues ordering God's house in 1 Timothy 3, which includes not only verse 15, an explicit reference to the house of God, but also verses 4 and 5, which are the especially disputed verses. Paul writes: "one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?)" Here, Paul explicitly links ruling in the family household with ruling in the household of God. A similar commandment is given by Paul for deacons: "Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well" (3:12).

Surely, Paul's first-century audience would have understood his words in 1 Timothy 3 to mean specifically husbands as heads of households who were qualified to be heads (overseers and deacons) in the house of God. It is not only the continuous context of male headship in human families and in the house of God that makes it clear Paul is speaking of men as overseers and deacons but also his specific singling out of "husbands of one wife." Any other interpretation has the immense liability of not only overturning God's ordained male headship which would have continued to Paul's day but also of having to somehow make "husband of one wife" mean something it cannot mean. If Paul had meant that bishops could be the wives of one husband (thus allowing women's ordination) he would have had to take this opportunity to forcefully command this innovation in God's people. Paul did not but simply and plainly assumes bishops will be men.

Paul continues to order the house of God when he speaks of the qualifications for deacons in 1 Timothy 3:11-12, writing: "Likewise, their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well." In verse 12, Paul repeats what he commanded about overseers, this time for deacons, saying "Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well." Since we have just discussed nearly identical language for overseers, we do not need to repeat those arguments here. Once again, Paul clearly speaks of male-only deacons.

Titus 1

Paul's letter to Titus is similar to his first letter to Timothy, including his teaching on the qualifications for being an overseer. Paul writes, in Titus 1:4-7:

To Titus, a true son in our common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior. For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you— if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination.

Here, Paul instructs Titus as his son on how to order the house of God, as he did with Timothy, calling Titus, “son.” Paul confirms the qualifications he gave to Timothy, that an elder must be the husband of one wife.

Paul’s teaching in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 could not be any clearer: only men are to be ordained to the offices of bishop and deacon. Not only is this Paul’s explicit teaching but if he had intended to allow for women clergy, he would have had to overturn what God had commanded in the Old Covenant and provided a clear commandment from God that now women may also be ordained. Instead, God inspired Paul to command a male-only clergy.

The Teaching of the Church Fathers and the Church

In keeping with the hermeneutics outlined in Chapter 1 of this book, we should look for confirmation of the complementarian view of male/female relationships in the Bible from the Church writings of the first several centuries after Christ. What that record unequivocally states is the traditional view that only men are to be ordained. This record includes quotations from the writings of the early Church, including both the Church Fathers and other early Church writings, some of which deal with the issue in some detail. One of the earliest of these references is found in Tertullian, writing in the 220s A.D.: “It is not permitted to a woman to speak in the church; but neither (is it permitted her) to teach, nor to baptize, nor to offer, nor to claim to herself a lot in any manly function, not to say (in any) sacerdotal office.”² The Apostolic Constitutions (375-380) teaches: “We do not permit our ‘women to teach in the Church,’ but only to pray and hear those that teach; for our Master and Lord, Jesus Himself, when He sent us the twelve to make disciples of the people and of the nations, did nowhere send out women to preach, although He did not want such.”³ Similar statements are made by Origen (230s A.D.), the Didascalia Apostolorum (235-240), Epiphanius (374-375), Chrysostom (c. 400), and many others.⁴ The record of the Church from the time of the apostles, through the Middle Ages and Reformation, and until the late twentieth century is clear: women may not be ordained.

While some Anglicans ordain women as bishops, priests, and deacons, in opposition to the teaching of Scripture and the Church, other Anglicans believe that women may only be ordained as deacons. However, although the early Church did have deaconesses, these arose only later and were not present until the third century in the East and the sixth century in the West. They were phased out by the thirteenth century, and female deaconesses never served the same functions as male deacons. Even the few passages that suggest they were ordained (because the bishop laid hands on them) make clear that the ordination of deaconesses was not that of male deacons.⁵

That only men may be ordained is not a new teaching or one unique to the Reformed Episcopal Church: far from it! Male-only ordination was *the* unanimous teaching of the

² *On the Veiling of the Virgins*, Chapter IX.

³ Book III, Section VI.

⁴ For a thorough examination of this, see Charles Erlandson’s *My Father’s House*.

⁵ The most authoritative study of the issue of deaconesses in the early church is Martimort’s *Deaconesses*.

Church until the late twentieth century. Few issues in the life of the Church have manifested a greater degree of catholicity than the doctrine and practice of male-only ordination.

We should appreciate just how extraordinary this consensus of male-only ordination has been:

1. It is found across 4000 years of God's people and their beliefs and practices, Old and New Covenants.
2. It is found across all of the many cultures into which the Church was established.
3. It is still the majority opinion today.
4. Most astonishingly, it was, until the late twentieth century, unanimously held by all Christian traditions – traditions that agree about little else.

Christians from the East and West, Roman Catholics and Protestants, various Protestant churches, all believed women should not be ordained. This is in spite of the fact that these same Christian traditions disagree about the nature of the threefold ministry and if the Church should have bishops; what the role of presbyters and deacons should be; the nature and efficacy of the sacraments; how many sacraments there are; the nature of Christ's presence in the Eucharist; the retention of the ancient liturgies and the Church year; soteriology and the meaning of salvation; the proper hermeneutics to interpret the Scriptures; the place of the Apocrypha in the canon; whether the Spirit proceeds from the Father alone or both the Father and the Son; and other issues.

In spite of disagreements about these important issues, the Church until the late twentieth century spoke with unity on the issue of women's ordination.

Teaching in the Church

We need to say a little more about the role of teaching in the life of the Church. By now it's clear the Bible allows for only men to be ordained, but we need to specify what these ordained men do that lay people cannot do. While the tasks in God's house for which priests and bishops are ordained may be derived from the Scriptures, the clearest expression of them is found in the traditional Book of Common Prayer, which is a binding and normative authority for Anglicans.

In the office for The Ordering of Presbyters, as the ordaining bishop lays his hands on the ordinand he pronounces the reception of the Holy Ghost over the ordinand, that he may be "a faithful dispenser of the Word of God, and of his holy Sacraments." The bishop also commits to the ordinand the authority to be "a faithful dispenser of the Word of God, and of his holy Sacraments."

In these two pronouncements by the bishop, we see the two primary tasks of the priest: to be a faithful dispenser of the Word of God and a faithful dispenser of the Sacraments. It is commonly understood that only priests and bishops may celebrate the Holy Communion and that they should be the ones to baptize new members of the Church.

The priest or bishop's commission to be a faithful dispenser of the Word of God is, however, sometimes misunderstood. After all, may not lay people also teach? What the Prayer Book Ordinal means by teaching, however, is the authoritative teaching of the Word of God in the church that takes place by means of celebrating the liturgy, preaching sermons, and catechizing the faithful. This authoritative teaching ministry, related to male headship and rulership in God's house, is sometimes seen as having the "keys to the kingdom" (or at least part of it), which Christ entrusted to His Church.

The teaching ministry of the Church, therefore, contains both a general ministry of teaching, of which all baptized Christians partake, and a special and authoritative ministry of teaching in the Church, which is reserved for the ordained clergy. This is in part, we should remember, because God has ordained that men be the heads of human households and fathers and heads in His House, the Church.

Both the tasks of dispensing the Word and dispensing the Sacraments, therefore, are related to male headship and ruling as God's representatives in His house. To this, we should add the role of the ordained clergy as rulers in God's house, a rulership which is manifested not only in dispensing the Word and Sacraments but also by means of pastoral service and leadership in the life of the parish.

The special and authoritative teaching ministry of the Church is assisted by the general and lay teaching ministry. This ministry may take place in many forms, although the most common and effective means of employing this ministry is in the Christian household. Here, fathers are still the heads of their households, but fathers may and often should delegate this ministry to their wives, under their supervision. Lay people may also find other opportunities for teaching in a non-authoritative way as they interact with relatives and friends.

Within the local parish, lay people may also employ this teaching ministry, if so delegated by the rector, in teaching Sunday school classes or other teaching ministries. However, their teaching is under submission to the rector who has been especially ordained to an authoritative teaching ministry in the Church.

What Can Women Do?

If women can't serve as bishops, priests, or deacons in the Church – then what *can* they do?

The answer is both simple and profound: *just about everything else!* Women have usually constituted the majority of churchgoers and have exercised their God-given gifts and talents in innumerable ways. They are not permitted to be bishops, presbyters, or deacons: they can serve in almost every other imaginable capacity. This includes being Sunday school teachers for children and youth, as well as vestry members and members of various committees and guilds. For some Anglican parishes (though not all) women may be lectors, and women may be acolytes. Throughout Church history women have served especially in

ministry to children and other women and have often been the primary and all-important teachers of the faith to their own children.

Churches, both in the past and today, have foolishly and even sinfully restricted the ministry of women in ways that they should not have. It is incumbent upon the churches in every Christian tradition to re-examine how they may make better use of God's gifts that He has given to the women in their churches. One important example of this is the re-introduction of the non-ordained office of deaconess into some churches, an office that we saw existed in the early Church for some centuries.⁶

It is time for the Church to unite around the biblical and traditional teaching of male-only headship – in part, that the special, though non-ordained, callings of women may be clarified and magnified.

Such a magnification of the role of women may also benefit the Church by reminding all of us that there is only one Body of Christ, of which all Christians are members. Each member is obligated to employ his gifts and talents for the glory of God and the good of all men. Perhaps an invigorated emphasis on women's ministry may remind us all that one does not need to be ordained to serve God and that in the eyes of God the ordained clergyman and the non-ordained layperson are all of equal worth.

One of the distortions brought into the Church by women's ordination is the (often unconscious) idea that the only ministry that matters is that of the ordained clergy. The push to ordain women in the church betrays an implicit sacerdotalism that to serve God as ordained clergy makes one essentially superior and of greater value to God than to serve Him as laity. Just the opposite is true. To bar women from ordination is not to demean or denigrate them but only to be faithful to God the Father's ordering of His Creation and His House and to remember the value of every member in God's house.

A proper ordering of God's house around male-only clergy with a highly active laity is a great blessing to both the Church and the world!

⁶ For more information on what the office of deaconess is and what deaconesses do, visit <https://recdss.org>.

CHAPTER VI – Man and Woman in Marriage and Family

The Ven. W. Scott Thompson

Introduction

The first order of introduction to this topic is to touch on marriage itself. The first marriage occurs in Genesis 2, where the woman is created out of the man, and God brings the woman to the man. The union is such that they become “one flesh,” which we will treat more fully later. The man and the woman are united for the purpose of serving and glorifying God. We see this in the commission of Gen 1:28 to “be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it...” The man and woman are God’s instruments in populating the earth with offspring, and in stewardship over the earth by caring for it and its creatures. Only a man and a woman are capable of joining in this Scriptural union of “one flesh,” and of serving God through marriage in the way He has decreed.

