

Hednesford Pentecostal Church

Women in Ministry & Leadership

Bible Version

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Abbreviations

NIV: New International Version of the Bible

NASB: New American Standard Bible

NKJV: New King James Version

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This and other studies are available for free download at:
http://www.hednesfordaog.org.uk/Meat_to_chew.htm

1. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Why Not Women? – Cunningham, Hamilton. The work of David Joel Hamilton in this book is invaluable and of an extremely high quality.

What Paul Really Said About Women – John Temple Bristow

Beyond Sex Roles – Gilbert Bilezikian

I would like too give my sincere appreciation to Mr Alan Hewitt for the excellent teaching he gave on this subject at the 2005 Assemblies of God Bible Conference.

2. INTRODUCTION

The world has seen much abuse, hatred, prejudice, victimisation and slavery. But no people group has suffered more than women. For thousands of years throughout the world, the life of a baby girl has been held in such low esteem that many have been killed by their own family. From ancient history the value of women has been deliberately minimized in most civilisations and societies. Often women were treated as possessions of men and seen as inferior mentally, morally and physically. They had little value and no rights.

In Christian countries the position of women in society has often been better than in other cultures but the Christian church has also at times discriminated against women. Some Bible teachers have reinforced the second class standard of women; forbidding them to minister or even speak in the church. Why have they done this? Some have done so because they genuinely believed it was what the Bible says. But sadly, we would have to confess there have been times in church history when the prejudice of the surrounding culture has been accepted and reinforced by the church.

One of the major factors that propagated the idea of women being second class standard has been the interpretation of Paul's letters.

“After all, did not Paul declare that women are not to speak in church? That husbands are to rule their wives and wives are to obey their husbands? That women are more easily tempted than men? That women can be saved through bearing children? That women are not to wear jewellery or nice clothing, or have their heads uncovered during worship?”¹

Some people, who have truly wanted to serve the Lord and obey His word, have enforced such ideas because they understand that this is what the Bible really teaches. But is this what Paul really said? After all he is the one who wrote

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

He is the one who also gave instruction on how women are to pray and prophesy in public meetings. He is the one who says that women should be taught Scripture.

In this study we will look closely at what Paul actually said and conclude that rather than being a misogynist, Paul was one of the greatest liberators and supporters of women.

Many English translations of the Bible appear to forbid women in leadership or even ministry. The translators' choice of words has not helped. For example using “man” when the Greek was a gender inclusive term and where “person” should have been used. Also a lack of knowledge of the cultural background in New Testament situations has until recently, hindered correct interpretation

¹ Quoted from *What Paul Really Said about Women* – John Temple Bristow

of Scriptures. In addition the church has carried forward Old Testament laws and cultural practises, such as a male only priesthood.

Over half the membership of the church worldwide is female. Some estimates state that two thirds of all Bible believing Christians are women. Forbidding them to be actively involved in ministry is a crime against the gospel of Jesus and tactically is foolishness.

Jesus came to set the captives free. He is the great emancipator. His gospel removes the walls that divide mankind². It is therefore a blasphemous crime against the work of the Cross and the person of Christ when those within the Church support and promote divisions upon race, social status or gender. And yet at times there have been those elements within the church that have attempted to give a theological accreditation to slavery, partition and discrimination. In doing so Jesus has been robbed of the glory that was due his name.

It has been through the work of Christians that slavery has been abolished and that many social reforms have taken place, such as education for all, the care for the mentally ill and stopping child labour. Today we think it incredible that it took so long for slavery to be abolished. Equally the church should have led the world in raising the status of women to full equality with men, but instead is still perceived as part of the problem. To this day the issue of women in ministry remains an extremely divisive issue in some church denominations.

In society a major force of resistance against the abolishment of slavery, the removal of class barriers and the equality of women has been the financial cost to the ruling faction. Pride is another factor. When one group have been told that they are better than another group or that they have a divine right to rule another group, then their hearts are filled with pride; a pride that sometimes is so subtle it is manifest in patronizing attempts to help “those poor people”.

The purpose of this study is to show that:

- Restrictions upon women fully participating in church life is against the spirit of the whole of the New Testament.
- Those passages supposedly forbidding women ministering, do not do so, but are addressing specific problems in specific cultural environments.
- The New Testament authorises and gives examples of women fulfilling a call to ministry and leadership.

This study is an introduction to this subject. The books listed in the bibliography are recommended for further investigation.

3. THE CULTURES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

To properly understand what New Testament writers were referring to, we need to understand the culture of the day. It is the culture that forms the background and context of the writings. It is the culture that the writings are trying to transform. There were three differing cultures effecting the recipients of New Testament writings; Greek, Roman and Jewish. If we are going to correctly interpret the originally intended meaning of various passages we have to understand the cultural background for the recipients. This is particularly true of the epistles.

It is only by understanding the cultural norms of the time can we appreciate how revolutionary the teaching of the New Testament truly is.