The roles of men and women in marriage and family are well established in Holy Scripture, they but are under revisionist attack in most current cultural contexts, often including within the church. Rooted largely in the feminist movement, the idea that women and men are equal in all aspects of ability has been woven into our consciousness with constant media marination, and subsequently into our body of law. This cultural mantra has so evangelized the church in many areas that perspectives on the roles of men and women are often shaped more by cultural concerns rather than by Scriptural norms.

The idea that all humans are created equal is true in only one ultimate sense, that of equal value as a created human being before the perfectly impartial God of Holy Scripture. The concepts of equal rights, equal liberty, and other “rights-associated” equality draw ultimately from that equal human value before God, whether our culture acknowledges that or not. But equality does not exist in any individual comparative sense among persons.

Comparative equality among humans draws largely upon the definition of “equal” in its verb form, meaning the same in number or amount. No two human beings are the same in that sense. Some folks have introverted natures, others extroverted, with lots of variants in between those poles. Some folks are wittier than others. Some folks are more academic than others. Some folks are more talented at music than others. Some folks are better athletes than others. I love to play golf, but I will never attain the level of play that tour professionals have. So I am relegated to my double digit handicap and watching the real talent on TV. “Certainly no person is the “same as” any other person. Each person is utterly unique and unrepeatable and Christianity is not egalitarian but hierarchical as is all of life.”¹

The differences between men and women are obvious from even casual physical observation. Men are generally larger framed, more muscular, more powerful athletes, etc. Women are framed more delicately and as child bearers, and are less powerful athletes (thus

¹ H. Ivor Kraft, *The Sacrifice*. Forward in Christ, Vol. 14, No. 2, Dec. 2021- Jan 2022, Forward in Faith North America, Bedford, TX, 15

the separation of male and female athletics, and the insane drama being played out as “transgender” males romp women in women’s sports events). The egalitarian would have us believe that differences between men and women are antiquated social constructs that can be debunked by a literal understanding of equality. However, the real social construct is the myth of equality, or “sameness”, among the sexes. Such thinking is, quite simply, illogical and irrational. Simple empirical observation lends the lie to it.

Scripture carries its recurrent theme of male headship from the creation account into marriage with simple clarity. It is the man who is created first, and the woman is from man. St. Paul highlights this as a basis for his argument for head coverings of the woman in 1 Cor 11:8-9. Furthermore, the woman is created (1) because it is not good for the man to be alone, and (2) because the man needs a helper. She is fully human, fully in the image of God, and “comparable” (equal and adequate as a helper) to him (Gen 2:18). Being created as a helper does not place the woman inferior to the man in terms of value before God. Rather, it tells us that the man has a job that he is not competent to do without the woman. The man and woman together are complete, yet the man stands at the head of the relationship. When we move to the next chapter of Genesis, and the woman is deceived by the serpent, we read that God came into the garden calling for the man. It is the man, in his role as head, that must answer to God for the fall.

The inference that a woman can do anything a man can do, or vice versa, is at best easily refuted, and at worst completely irrational. Admittedly, there are many tasks that men and women may be equally good at. They may have equal potential as competent musicians, scholars, or linguists. They may be equally competent physicians or teachers. But there are important areas related to roles in the family where they simply are not functionally equal.

For example, the man is the one uniquely suited for supporting the family with income. It was the man to whom God spoke in Gen 3:17 in the cursing of the ground. Having already established the man as head of the marriage relationship, the Genesis account explicitly points to the man. It is to him that the cursed ground will intensify the labors to which he is uniquely suited. The woman’s punishment is likewise framed in things she is suited to do, childbearing and submission to the husband as the head of the family. That is not to say that there is never a situation where the woman has to provide for a family. In cases such as the death of a male provider, she may indeed have to assume that role, as did Naomi in the OT book of Ruth. The point is that it is not a normative situation. Where possible, it should be mitigated or corrected by either remarriage, family assistance, or church assistance. Where these solutions are not available, the woman is left to shoulder a burden that is very difficult for her.

With respect to the woman’s unique roles, the bearing of children stands foremost, and is not to be dismissed as if it were some outdated chauvinistic bias. It is the woman who bears the child in gestation. The pre-birth nurturing of the child is a strong foundation for the future nurturing role of the mother. Of course, we all know that bearing a child is not something a man can do. But the nurturing of the mother is not up his alley either. It is the woman who is equipped with the loving sensitivity to the emotional and developmental needs of child and family, and it is she who is uniquely equipped to provide it. That is why a

child's attachment to the mother is so unique, and why the mother's care of the child is so much more encompassing than the father's. And that is part of the reason the mother is such a strong anchor point in the Christian family.

The Role of the Man in Marriage

We move now to take up the roles and duties of men and women in marriage. We will deal with the man's role first, since Scripture accords him the greatest duty, which I shall elaborate upon later. The signal passage of Holy Scripture is Eph 5:25-33. We will touch on other passages as well, but the most direct and complete set of commands to married Christians comes from St. Paul, who is surely elaborating on OT passages such as Gen 2:23-24, but giving us the greater light of NT elaboration through direct divine revelation. The passage reads as follows in the NKJV:

Eph 5:25-33 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. ²⁸ So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. ³⁰ For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. ³¹ *"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."* ³² This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. ³³ Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

Love – The Single Command

The man is given a single command with respect to the woman (as is the woman with respect to the man, which we will treat later). The Greek verb used here is the second person plural imperative of the verb *agapao* (to love). In English we have one word for love. One can say "I love pickup trucks, I love spaghetti, I love flowers, or I love my wife," all using the same verb. In Greek there are several different words for love. For example, *eros* is a Greek word for physical love or sexual desire. *Philia* is another Greek word for the love we often associate with close friendship. Philadelphia, the city of brotherly love, derives from this word. But *agape* love is an unconditional and sacrificial love. The Bible uses this word to describe the love of Jesus for people (Mk 10:21), the love of God the Father for Jesus (Jn 3:35), the love of God for the world (Jn 3:16), and even Jesus' command to love our neighbors and enemies (Mt 6:43-44). It is with this *agape* that the man is to love his wife; deeply, unconditionally, and sacrificially.

Perhaps you have heard the old saying that "love is a verb." Of course, it is a noun also, and can be used as other figures of speech as well. But the point is that love of another

person is more of something we do than something we feel. Feelings are there in true love, of course. But feelings of love lead to actions of love. This is especially true of *agape*.

The greatest description of love ever written resides in Holy Scripture as the thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians. It is well worth frequent and prayerful reading. Paul has nothing to say about infatuation and tingly feelings of romantic arousal. He says some things about love that seem to surprise us. Love *suffers*, and it suffers *long*. Paul is not referring only to bodily pain here, but to self-control in perhaps aggravating circumstances posed by others. Love does not *envy*, and is not *puffed up*. Love is not *rude*. It does not *seek its own* (a sacrificial note here), and is not *provoked*. Love *endures all things*. Love is a verb.

Paul closes the chapter with this: “And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love (1 Cor 13:13).” Is Paul saying that love is greater than our faith in Christ and our hope in eternity? Yes, but how so? The context is, in fact, eternity, which Paul has addressed immediately before this sentence. When we are in eternity, our faith in Christ will be consummated, for we will be eternally saved and present with the One in whom our faith had rested. My hope for eternal life will have been fulfilled. But love will continue into eternity, in a glorified dimension that I do not believe we can even begin to contemplate (1 Cor 2:9). And yes, the love Paul refers to in 1 Cor 13 is *agape*. This is the love men are to have for their wives.

Christ as the Standard of Love

Having shown the love St. Paul means for men to have for their wives, we may be deeply concerned with our ability to measure up. But the bar is even higher than we thought. Paul wastes no time in letting the other shoe drop, and it is a weighty one. The standard we are to meet, the measure we are to achieve, the bar we are to clear, is none other than Christ Himself, God the Son. Men are to love their wives “just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her.” *Just as Christ* also loved the church. Now we are wont to sit down and breathe deeply, and ponder the predicament we are in. God Himself is the standard. No such standard is imposed (at least not directly) on the woman. What is a man supposed to do?

Paul cites Christ giving himself for His church. Christ did indeed die for His church. Now, many a man will stand and avow his willingness to die, to give his life for his wife. To die in her place to save her life. Such a sacrifice may result from any number of emergencies or evil situations. But of course, the man’s sacrificial death cannot atone for his wife as Christ did. Nevertheless, such a willingness on the part of the man is a demonstration (love is a verb) of his love for her (Jn 15:13). But is that the only dimension to this measure of love.

Paul gives us the reason for Christ giving Himself for the church. It is “that He might sanctify and cleanse her, ... that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, ... that she should be holy and without blemish.” Paul does not mean that men are able to sanctify their wives by themselves, or that they are to present their wives to themselves. That is the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit in the church, consisting of both men and women. But in loving their wives as Christ loved the church, men work out their purpose in being part of the bride of Christ themselves. They model, in the marriage relationship, the very relationship of

Christ to His church. That is why Paul tells us that “This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.” Paul’s instructions are not just temporal admonitions for men to behave themselves, but divine commands for men to step up to their God-given duty in the glorification of the Bride of Christ, of which they are a part.

Before we leave the duty of the man in marriage, is there a broader context in which we should examine the example of Christ that men are to follow in loving their wives? Let’s look at Jesus’ love for the twelve. St. Luke relates a dispute among the disciples: “Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest (Lk 22:24).” This passage is placed immediately after Luke’s account of the institution of the Lord’s Supper and the disclosure by Christ that one of them is a betrayer. One would think this to be a occasion for a good dressing down by the Lord of all creation. But what is Jesus’ reply? “He who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves (Lk 22:26). Do we not hear the words of St. Paul ringing in our ears: *Love suffers long, love is kind.*

For another example, we find that in the feeding of the four thousand, Jesus is moved to compassion on the multitude because they had followed Him for three days and there was nothing for them to eat. *Compassion* here is a deep, heartfelt empathy for another person. Such compassion by Jesus is frequent in the Gospels. The Good Shepherd has compassion on those who are weary and scattered like sheep without a shepherd (Mt. 9:36). He heals the sick out of compassion (Mt 14:14). And in that wonderful parable of Lk 15, we see the Father having compassion on the repentant son, running out to him when he was yet a great way off, and falling on his neck and kissing him. *Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

Jesus’ treatment of women is cameoed when he comes to Bethany upon the death of Lazarus. The sisters of Lazarus, Martha and Mary, are mourning. We are told immediately that “...Jesus loved Martha and her sister.... (Jn 11:5). Martha went out to meet Jesus and opined that if He had come earlier, her brother would be alive. Jesus preached the Gospel to her. “I am the resurrection and the life...Do you believe this?” Martha’s glorious reply is the one we must all confess if we are to be saved. “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is come into the world (Jn 11:27).” Jesus’ love for Martha evokes the Gospel from her Lord. Her salvation is as important to Him as any other human being. *Love rejoices in the truth.*

So we learn from the Scriptures that Jesus giving himself for the church has more dimensions than his sacrificial death alone. His life is part of His gift to the church as well. A man has much to measure up to in his responsibilities in marriage. Nothing short of the indwelling Holy Spirit of God can possibly enable a man to approach such a standard.

The Self as a Standard of Love

As if the measure of the love of Christ for the church was not daunting enough for men, St. Paul adds another. The man is to love his wife as himself. This is not a new commandment from Paul. We hear from the mouth of Jesus in his summary of the law to

“...love your neighbor as yourself (Mt 22:39).” Jesus is quoting the OT here, from Lev 19:18. St. Paul reiterates this command in Rom 13:9. There are also other versions of this same theme. “...just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise. (Lk 6:31, Mt 7:12).”

If the standard is the self, then the question is, do we love ourselves? The answer is, of course, that we do. God knows that we do, and He wouldn't have given this command if we didn't. Note that Paul frames it in terms of the body. “For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church (Eph 5:29).” As before, Christ is part and parcel of this standard. Christ nourishes and cherishes the church because “...we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones (Eph 5:30).” All of this has its roots in the first marriage of Gen 2. God made the woman and brought her to the man, who said: “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh (Gen 2:23).” The man leaves his parents and is joined to his wife, and they become one flesh (Gen 2:24).

This matter of one flesh in the first marriage is carried forward by Paul to the Corinthians. It is something that applies to all marriages, whether the couple realizes it or not. In God's eyes, this business of one flesh is quite real and quite serious. A couple may come before the altar of God as two people to be married, but they leave as one. Yes, we do see two literal, physical people walking out of the church, seemingly as they walked in. But they are one. So real is this bodily, fleshly aspect of the marriage that Paul touches on it again in warning the Corinthians against adultery.

1 Cor 5:15-16, 18 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not! ¹⁶ Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For "the two," He says, "shall become one flesh." ...¹⁸ Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.

The sexual union of man and woman is confined to marriage because it is the consummation of the state of being one flesh together. So real is this aspect of the union that Paul threatens the adulterer with becoming one with a harlot. Recreational sex is prohibited because it violates this “one flesh” dimension of marriage. The mystery of our marital union being an image of the church lies in the sacrifice of Christ. There is a bodily dimension to the sacrifice given on the cross. We feed on Him in the Eucharist.

Finally, let us note that this unity of the husband and wife, this oneness of body of the married couple, extends to authority over each other's body.

Eph 7:3-4 Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. ⁴The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.

For the man to love his wife as Christ loved the church, and to love his wife as he loves himself, are the standards set. St. Peter tells us that such understanding gives honor to the wife, and reminds us that both husband and wife are heirs together of grace (1 Pet 3.7).

The Role of the Woman in Marriage

Having treated St. Paul's admonitions to the husband, we look now to the role of the woman in marriage. Of course, if we look at the whole of Scripture, we will find that Scripture assumes numerous roles for women in marriage, not the least of which would be childbearing. Yet Paul does not rehearse all of these specifics, but gives an overarching rubric under which all these roles should be performed. He is more concise in his command to the woman than he was to the man. The Ephesians passage reads:

Eph 5:22-24 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. ²⁴ Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

Submit – The Single Command

The single command to the wife is to “submit” to her husband. The word means to obey or be obedient. In our culture today, this is largely taken as an offensive relic of an ancient, male dominated culture, and relegated to insignificance in our modern era of liberated women and egalitarian insistence. If we simply lift the words of Eph 5:22 out and stand them alone, we do indeed seem to have a rather curt statement to women to submit to (obey) their husbands in the same way they are to submit to God. Were that the true connotation, we would have to admit to a difficult and seemingly unrealistic demand. But that is not the context that Scripture provides, as we shall see. The husband is not to be literally worshipped and obeyed as one would God, but he is to be accorded the deference and respect of his role as head of the family.

St. Paul is most surely bringing the creation account forward here (including the fall) as a basis for the commands he gives to women and to men in marriage. Submission here cannot mean blind and cowering obedience to a dictatorial husband who runs the household and the marital relationship like a rogue monarch. We specifically read in Genesis that the woman is created for two overarching purposes. One is that God declared that it was not good for the man to be alone. The other is that he needed a helper, and not just any helper (none of the animals would do) but one comparable to him. The clear implication is that Adam, already placed in the garden and under the commands of God regarding keeping it and abstaining from the forbidden food, had a job which he was not competent to perform without such a helper.

Throughout Scripture we find examples of women advising the head of the family or the heirs of headship. Sometimes their actions are sinful, just as are some of the actions of the male heads of families. The Bible shows us both the good and bad sides of both. For

example, Sara's suggestion that Abraham have a son by her servant Hagar was a sinful temptation to her husband and an attempt to realize God's promise of a son through her own devices (Gen 16:1-4, 15-16). But her insistence that the son Ismael be cast out when he became a liability, though painful to Abraham, was confirmed by God as part of His purpose in the lineage of Israel (Gen 21:8-13).

Submission to others must include being a good helper or assistant. The woman is to voice her opinions, desires, and ideas as well as the man. This may indeed bring instances of mutual submission. What man who loves his wife as Christ loves the church will not subordinate some of his priorities sacrificially to the good of his wife, just as she does the opposite for him. While ultimate family decisions need to have the nod of the man, they are best arrived at by collaboration, discussion, and mutual prayer, and a wise man will understand that this is so.

When I was a young Navy officer, there were occasions when a senior officer appeared bent on a decision that might have adverse consequences that he had not envisioned. There were some junior officers that would withhold advice and knowingly let the senior officer err, hoping it would result in that senior officer's embarrassment. We called that "malicious obedience." That is an example of submission in a sinful way. The submission that St. Paul speaks of for women, as seen in the whole Scriptural context, is a collaborative submission. Moses gave an example of this in pleading with God not to destroy Israel (Num 14:13-19). Rather than remain silent and watch God destroy Israel, he pointed out unfavorable consequences among heathen nations, and pleaded for mercy and pardon. God did so "...according to your (*Moses*) word...(Num 14:20, italics mine)." A similar example would be the intercession of Abraham with the Lord over Sodom (Gen 18:16-33).

Headship of the Husband

The headship of the male has its origins in being created first. The woman originally comes out of the man. It is the man in Gen 2:23 that named the woman and declared her one flesh with himself, and thus initiated the marriage relationship of man and woman. St. Paul cites this creation order in 1 Cor 11:8-9 as part of his rationale for the covering of the woman's head in worship. According to Paul, this creation order places man directly under Christ in the hierarchy of the church, and the woman under the man (1 Cor 11:7).

When we come to the fall in Genesis 3, we find that God's punishment for the man and the woman reflect their roles in the family to a significant extent. The man is the bread earner. It is his responsibility, however he may be assisted by his wife, to provide for the material needs of the family. His occupational focus, to use a modern term, is outside the home, and it is this toil that will be exceedingly difficult for him now. The ground is cursed and will produce competing vegetation with the food. He will sweat and toil for a living and return to the dust from which he came.

The punishment of the woman focuses on childbearing, which points to the home and not the workplace. Just as the pain of providing for the family is laid upon the man, the pain of producing and nurturing the family is placed upon the woman. To suggest that the

woman's primary place in the home is highly offensive to many women today, but Scripture everywhere points to it. The virtuous wife of Prov 31:10-29 stands as a magnificent testimony to the woman in marriage. It is most complementary to womanhood. All of the activities of the virtuous wife, including her commercial pursuits and wise counsel, are directed toward her nurturing care and provision of the home and the family.

There are times, of course, when women must assume functions as head of the house. Desertion and divorce are some sad causes of this. Death or incapacitation of a husband is another. Military families bear the burden of long absences by the husband. Nothing in Scripture prevents a woman from assuming duties as household head when she has no other alternative. We must simply understand that though it may be necessary, it is not normative, and can hopefully be mediated by family or church. Naomi was in such a situation with her daughters-in-law. She wisely sought the relief of family and the law of Israel to relieve her situation, and her faithful daughter-in-law Ruth married a kinsman and gave birth to Obed, an ancestor of Christ.

Marriage as a Model of the Church

St. Paul closes his command to the wife in marriage with a comparison to the subjection of the church to Christ as a standard. "Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything (Eph 5:24)." The wife is to look to the church as a model of her role in relation to her husband. It follows then that the wife who does this also acts as an example and image of the submission of the church to Christ. This is no matter of small consequence. The man is to love his wife as Christ loves the church, and the woman is to respond to that love as the church does to Christ.

Of course, the church is to worship Christ. Scripture does not command the woman to worship her husband as she worships Christ, but to worship Christ along with him and the church. Nevertheless, her respect of and submission to her husband acknowledges his headship of the family as an earthly image of Christ's headship of the church. The church receives the command of Christ to keep His commandments through the Apostles to whom He gave it (Jn 14:15). Likewise, the "new" commandment to love one another (Jn 13:34) stands over the numerous Scriptural functions of the church, including evangelism, care of the poor, and other functions of the bride of Christ. In this way, the command to the man to love his wife comes to the wife as well in her relationship with her husband. As the church keeps the commandments of Christ out of love for Him, so the woman models the church in her role in marriage. And so both the man and the woman together strike an image of Christ and His church before the world when they live out St. Paul's framework for marriage.

Conclusion

We conclude that men and women in marriage have clear Scriptural roles. There is a hierarchical structure in the marriage, as there is in all of creation, and as there is the Divine relationships in the Holy Trinity. The man is to function as head of the family. The wife is to function in submission to him, but as a helper and partner. Together they were commissioned

by God to “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it...(Gen 1:28. See also Gen 9:7).” Scripture is equally clear that there is no partiality with God (Rom 2:11). Man and Woman stand before God as human creations of equal value and sharers in the saving grace of Christ. So there is an order in human marital relationships that is not egalitarian but complementarian, yet there is an eternal equality of value before God.

Discussion Questions:

1. What Scriptures, both OT and NT, convey the hierarchical structure of male headship in the family?
2. What Scriptures, both OT and NT, convey the complementary role of women in the family?
3. What are some potential consequences to families when Male/Female roles are egalitarian or reversed?
4. What is God’s overarching mandate to the family in Scripture?
5. Can you think of practical examples of Godly male headship? Of Godly female submission?

CHAPTER VII – Man and Woman in the World

Dss. Teresa Johnson

Introduction

We have learned in other chapters that God created Adam and Eve in His image, equal in being, and commissioned them to fill the earth and serve as co-regents over it. Their shared purpose was quickly eclipsed by the selfish ambition that overcame Eve in the moment she decided disobedience to her Creator would provide benefits that God was withholding from her. Harmony between the man and the woman was replaced by excuses and blame-shifting, and the seed of the serpent was set at enmity with the seed of the woman. Knowing this, we should not be surprised that conflict arises daily in every area of our lives as Christians, and even more so as we interact with those who have not been transformed by the Gospel.

Therefore, it is important for us to take seriously that Christ, who is the Light of the World, has proclaimed that we also are the light of the world. Wherever we go, we are faced with the choice of shining His light to draw others to Him or behaving no differently from those who are driven by selfish desires and personal agendas—the seed of the serpent. To present “ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice,” we must continually examine our own hearts to determine whether our attitudes toward our fellow humans—especially toward those of the opposite sex—are rooted in the truth of the Word of God or the false notions of a culture that does not understand the inexorable goodness of God and the high and holy purpose to which He has called us in both the Creation Mandate and the Great Commission. All that we do should reflect his glory as we encounter others at work and in the world.

Rules of Engagement

The book of Ecclesiastes depicts a love-hate relationship between mankind and work. Multiple laments about the vanity of toil are interspersed with warnings against laziness and exhortations for us to enjoy our labor and the fruits thereof. There is no contradiction here; both concepts are true. On the one hand, work was part of the created order, as it is an aspect of being made in the image of God. We should embrace the opportunity to use our God-given talents to earn a living so that we may take care of our own families and have enough left over to share with others. On the other hand, the Fall introduced difficulties not only into work itself, but also into our relationships with each other. This is especially true when we are dealing with unbelievers, whether as co-workers or fellow drivers on a busy road. As Christian men and women we are to follow biblical principles in navigating these difficulties, and our goal must be obedience to God rather than fulfillment of our own selfish desires or adherence to the ungodly standards of the world.

A first principle to uphold wherever we are—home, work, marketplace—is that of honesty. This principle includes telling the truth, but it also incorporates the concept of truth in action, as seen in a commandment introduced in Leviticus 19:35-37 about honest scales

and other measuring devices. This concept is repeated several times in the Old Testament. The theme of honesty runs throughout the New Testament as well. St. Peter writes, “Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.” This principle also extends to our attitudes toward our co-workers. It means being willing to admit when we are wrong and correctly evaluating the contributions of others. Men who view women as intellectually inferior or who resent women’s participation in the workforce may deny the competence of their female co-workers, regardless of evidence to the contrary. Women who consider all men to be patriarchal adversaries may view their male co-workers with suspicion or disdain, doubting their motives and arguing with them just to be disagreeable. As Christian men and women, we are obligated to be honest and upright in every matter, including our treatment of those of the opposite sex.

A second principle is that of diligence, which the writer of Proverbs calls “man’s precious possession.” We read that “He who is slothful in his work is a brother to him who is a great destroyer. Additional passages in Proverbs compare diligence with laziness, linking diligence with success and laziness with ruin: “The hand of the diligent will rule, but the lazy man will be put to forced labor.” Jesus picks up this theme in the parable of the talents, in which the wicked and lazy servant who had been entrusted with one talent did not attempt to increase his master’s wealth as he was expected to do. A large part of diligence is keeping our focus on our work during the time for which we are being paid. Men who spend time talking about last night’s basketball game or women who spend time talking about their children instead of pursuing their assigned tasks are lacking in diligence. Further, we are not good witnesses if we read the Bible or talk about last Sunday’s sermon while on the clock.

A critical factor in exercising diligence is gaining the knowledge and wisdom to fulfill our duties with excellence. If additional training or education is required for excellence at our work, we should be eager to pursue it. We should follow the example of the wise virgins who took extra oil with them because they had taken time to consider how to prepare for awaiting the bridegroom’s arrival. The foolish virgins were not wise enough to think ahead, and they were banned from entering the feast. It does not honor God for us to do our work in a slipshod manner.

A third principle is that of graciousness. We may be scrupulously honest and admirably diligent yet behave so obnoxiously as to alienate everyone around us and thus dishonor the name of Christ. In all our dealings with others, we must demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit, namely “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” Each of these characteristics is as applicable to Christian men as it is to Christian women. One of the lies women often hear is that they must act like men if they are to be successful in the workplace. It is a lie on two different levels. We must be as God made us, and He made men and women different for a reason. But even more, if “acting like a man” means being cold and unkind in our interactions and ruthless in transacting business, then neither men nor women should take that advice. It does not matter whether the people around us are behaving graciously or yelling obscenities, we are called to obey Christ. Nor does it matter whether our Spirit-filled demeanor inspires our co-workers to curb their bad behavior, although that is sometimes the result. What matters is that we must behave like

sons and daughters of God—salt and light—and demonstrate His love to those with whom we come into contact. Where others tear down and ridicule, we must speak the truth in love. Where others stop to place blame when something goes wrong, we should lead the way in planning how to correct the situation. Where others stir up anger and discontent, we should champion peace and reconciliation. Where others allow their emotions to run away with them, we should exhibit self-control.

A fourth principle is that of fidelity. Given the erosion of sexual morality, we as Christians are compelled to exercise self-control through remaining chaste and honoring the chastity of our co-workers. In a workplace where men and women spend a great deal of time together, temptations can arise. But St. Paul admonishes the people of God to “abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God.” Whether married or single, we must remain faithful to God and guard against improper affections.

But what if our sincere desire to be obedient is challenged by unwanted advances? Unfortunately, sexual harassment at work is not new. Potiphar’s wife made repeated attempts to seduce Joseph (who was “handsome in form and appearance”) while he served as a slave in her home. Due to her false accusation, Joseph spent at least two years in prison. An opposite example is that of Boaz, who warned Ruth not to go to any other fields to glean because she might not be safe from evil men. He had forbidden his field workers to harass her, but he could not guarantee that she would be safe from unwanted attention elsewhere. As a man of God in a position of authority, Boaz took seriously the responsibility of his employees, as well as those who sought refuge with him.

The final principle is to honor those in authority over us. One of our greatest opportunities to show our obedience to Christ is to honor the civil government in all things that are lawful to Christ and to honor those who are above us in the chain of command at work. Whether that person is referred to as a manager, supervisor, boss, or team leader, he or she is due our respect and obedience, within the boundaries of the law. This is true whether the person in authority is a member of the opposite sex and whether he or she is a godly manager. (More will be said about being a godly manager in the next section.) If a Christian man rebels against his manager simply because she is a woman, or vice versa, God is not honored. We of all people should understand that all authority comes from God, so to hold a manager in contempt out of pride or prejudice is to be in rebellion against God. Because the concept of authority is such an important aspect of not only of our work but also of our place as image-bearers in the world, we will explore it further in the following section.

Duties of a Shepherd

God’s Word provides many images of the Sovereign authority of God, including King and Father. But the image He has provided for those responsible for the Church is that of shepherd, and there is much to be said for taking this image into the workplace and civil life. Managers and magistrates who understand that their authority comes from God will demonstrate His characteristics, seeking justice impartially yet leading with a heart of love.

They will be concerned with the good of their charges, and with ensuring that the rich and powerful do not prey on the weak and vulnerable. They will, in other words, serve as shepherds rather than dictators. Jesus tells his disciples that anyone who wants to be great among men must be their servant, and we see this principle in God's willingness to sacrifice his Son for those who had rebelled against him. A goal of redemption is to reconcile sinners with the godly authority against which they have rebelled so that they can find provision and protection. Whether in the home, the workplace, or the civil arena, those who bear God's delegated authority must be providers and protectors—shepherds of those within their purview.

Provision of all mankind's needs was a part of God's original design. He created the garden with everything Adam and Eve could possibly need for their health and well-being. Even his commandments must be viewed as a provision to guide us in his ways. Today, He provides for His people through the Church, where His representatives feed us spiritually with Word and Sacrament. Sutton notes, "The original priestly task of Adam was to feed, being called to 'till' the ground," and this metaphor continues into the New Testament, where Jesus tells Peter, "Feed my sheep." Provision in the workplace takes the form of supervisors ensuring that their employees are equipped with everything they need to accomplish their tasks. Civil magistrates have similar duties to pass laws that ensure the orderly transaction of business.

Protection was made necessary by the Fall. Genesis 3:15 defines the great dividing line between the children of God and the children of Satan. God and those to whom he delegates authority pronounce judgment against all who would harm his family. We see this in the collect for the Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany: "O God, whose blessed Son was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil, and make us the sons of God, and heirs of eternal life:..." Civil rulers bear the power of the sword precisely so that they can defend their people against all enemies, and Bishops bear equivalent power to condemn false doctrine that would destroy the people of God. Consider St. Paul's address to the leaders of the church at Ephesus:

Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears. (Acts 20:28-31)

This two-pronged theme of provision and protection, the major duties of a shepherd, is a major theme of the psalms, and indeed, of all of Scripture.

Let's consider a few examples. Boaz is a perfect human representation of an authority figure who understood his responsibility both to provide for and protect the people under his purview. We see from his servants' loving and respectful attitude toward him that he ruled his estate in a godly manner. We also see evidence of his provision for the poor, in leaving not just what the law required for gleaners but ordering his workers to drop extra. When Ruth

came to glean, he took her under his protection with no intent of exploiting her. He called her his daughter, not to be possessive or overbearing, but because he recognized his responsibility to care for her as he would care for his own child. His authority as a landowner, employer, and benefactor is marked by compassion, self-sacrifice, and honor. Boaz had taken the Creation Mandate seriously and was offering back his entire life and all his possessions to the glory of God and to the good of God's people.

In the life of Joseph, we see someone who suffered much at the hands of his family, but when it came time to help the brothers who had left him for dead, he exercised his God-given authority with compassion—God-given because although Pharaoh was the one who elevated him to be second in the kingdom, his place of honor was the fulfillment of the dream of the sheaves that God had given him in his youth. Joseph could have been harsh with his brothers, and for a time it appeared that he planned to be, but his goal was to restore his family and then to provide for them and protect them from the famine.

Another Joseph, the earthly father of our Lord, is an authority figure who understood his responsibilities, both in his treatment of his beloved fiancée and his acceptance of her Son as his own. Even before he found out that the Child she was carrying was the promised Seed, he agonized over the thought of publicly humiliating her, resigning himself to keep hidden what he thought was her shame. Subsequently, he took very seriously his calling to be the earthly father of a heavenly Son. He upended his own life to protect his family when Herod turned his murderous eye toward all the babies in the region as Pharaoh had done before him.

A final example to consider is St. Paul. In his initial zeal, he exercised what he thought was his God-given authority against Christians. But after his conversion, he aligned himself with the True Authority. He took up his calling as a shepherd of God's flock who risked his own life countless times to establish churches and equip their leaders. The persecutor became the persecuted as he traveled around to guide the churches he had planted and protect them from false teachers. He agonized over them, prayed for them, and stayed in touch with them as much as he was able. Even the sternest warnings found in the Pauline epistles were designed not to discourage the flock but to bring his wandering spiritual children back into obedience, for their own good and for the advancement of the Kingdom.

Without an understanding that provision and protection are fundamental to godly order, authority is often wielded as a hammer, in which the one in authority is interested only in personal aggrandizement, leaving those below them to either cower in fear of undeserved punishment or submit to unreasonable demands. Conversely, those who abdicate their responsibilities as shepherd and fail to exercise godly discipline are inviting chaos and rebellion to rule instead. The worst-case scenario is for leaders to call evil good and good evil. When authority is exploited or weakened, God is dishonored and the cause of Christ is scandalized. But the proper exercise of authority leads to a healthy environment where everyone involved is honored as an image-bearer and equipped to accomplish the work to which they are called.

Women's Work

Although the principles in the previous section apply equally to women and men, there are a few additional concerns where women are concerned. We will begin by examining two areas in which the Reformed Episcopal Church has spoken about the role of women, namely, Holy Orders and military combat. The first area is discussed in a 2017 Pastoral Letter from our bishops. The topic of women's ordination is discussed more fully in other chapters in this book, but the pastoral letter summarizes our position as follows:

We begin by reassuring you that based on the authority of the Holy Scriptures as understood by the Great Tradition of the Church for two thousand years, we believe that only a baptized male may be ordained into the Holy Orders of Deacon, Presbyter, and Bishop. Our Churches have held this position without dispute for over one hundred forty-four years. For many years it was not necessary to state this principle in our *Constitution and Canons*. In recent years, however, both the Reformed Episcopal Church in North America and the Free Church of England have safeguarded this conviction by making certain that our *Constitution and Canons* explicitly state the historic, Scriptural position on Holy Orders. In addition, our North American jurisdiction has restored the ancient and Biblical lay Office of Deaconess and is committed to fostering the proper, Biblically important ways for women to have ministry in the Kingdom of God.

The second area is discussed in two resolutions written by our Council of Bishops to address women's involvement in the Armed Forces. In the first document, entitled "Resolution on Women in Combat" (2017), our bishops object to the United States government's impending decision to remove the restriction on women serving in combat, stating that "it is the special gift of God to women that they bear children for the preservation of the human race and the glory of God, and the policy of placing women in combat is destructive to the exercise of that gift." The resolution concludes that our bishops "give deepest gratitude and honor to those courageous women who have served their country in military support roles, especially those who have served in harm's way," and they commit "prayer support to all military members and families serving this great nation around the world." This resolution went unheeded, prompting a subsequent document entitled "Resolution on Selective Service Registration and Potential Conscription of Women to Military Service" (2020), which argues against the inclusion of women in the draft, since "some of our female members may, on the basis of their theological and biblical concerns, object to serving in the military especially in combat roles."

With those proscriptions in mind, we look to the Scriptures for guidance on "the proper, Biblically important ways for women to have ministry in the Kingdom of God," with the understanding that ministry is not confined to the four walls of a church building. If we keep our focus on the glorious privilege we are granted to serve as Kingdom builders and not on the popular notions of equal rights and individual fulfillment, we will find that in God's service is perfect freedom, a promise that is just as true for women as it is for men. There are many professions in which women may legitimately serve God. We will begin with the first and most obvious responsibility of women whom God has blessed with children, and that is the role of mother. Although both parents have a responsibility to train their children to follow Christ, mothers have a special role during a child's early years, so if circumstances allow, a family will benefit greatly if the mother makes the home her focus while her

children are young. As Christian women, we must learn to ignore the taunts of a culture that devalues the work of a wife and mother and therefore devalues womanhood itself. Conversely, the Church must treat with great tenderness those families whose financial situation requires a young mother to work. There are no cookie-cutter families; each family will have its own set of needs and challenges and will require its own measure of grace.

The classic example of a godly woman at work is the virtuous woman described in Proverbs 31. Her delight is in the building up of a strong, prosperous household where her family can thrive and grow. Egalitarians might focus on the fact that she single-handedly transacts land deals (and thus has authority over household finances), has a thriving textile business, and is known for her wisdom, Complementarians would note that all her work appears to be home-based and that the passage begins by placing her in the context of being someone's wife and ends with her husband and children praising her for managing her home well. Which is the correct view? In this case, both! All the accomplishments listed in this passage must be seen together to form a full view of the work to which women may be called. The work of a virtuous woman is done as unto the Lord in the service of her family (if she has one), her parish, and the poor. She exercises godly authority and responsibility in matters related to manufacturing, business, management, food production, and finances. Though it is not clear whether the writer had a particular woman in mind, the example of her resourcefulness points to such godly women as Sarah, Deborah, Hannah, Lydia, Phoebe, and Tabitha.

In choosing a career or even a temporary job, women should keep in mind that they are the heart of their home, but there is no need to limit the scope of their search to church-related work or to careers that have traditionally been the province of women, such as teaching and nursing—both of which are honorable professions. We can and should glorify God by being salt and light wherever we are, and we can do that best when we pursue work that allows us to use our God-given capabilities. We can be thankful that we no longer live in a time when women are barred from professions that have no biblical reason to remain as male-only fields. Even after it was grudgingly acknowledged that women had the capacity to contribute to such disparate fields as industry, literature, mathematics, and science, their accomplishments were often suppressed. Such dishonesty is never honoring to God. Women's competence in a wide variety of fields should not be viewed as a threat to men or an unraveling of the moral fabric of society but as an opportunity to have all people using their capabilities to participate in the vast variety of Kingdom work. It is important to note that the Anglican Reformers accepted Elizabeth I as their sovereign, even incorporating the Prayer for the Queen's Majesty in the Daily Office.

Although women are not permitted to the orders of Deacon, Priest, or Bishop, we dare not stand like Eve, staring longingly at what we cannot have, while there is so much work to be done. The early Church welcomed the ministry of women to fulfill the Great Commission, in an even greater way than women in the Old Testament had assisted in fulfilling the Creation Mandate. And this was not just in the sense that men did the important work while women had babies and taught their own children—though having babies was and is important work, as Sarah, Rachel, and Hannah would attest. But women also participated in administering justice (Deborah, Jael, Rahab), in prophesying (Miriam, Deborah, Huldah),

in diplomacy (Esther, Abigail, Miriam as a child), and in teaching (Priscilla, Eunice, and Lois).

Conclusion

As we consider what it means to be Christian men and women engaging with the world of work and the culture at large, we must learn to ask the important question, which is not, “What is in it for me?” Rather, we must honestly assess whether our earthly pursuits and our demeanor as Christian men and women are either building or harming the Kingdom of God. Our allegiance is to the Kingdom of Heaven, whose citizens we are. As such we have an obligation to reflect the character of our King every day of the week. We must recognize the dignity of work, as well as the necessity of viewing it through the lens of our whole duty to God. Our career should not define us. Our relationship to Christ defines us. If we neglect our spiritual life, attendance at worship, or time with our family for no other reason than to advance in our career, we have made work our idol, and we have failed Christ, whose invitation is to come to Him and rest.

In other words, it’s not about you or me. It’s about the glory of God and the Kingdom of God. It is about being content as God made us and serving Him as He wants to be served. In so doing, we grow in grace, and we shine the light of Christ on all around us. This concept does not apply only to those in “full-time Christian ministry.” As laity, our participation in respectable secular vocations is honoring to God, provided our jobs do not interfere with our duty to Christ, which includes our duty to our families. As we Christians pursue our various callings, we are joining David the shepherd-poet-King; Deborah and Gideon the judges; Mary, the mother of our Lord; and St. Paul the tentmaker in honoring God with our work and therefore with our very lives. To Him be the glory.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are ways in which you should become more diligent in the workplace?
2. If you are a manager, how can you better provide for and protect your employees?
3. How can you better honor the people in authority over you at work?
4. What advice would you give to a young man who is trying to discern what career to follow? A young woman?
5. What are some ways you can help bear the burden of those who are unemployed, underemployed, or have difficult, demanding jobs?

CHAPTER VIII – Extremes of Feminism and Male Chauvinism

Dss. Teresa Johnson

Introduction

Certain words are tripwires in any discussion of religion, politics, or society in general. *Feminism* is one of them, as are the terms that feminists have used to describe men: *male chauvinist*, *misogynist*, *sexist*, and worse. Similarly, the term *patriarchy* is received quite differently by those at opposite ends of the liberal/conservative or egalitarian/complementarian spectrum. The 21st Century Church is struggling with the fallout of having Christianity mischaracterized and the Gospel message compromised by those on both extremes of this debate. Considering that entire books have been written on the topic of feminism and the historical milieu from which it sprang, this brief chapter provides only a basic overview of the topic without delving into the many differences among feminists or the differences among those who oppose the feminist agenda.

The goal of this chapter is to understand how wrong attitudes about God's design for mankind have affected the Church, hindered her witness, and alienated those whom the Church should be a refuge. A brief review of some of the charges of inherent misogyny in society and in the Church will be followed by a description of a few of the feminist methods used in their attempt to rewrite Scripture and redefine the Church. The intent is to find the way back to biblical truth that men and women are created in the image of God, ontologically equal, yet functionally and physically different. Rather than demean each other or waste time and energy in power struggles, Christian men and women should recognize the beauty of God's design and pursue the common goal of building His Kingdom.

On Male Superiority

One of the pivotal scenes in the movie "My Fair Lady," which is based on a play by George Bernard Shaw, is a song entitled "Hymn to Him," sung by Professor Higgins, the notoriously chauvinistic character who takes on the challenge of training Eliza Doolittle—a poor Cockney flower seller—to speak, dress, and act like a lady. Having alienated her in the process of achieving this goal, he makes the following pronouncement:

Women are irrational, that's all there is to that!
Their heads are full of cotton, hay, and rags!
They're nothing but exasperating, irritating,
Vacillating, calculating, agitating,
Maddening and infuriating hags!

He goes on to name multiple areas in which men are superior and women inferior, concluding that women need to be more like men, or more specifically, more like him. The song is a masterful piece of satire that aligns with the playwright's socialist message and his support of equal rights for women.

Assertions about male superiority arose from a variety of secular sources, and some are based in truth, or at least partial truth misinterpreted or misapplied. Part of the problem of responding to those who would insist that men are superior to women is that the criteria for measuring superiority are often not made clear and can be subjective. There is no question that physical differences make most men better than most women at activities that require strength and endurance. The fact that most men's brains are proportionately larger than most women's has been used to assert that men are intellectually superior to women, yet research has shown that brain volume matters less than the effect of hormones on brain function and that the differences between male and female brains demonstrate some advantages on either side, which interestingly enough, supports the concept that men and women were created to be different for complementary purposes. One surprising source of teachings on male superiority is evolution. According to researcher Gerald Bergman, "A review of the prominent late 19th-century biological writings reveals that a major plank of early evolution theory was the belief that women were intellectually and physically inferior to men," Considering that this belief was based solely on the conjecture that men are required to deal with more challenges than women, thus assuming the theory to be true rather than proving it, Bergman concludes that "the women inferiority doctrine is an excellent example of the fact that armchair logic often has been more important in building Darwinism than fossil and other empirical evidence."

The feminist claim that the Church has historically taught male superiority and its corollary, female inferiority, must be examined objectively because, as with science, it is possible to state a truth from Church history yet arrive at a wrong conclusion from it. Feminists cite key passages from the Church Fathers to argue that misogyny is the reason women were denied positions of authority in the Church. It is true that some of the Fathers were influenced by Greek thought and attributed an inferior status to women. Two examples often mentioned are Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas, who both interpreted Paul as saying in I Corinthians 11:7 that women are not made in the image of God in the same way that men are. That some theologians have drawn wrong conclusions from the headship of Adam does not negate the fact that God has established an authority structure in which the husband is the head of the wife in the same way that Christ is head of the Church. But that in itself is the sticking point for feminists because they reject this biblical truth as demeaning to women, so those Scriptures and associated teachings are also cited as oppressive to women.

But there is another issue with the feminist argument, in that some of their proof texts are taken out of context and therefore do not tell an accurate story. One passage that is often used as proof of misogyny is Tertullian's diatribe against all women because of Eve's sin:

You are the devil's gateway: you are the unsealer of that (forbidden) tree: you are the first deserter of the divine law: you are she who persuaded him whom the devil was not valiant enough to attack. You destroyed so easily God's image, man. On account of your desert — that is, death — even the Son of God had to die.

Granted, this passage is quite shocking, but it is not Tertullian's only utterance about men and women. In other passages, he calls his wife his "best beloved fellow-servant in the Lord," and later refers to the unbelieving husband of a Christian wife as "a servant of the devil," an equal opportunity condemnation of men's nature. Perhaps the most convincing evidence that he is not a misogynist is his beautiful description of Christian marriage:

What kind of yoke is that of two believers, (partakers) of one hope, one desire, one discipline, one and the same service? Both (are) brethren, both fellow servants, no difference of spirit or of flesh; nay, (they are) truly "two in one flesh." Where the flesh is one, one is the spirit too. Together they pray, together prostrate themselves, together perform their fasts; mutually teaching, mutually exhorting, mutually sustaining. Equally (are they) both (found) in the Church of God; equally at the banquet of God; equally in straits, in persecutions, in refreshments. . . . Between the two echo psalms and hymns; and they mutually challenge each other which shall better chant to their Lord. Such things when Christ sees and hears, He joys. To these He sends His own peace. Where two (are), there withal (is) He Himself. Where He (is), there the Evil One is not.

To view a man and wife as "mutually exhorting, mutually sustaining" is to give women a high honor that does not align with the feminist characterization of Tertullian.

While we may applaud women who eventually broke through barriers to enter medicine, science, law, and other fields from which they had been barred due to their supposed inferiority, we cannot accept the feminist assumption that the Church is a field to be conquered in the name of women or that an all-male priesthood is a male-devised means of oppressing women. Such a view misses the point that while God created us equally in His image, he created us to be different, with different functions and different responsibilities. The headship of Adam does not equate to superiority, yet it has been interpreted as such both by feminists and anti-feminists alike—by the former to condemn it and by the latter to embrace it. God's ordained authority structure is not misogyny. It is the very essence of God's loving care for His people.

On the Feminist Mindset

In her book *The Feminist Mistake: The Radical Impact of Feminism on Church and Culture*, Mary Kassian presents the case that while early feminists focused on equal rights for women, the 1960s saw the rise of a feminism that sought to redefine the world as terms of women. In response to the assessment that women have suffered greatly throughout history because men were considered superior to them, Christian "feminists embarked on a woman-centered analysis of the Bible in order to recover *herstory*, the story about women and for women, hidden in the text." Their liberation motif was structured from Latin American Liberation Theology, which teaches that it is the business of Christianity to liberate the oppressed from their oppressors. Viewing women as an oppressed segment of society, feminists asserted that the true stories and experiences of women had been obscured by the male authors and compilers of Scriptural text and must therefore be reclaimed. To that end,

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, a feminist scholar, professor, and author, posited four principles for interpreting Scripture: suspicion, proclamation, remembrance, and imagination.

In the first principle, the suspicion is that the male authors of Holy Scripture purposely hid the truth about women and supported patriarchy because they feared the power of womanhood, and they especially feared a woman in power. Furthermore, the all-male leadership of the Church assembled a canon that perpetuated this fear of women and continued to lead the Church down a patriarchal and male-centered path that God never intended. As a result, Kassian notes, feminists concluded that the Bible cannot be trusted. The feminist suspicion that any assessment of a woman in Scripture is wrong because it was made by a man requires the re-evaluation of every passage in which women are mentioned. For example, both the evil queen Jezebel and Michal, David's wife who held him in disdain for rejoicing before the Lord, were vilified in Scripture only because they asserted themselves and dared to oppose a man of God. Given this presupposition, it seems illogical that a feminist theologian would pursue the matter any further and would instead prefer to leave the Church—and some have done exactly that. Yet many of them hold a desire to “redeem” the Scriptures and Christianity from the traditional view. There are two problems with this approach. First, this reassessment fails the test of objectivity and therefore of truth itself. Second, the Scriptures are no ordinary book and can only be understood through Spirit-led eyes of faith, not a through a heart of suspicion.

The second feminist principle of interpreting Scripture, the hermeneutic of proclamation, is the logical outcome of the hermeneutic of suspicion. If the traditional canon of Scripture compiled by patriarchists (assumed to be misogynists) is not to be trusted, then the feminist must decide what is and is not acceptable as the Word of God. This concept is not new; Marcion committed this heresy, as did Thomas Jefferson. Fiorenza's principles for assessing Scripture are simple: passages that proclaim “liberation for the oppressed women of contemporary culture” are embraced, and those that show evidence of “patriarchal structure” or “sexist traditions” are rejected. Thus, St. Paul's admonition for wives to submit to their husbands is unacceptable, but his declaration that there is no Jew nor Greek, bond or free, male or female supports equality and is therefore accepted as canonical. This method goes beyond taking Scripture out of context. It attempts to make the context disappear, leaving only those concepts that support the reader's agenda. God's Holy Word should be recognized as a means for transforming our lives, yet the feminist approach is that the female reader is at all costs to be validated and freed from any negativity and must instead transform Holy Writ.

A concept that falls within the hermeneutic of proclamation is that of relegating texts to an *ad hoc* category. Those who are hesitant to dismiss whole passages of Scripture outright can mitigate their unease by dismissing problematic passages as irrelevant outside their cultural setting. In an article entitled “The Hermeneutics of Evangelical Feminism,” Paul Felix observes that portions of I Timothy and Ephesians are often relegated to *ad hoc* status, and he quotes Gordon D. Fee's assessment of these passages:

All of these instructions, including [Ephesians] 2:11-12, were *ad hoc* responses to the waywardness of the young widows in Ephesus who had already gone astray after Satan and were disrupting the church.

It simply cannot be demonstrated that Paul intended 1 Tim 3:11-12 [sic, 1 Tim 2:11-12] as a rule in all churches at all times. In fact the occasion and purpose of 1 Timothy as a whole, and these verses in particular, suggest otherwise.

Felix also describes a corollary to the *ad hoc* principle, that of the Interpretive Center. The idea is that when a text is found that supports the desired agenda, it becomes the plumbline for all other texts, influencing the interpretation of all other passages dealing with the ecclesiastical and domestic roles of women. The text that is generally recommended is Galatians 3:28, though others are also used. But there are several problems with this approach as well. First, a basic hermeneutical principle is that all related texts must harmonize with one another. As we know, Galatians 3:28, if understood as allowing for no differentiation between the sexes, is out of step with other texts regarding the roles of men and women in the Church and in the home.

The third feminist principle of biblical interpretation, the hermeneutic of remembrance, asks the reader of Scripture to focus on the women in biblical stories, regardless of their faithfulness to God, and to make their experience central to the story, regardless of the clear meaning and intent of the text. Kassian states that “through a hermeneutic of remembrance, women harnessed their anger and claimed the right to define themselves and the Bible.” Although the biblical account of Noah’s ark mentions his wife and family, only his sons are named. The Scriptural account leaves his wife and daughters-in-law in the shadows, but what must they have endured watching him build a huge boat on dry land and get it ready for a predicted rainstorm? What must these nameless women have endured on the ark with all those animals, knowing that the world as they knew it was being destroyed.

Such an approach misses the entire point of Scripture, which is to unfold the story of the redemption of the world through the sufferings of Christ. Although the introduction of the Gospel was that the seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent, the types of Christ in the Old Testament are mostly men. With the hermeneutic of remembrance, the Biblical theme of filling the earth with God’s glory takes a back seat to the message of what women have had to suffer in order for God to be glorified. Never mind that the sufferings of men are also recorded in Scripture. The feminist has no compassion for the countless men who died in battle so that unnamed women and children at home could remain safe. In such a case, there would only be outrage that the women were not named, and their sufferings were not mentioned. As we have seen, the attitude behind this approach to Scripture is that men cannot be trusted to tell women’s stories. But there is also another troubling aspect in the rhetoric of universal sisterhood, for it implies that even though women must be accepted as equal to men, there will ever and always be a division and distinction, with women naturally being greatly to be preferred. Another aspect of this method that is puzzling is the obvious sentimentality that it requires. By encouraging us to grieve over the sufferings of women who are well past any need for our sorrow, this principle actually plays into a stereotype of

women that we would think feminists might want to avoid, that of an irrational being who is guided by emotion rather than reason.

The fourth feminist principle of interpreting Scripture, the hermeneutic of imagination (sometimes called the hermeneutic of creative actualization), might more accurately be called the hermeneutic of speculation or reading between the lines, and it is closely related to the hermeneutic of remembrance. Let's take an example. We aren't told very much about the woman with the issue of blood who touched the hem of Jesus' garment for healing. But we might imagine that she had once been a wealthy wife and mother whose family rejected her because of her infirmity. We might also imagine that after spending all her time, money, and energy going from doctor to doctor, she had finally sunk into such deep despair that she had awakened that morning and decided to end her own life. But then she heard that Jesus was in town, so she determined to push her way through the crowd to touch the hem of His garment to see if that would provide the healing she so desperately needed. Her brave rejection of the laws of cleanliness set her free from the oppression that had been imposed upon her by the patriarchy. In some circles, those imaginings would be referred to as "fiction." In feminism, however, they are acceptable hermeneutics.

But according to Kassian, even applying an imaginative flair to the reading of Scripture was not enough, and they began to search elsewhere for spiritual enlightenment.

Not only was traditional language about God a problem for feminists in the church, but the Bible itself was a problem. They had introduced a hermeneutic of creative actualization to embellish and expand the usefulness of the Bible for women. But it was not long before these theologians found that the search for a Judeo-Christian heritage that relied solely on Scripture and affirmed feminist theology yielded meager fruit. Therefore, they decided that women could not rely on the canon of Scripture as it was.

Accordingly, they went to other traditions to find that which contained value for women. Christian feminists deemed that religious practices borrowed from witchcraft, neo-paganism and the New Age were legitimate, as were ancient heresies (i.e., gnosticism) and sectarian philosophies from church history (i.e., Montanism, the Shakers, and Christian Science). In this manner feminists in the Church reconstructed the basic foundations of theology itself. They moved away from the Bible as the sole source of authority and toward a theology built on a collection of texts that were credited with similar authority.

This progression (or more accurately, regression) from biblical truth to heresy, paganism, and idolatry was inevitable, as the truth of God was rejected in favor of human experience. We should never forget that Eve's justification for eating the forbidden fruit was the benefit she thought it would bring to her. In sum, the hermeneutics of feminism sounds a drumbeat with which the Author of the Scriptures is completely out of step. By this view, if anything is to change, it must be the Scriptures, for they make us uncomfortable and fail to affirm us. Yet to hold this view is to reject the entire purpose of the Word of God, which is, after all, sharper than any two-edged sword.

On Grace and Detente

In *What Will Happen to God?*, William Oddie makes a statement that puts liberation theology, and therefore feminism, into perspective:

It needs to be said clearly that – whatever may be said about injustice and oppression – the quest for freedom from patterns of authority which involve the subordination of some human beings to others, whether within the Church itself, within the family, or within society at large, cannot be seen to be any significant part of the Christian tradition or of biblical teaching.

For those in the Reformed Episcopal Church, where God’s order is understood and feminism has no foothold, it is still important to understand what has happened in other branches of God’s Church so that we may avoid calamity.

It is too simplistic to say that Christian feminism was an inevitable backlash against the Church following centuries of the assumed inferiority of women. In the beginning, the apex of God’s creation—male and female made in His image—were entrusted with a high and holy purpose and united in accomplishing it. This intended purpose and the relationships between men and women that would have supported it were both muddled by the Fall. It was only through God’s intervening grace that women were restored to their intended place as a participant in the advancement of His Kingdom. In his *Sketches of Jewish Social Life*, Alfred Edersheim asserts that the New Testament picture of social life presents “a full view of the place which [women] held in private and in public life,” and that was a place of honor and full participation:

Here we do not find that separation, so common among Orientals at all times, but a woman mingles freely with others both at home and abroad. So far from suffering under social inferiority, she takes influential and often leading part in all movements, specially those of a religious character. Above all, we are wholly spared those sickening details of private and public immorality with which contemporary classical literature abounds. Among Israel woman was pure, the home happy, and the family hallowed by a religion which consisted not only in public services, but entered into daily life, and embraced in its observances every member of the household.

After listing the accomplishments of such Old Testament women as Deborah, Miriam, Hannah, Ruth, and Abigail, he states that “the ministry of woman to our blessed Lord, and in the Church, has almost become proverbial.” Therefore, to accept the premise of feminism that the Church is responsible for the oppression of women is to ignore the rich, full ministry that Christian women have pursued since Martha welcomed Jesus into her home at Bethany.

Considering the roots of Christianity in the sacrificial death of God's Son out of the great love He bore for His people, the Church should never be seen as an organization in which power is the goal. It is an extended family in which our spiritual fathers, as representatives of our Heavenly Father, have been entrusted with the responsibility of nurturing and protecting the children of God. It is perplexing that women who despise godly order want to become a part of what they consider the power structure. By insisting on changing the Church, proponents of women's ordination are destroying the very thing they claim to love. We cannot "redeem" the Church by dismantling it.

Yet we also cannot redeem it by ignoring any true injustices caused by the notion that women are, in their very being, inferior to men. Since shouts of "Down with the Patriarchy" reverberate every time a new scandal surfaces within the church, we must recognize that the solution to abuse is not to do away with God's order, in which Bishops, Priests, and Deacons are all male. Abuses occur in denominations where women are allowed to be pastors. Patriarchy in itself is not the problem. Abuse of power and abdication of responsibility are the problem. For any progress to be made in the current war between egalitarians and complementarians in the Church, both sides must be willing to view the matter objectively, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the lens of Scripture, and the accepted teachings of the Church throughout the ages.

Conclusion

The Gospel for the Third Sunday in Lent (Luke 11:14-28) depicts what might be seen as an early feminist reaction to the Word of God made flesh. In this passage Jesus is accused of being the servant of Beelzebul, the prince of demons, because He frees a man from a mute demon. After He rebukes his critics for not recognizing His true nature, a woman shouts from the crowd, "Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts which nursed You!" To respond to the Son of God's teachings with an emotional statement about how His wisdom reflects the influence of a woman is the very essence of feminism. In His response to her, Jesus gave us the way to respond to the feminists of our time: "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it." The blessed Mother of God said essentially the same thing at Cana when she told the servants to do exactly what Jesus told them to do. And that is what we, as men and women of God, must do. We must read, mark, and inwardly digest His Word as it is and not through the filter of personal agendas, cultural trends, or collective grudges. Like the psalmist, we will find it is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, if we trust in the steadfast goodness of the Lord.

Discussion Questions:

1. Have men helped provoke the Feminist movement through abuse of their headship roles? What are some examples?
2. What are some practical ways that a godly woman can live as a testimony against the errors of feminism?

3. What are some practical ways that a godly man can live as a testimony against the errors of chauvinism?
4. In what ways does modern culture confuse subordination with inferiority?
5. What does it mean to be ontologically equal, yet functionally and physically different?
6. In what ways are both feminism and chauvinism sinful?
7. Is Biblical male headship, as presented in Scripture, subjective or objective?
8. Can godly men and women support that aspect of feminism that argues for equal rights for women? What rights would be legitimate? Are there demands for rights that are not Scripturally legitimate?

Chapter IX - The Laudable Service of the Laity

Dss. Teresa Johnson

ALMIGHTY and merciful God, of whose only gift it cometh that thy faithful people do unto thee true and laudable service; Grant, we beseech thee, that we may so faithfully serve thee in this life, that we fail not finally to attain thy heavenly promises; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Introduction

The preceding chapters in this study have laid a solid foundation for each of us to recognize our duty to pursue with vigor our various callings in the home, the world, and the Church. The New Testament image of the Church as the Body of Christ portrays the truth that every Christian, whether male or female, old or young, feeble or strong, has a purpose to serve in the Kingdom of God, and the Book of Common Prayer reinforces this concept, as will be discussed in Part II of this chapter. Further, the Reformed Episcopal Church has made the service of the laity a matter of policy, as we will see in Part III below. Without lay participation, our clergy—in particular, our Bishops—would grow weary, much as Moses did during the battle against the Amalekites and required help in holding his hands heavenward.

So the answer to the question “Is God calling me to serve Him?” is always a resounding yes. For us to assume that laudable service can only be offered by those who are in Holy Orders is to overlook the many important ways in which the laity can and should be busy building the Kingdom of God. There is no doubt that the Orders of Deacon, Priest, and Bishop are vital to the well-being of the Church. But there is also no doubt that the vast majority of the Church’s ministry lies beyond the Altar and that the clergy cannot fulfill the Great Commission alone. This chapter focuses on the ways in which REC laity may joyfully serve in the Kingdom of God, in particular the various opportunities for women to participate in the life of the Church.

Living Eucharistically

As Anglicans, we should be well attuned to the concept of serving Christ with thankful hearts. At baptism we are charged “manfully to fight under his banner, against sin, the world, and the devil; and to continue Christ’s faithful soldier and servant” unto the end. Our baptismal covenant is reiterated in the catechism in which we are trained, where we acknowledge that our duty toward God is “to serve him truly all the days of [our lives].” And every time we celebrate the Eucharist, we freely offer “our selves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice” unto the Lord, in thanksgiving for His great sacrifice on our behalf. This prayer is derived from Romans 12:1-2, which reads as follows:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

This passage indicates that our whole person—and by extension, all that we own—is to be offered back to God with thanksgiving, just as the Samaritan who was healed of leprosy returned to thank Jesus and glorify God. Although the Old Testament animal sacrifices symbolized the necessity of the perfect blood sacrifice that Jesus would offer, what God truly wanted from his people was not just their sacrifice of bulls or goats, but their willing obedience, as Samuel proclaims: “Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams (1 Sam 15:22).”

The Eucharistic life not only has its roots in the actions of the Old Testament worshipers, who were responsible for bringing their sacrifices and killing them so that the priest could offer them. It has its roots in the jewelry and other gifts that the Israelites gave to adorn the tabernacle and in the work of the various craftsmen and artisans whom God anointed to complete the work. It has its roots in their participation in the holy feasts and in offering prayers in the temple. In Luke’s Gospel, we find the stories of one man, Simeon, and one woman, Anna, who were praying in the temple on the day that Mary and Joseph brought the Child Jesus to be circumcised. Simeon had been promised that he would not see death until he saw the Messiah, and his beautiful hymn of praise has become an integral part of the Order for Evening Prayer.

Like Simeon, Anna lived the eucharistic life in anticipation of the coming of Christ, and then she continued to do so in anticipation of the Great Commission, serving as a missionary to her own people. Christian mothers have the same opportunity in their own families. The Creation Mandate, after all, was not just a matter of producing offspring but of filling the earth with the glory of God. Those who do not marry have other opportunities to participate in this purpose as they live obediently and witness to others about the redemption found in Jesus Christ.

We are, therefore, to view the whole of our lives as a Eucharistic offering to God. Nourished by the Bread of Heaven, characterized by the fruit of the Spirit, and bathed in prayer and worship, we are to be ever conscious of the Creation mandate to fill the earth to the glory of God, a purpose that Christ restated in the Great Commission. The physical and spiritual world, men and women, sacred marriage and the generation of physical children, as well as local churches—all of these are the elements of serving God with thanksgiving.

The REC Constitution and Canons

Taking a cue from both the Scripture and the Book of Common Prayer, which as we have seen encourages full participation in service to God, the Reformed Episcopal Church is structured to encourage the participation of the laity—both men and women—in the pursuit of Kingdom business. Those who view the clergy as having the only important work of the Church need only examine the REC Constitution and Canons, which reflect the reality that the practical administration of Church matters requires the service of the laity. REC General Council comprises two Houses, that of Clergy and Laity, and several committees prescribe the number of clergy and laity required. No committee is specifically restricted to male membership, and women have historically served beside laymen and clergy on committees dealing with such matters as finances, doctrine and worship, liturgy, missions, and Christian education. Canon 11,

which outlines the method for the election of a bishop, begins by setting forth the requirements for the Episcopal Search Committee, which should not include current or retired bishops but should include “2 clergy and 2 lay members who are elected members of the Standing Committee and 4 to 6 members at large, equally divided between clergy and laity. These members should be men and women in leadership positions and chosen as a cross representation of the membership of the diocese.”

As for the role of the laity in the worship of the church, Canon 24 on Lay Ministry indicates that both male and female parishioners may serve as “Lay Lectors, Acolytes, Ushers, and similar ministry,” with the explanation that all who serve in such capacity do so under the authority of the Rector. The Canon specifically allows Lay Lectors “to read the First and Second Lessons at Morning Prayer and any reading from the Old Testament or the Epistles at the Holy Communion” (Canon 24, Section 2c). Only the service of Lay Reader is limited to male communicants.

Further, the REC has for many years acknowledged that women are called to honor God specifically as women. A long-standing organization, The Committee on Women’s Ministry, is responsible to the Presiding Bishop for specific ministries that encourage women to support and train each other in the faith and to work together to support the work of the Church. In recent years, the Committee on Women’s Ministry has pursued projects in aid of REC mission works at home and abroad.

Further, at General Council in 2002, after years of prayerful consideration, the REC adopted Canon 22, which established the Order of Deaconesses as “an ancient and Apostolic lay ministry for women in Christ’s Church” (Canon 22, Section 1). The enthusiasm in which the Order was accepted is an indication of the high value that the REC places on women, on ministry to women, and on ministry by women. It honors the special gifts and needs of the image of God as manifested in women and is a recognition of women’s special province as life-bearers, since Deaconesses have traditionally been charged with the care of children, the sick, and the poor. Canon 22, Section 2, states that “The duty of a Deaconess is to assist in the work of the Parish, Mission, or institution to which she has been duly appointed, under the direction of the Rector or Priest in charge; or to perform such functions as may be directly entrusted to her by the Bishop who has jurisdiction in the Diocese or Missionary Diocese in which she serves. In no case shall duties of a Deaconess include the performance of any liturgical function that is reserved to men in Holy Orders.”

Parochial Ministries

Our attendance at Holy Communion is not merely to be a solace to our own souls or an aid to private devotions. Rather, each of us has a responsibility to take heed to our Fathers in Christ as they strive to equip us for ministry to the needs of those around us, both inside and outside the parish. We often speak of the discernment process that leads to a man being ordained to Holy Orders or to a woman being set apart as a Deaconess, but each of us as Christians should thoughtfully discern how we may best use our gifts and talents, taking into consideration our available resources and our circumstances in life, as well as the needs of our parish and community. Not everyone is required to do everything, but all must do something, from the

homebound person who may devote additional time in prayer to those whose strength enables them to tackle hard duties for long hours. What follows in this section is a sampling of the possibilities for laudable service but by no means includes every duty that may exist at every parish. Please read through it prayerfully, and if you are called to do more than you are currently doing in your local parish, talk to your Rector.

Vestry Positions

The whole Church—but particularly the Rector—benefits greatly by the diligent service of vestry members. Vestries take responsibility for the practical matters that keep a parish running, including finances and facilities, allowing the Rector to focus on ministering Word and Sacrament and visiting parishioners. Men and women alike have gifts, talents, and wisdom that enable them to serve in these capacities, in much the same way that the Spirit-filled children of Israel participated in constructing the tabernacle and creating priestly garments. As for Vestry offices, both men and women may serve as Senior Warden, Junior Warden, Treasurer, or any other position without stepping outside God’s authority structure, as all serve under the authority of the Rector, who in turn, serves under the authority of the Bishop.

Liturgical Support

Besides the more visible support of Lay Leaders, Lay Lectors, and Acolytes that has already been discussed, to which we may add greeters and choir members, there are services that take place quietly in the background every week that are vital to the ability of the priest to administer the liturgy. One such service is that of the Altar Guild, which has traditionally consisted only of women but could just as well include men, especially if services are held in a rental space that requires weekly setup and removal of chancel furnishings.

Orderly preparation of the chancel for the worship service requires other assistance as well, including dusting, sweeping, flower arranging, and laundry. For several years, Miss Ann at St. James Church in Memphis, TN, washed and ironed the Communion linens every week and the priest’s vestments and choir robes as needed. Twice widowed, with her children grown and gone, Miss Ann found great delight in serving the Lord in this very practical matter that most of the other women did not have the time, energy, or inclination to do. Every Sunday morning, she brought in the pristine purificators and altar cloth, and after the service, she patiently waited for the Altar Guild to remove the soiled linens so that she could start the process over again. Serving God with a broom or an ironing board is not most people’s ambition, but thank God for those who serve cheerfully to maintain sacred space.

Christian Education

The importance of training our children and young people in the Word cannot be overstated. While the primary responsibility for Christian education lies with the home, the Church is also called, when able, to reinforce and supplement the work that parents are already undertaking. In many cases, the Church becomes the primary source of Christian education, as

neighborhood children attend Sunday School or other events and as parishioners bring guests with them. As with other aspects of parish life, Christian education falls under the authority of the Rector, but he may choose to appoint associate clergy, a Deaconess, or other educator to oversee the parish's Christian education program by reviewing and selecting curriculum and providing guidance to the teachers.

Ministries of Mercy

While sick and homebound parishioners want to see their priest from time to time, they also benefit by visits from other members in the parish who can offer a smiling face, a kind word, a Scripture reading, and a prayer. Many parishes have organized meal delivery programs that spring into action as soon as the church office receives notice of a parishioner's illness or injury. In some cases, young mothers may need a reliable person to watch their children, or caregivers might enjoy a few hours to run errands while a member of the parish comes over to visit with the person who is in their care. Those whose physical strength is limited might also appreciate a friend to do some basic cleaning or yard work. The parish should be a safe place to ask for these needs to be met, and we should serve each other with joyful hearts as we are able. Without being intrusive or overbearing, we can lift each other up in these practical ways, while providing a loving presence that can comfort and cheer our brothers and sisters who may be feeling overwhelmed by life's circumstances.

Community Ministry

The laity not only have an obligation to support their parish as they are able, they also are called to serve Christ outside the walls of the Church in the fields that are white unto harvest. While evangelism has an important place in the life of the Church, it is not the only way to demonstrate the love of Christ. Outreach, or ministry to the needs of the community, is an area in which some parishes may need guidance. Outreach normally requires us to live the Gospel without directly preaching the Gospel, which is how it differs from evangelism. In the REC, we have Bishop Sutton's direction to establish Front Porch ministries, by which parishes offer events and activities that are designed primarily for non-members. Examples include divorce counseling, grief support, addiction recovery programs, financial planning seminars, book studies, art shows, cooking classes, and community dinners. The guiding factor is to assess the needs and interests of the community and offer opportunities that will be attractive to those whose real need is Christ.

Closely related to outreach opportunities are ministries to the poor. While such work is a traditional avenue of service for Deaconesses, all parishioners should be encouraged to take part as they are able. Each parish will have different opportunities and resources, but this is a matter of assessing the local needs and finding ways to meet it, with one important caution: Poverty can be dehumanizing, and any relief that the Church provides must be offered in a way that treats people with both compassion and respect, allowing them to do as much for themselves as they are able to do and not exploiting them in the guise of helping them (for example, photographing them to publicize your ministry or your parish). As with any form of outreach, the purpose is not to exploit their vulnerability or lure them into a false confession just so they can continue to

participate in our programs but freely to offer them assistance in the name of Christ, showing mercy because we have received mercy.

Parishes may have enough resources and personnel to develop their own ministries to the needy, or they may choose to participate with other churches or organizations that offer such assistance as literacy programs, health clinics, prison ministry, homeless shelters, job fairs, clothes closets, or food banks, to name a few. The bottom line for churches is the same as it is with individual Christians—no church can offer everything that is needed, but each church should offer something, indeed, as much as is possible within the limits of good stewardship.

Conclusion

The Anglican way provides a rich framework for both women and men to serve the Lord our God as He requires. And that is precisely the point. He sets the ground rules. The Church's Great Commission—our mission—is to evangelize, baptize, and disciple all nations so that they will obey Christ's commandments and be transformed by the renewing of their minds. But the Gospel is not just a spiritual or intellectual pursuit. According to Jesus in Matthew 25, we are transformed into his likeness to offer very practical compassion to meet the physical needs of those who suffer on earth. As we feed and clothe the poor, visit prisoners, and welcome the stranger, we honor the sacrifice of our Savior. Brothers and sisters, there is much work to be done. Let us not waste time in prejudice and power struggles, losing our witness to the world and missing the opportunity to be about our Father's business. Service done in his name and to his glory is never beneath our dignity.

Discussion Questions:

1. Knowing what you know about your own gifts and talents, what existing parish ministries would you like to join or begin?
2. What ministries might your parish develop to serve the needs of your community?
3. Summarize the teaching of the book of James regarding "doers" of the word.
4. What are some key points in Christ's Sermon on the Mount (see Mt 5-7) that relate to Christian lay ministry.