At the time of the writing of the New Testament the new Christian churches were planted in lands that were ruled by the political and military might of Rome. It has been said that although Roman

² Eph 2:14. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation,

might ruled the cities it was Greek thinking that ruled the minds of the Mediterranean world at the time. The Romans had adopted much of Greek mythology as their own³. The Greek culture was therefore a very powerful influence. The other main culture found in the early church was of course Jewish, but even here we find the effect of years of Greek rule. Among the early believers there were Hebraic Jews and Hellenistic Jews. The former distained the perversion of traditional Jewish values by the invasion of Greek thinking and the later embraced the change.

This chapter is based upon the work of David Joel Hamilton in *Why Not Women?* and John Temple Bristow in *What Paul Really Said About Women*.

3.1. GREEK

Greek culture and philosophy is something which academics still speak of highly. Although Greek ideas may be ancient they still influence our modern Western world. The work of philosophers, poets and play writers such as Homer⁴, Socrates and his disciple Plato and his disciple Aristotle not only helped form Greek culture but shaped Western thought. Aristotle was the mentor of Alexander the Great whose conquests spread Greek thinking across the known world.

David Joel Hamilton writes⁵ that the Greeks were:

“... one of the most women-hating civilisations in all of history! It would be hard to find a society that so elevated one sex and subjugated the other.”

He quotes Eva Cantarella⁶ when she writes of Homer’s works:

“The roots of western misogyny⁷ go back to... the oldest document in European Literature”

Not all the ancient cultures treated women as inferior. Both Sparta and Egypt were societies where sexual discrimination was not the norm. But neither of these cultures produced great philosophers whose writings helped shaped European culture for centuries to come.

3.1.1. Creation of Women

The ancient Greeks believed that Zeus, their supreme god, was married to the goddess Hera. Zeus was a wife beater who also taunted Hera with tales of his infidelities. What a role model to Greek men!

The poet Hesiod wrote *The Theogony* which is like the book of Genesis to the Greeks. In it he taught that there was a time when men lived in a paradise without any women. But then Prometheus stole fire from the Olympian gods and shared it with other men. In his fury Zeus conceived a horrifying punishment he created “an evil thing”, a woman named Pandora, “a beautiful evil”. From Pandora came the race of women, “the deadly race... who live amongst mortal men to their great trouble.”⁸

Plato taught that Zeus punishes mankind in this life by “afflicting us with these creatures” referring to women. He wrote in *Timaeus* “All those creatures generated as men who proved themselves

³ Thanks to the writings of Virgil.

⁴ The Iliad and The Odyssey

⁵ *Why Not Women?* – David Joel Hamilton

⁶ *Pandora’s Daughters: The Role and Status of Women in Greek and Roman Antiquity*

⁷ The fear and hatred of women.

⁸ Quotes from *The Theogony* made by David Joel Hamilton in *Why Not Women?*

cowardly and spent their lives in wrongdoing were transformed, at their second incarnation, into women... In this fashion, then, women and the whole female sex have come into existence.” Aristotle advocated that the male should be “separated from the female, since it is something better and more divine”.⁹

Semonides wrote that Zeus created every woman from one of ten sources: “a long-haired sow, the evil fox, a dog, the dust of the earth, the sea, the stumbling and obstinate donkey, the weasel, the delicate and long-maned mare, the monkey or the bee.”¹⁰ Only women made from the tenth source, the bee, had a good character. The rest were terrible in some way.

3.1.2. Women’s Character

Aristotle wrote that the female is a monstrosity and a deformed male. He stated that “the female sex has a more evil disposition than the male, is more forward and less courageous... and less honest.”¹¹ He believed that women were immoral and incapable of self-control. In defining role types Aristotle said “The courage of man is shown in commanding, of a woman in obeying.”¹²

Menander stated women are “an abominable caste, hated of all the gods.”¹³ Hippocrates, known as the father of medicine, taught that “the nature of women is less courageous and is weaker.”¹⁴

3.1.3. Women’s Role in Reproduction

The Greek philosophers and physicians taught that male semen contained perfect, miniature and male human beings; the image of their father. The male was the sole producer of offspring, with the woman adding nothing positive to the child. The semen came from the male brain, travelled down the back to the genitals. These miniature beings were seed that were planted into the “soil” of woman. They taught that sometimes the female soil subverted the seed and a defective specimen was produced; that is a female.

Numerous Greek writers recorded frustration that children could not be produced without the need for the soil of the woman.

3.1.4. Women’s Role in Society

The anti-women philosophy of the Greeks was clearly born out in their society. Life was not good for women who had no more rights than slaves. A woman could not receive any inheritance from their father and they were not permitted to handle money that was greater than the price of a bushel of barley. Any education a woman received was solely practical, preparing her for her role within the home.

A wife could not even leave the house. Even within the home women were segregated from the men, especially at meal times. Men were encouraged by the state to use prostitutes, mainly because of the tax revenue that was raised.

Women were considered to be a deformed male and the male form was considered a thing of beauty. This may explain why homosexual activity was prevalent.

⁹ Quoted from *Why Not Women?* - David Joel Hamilton

¹⁰ Quoted from *Why Not Women?* - David Joel Hamilton

¹¹ Aristotle Volume XXI quoted by David Joel Hamilton in *Why Not Women?*

¹² Quoted from *What Paul Really Said About Women* – John Temple Bristow

¹³ Quoted from *Why Not Women?* - David Joel Hamilton

¹⁴ Quoted from *Why Not Women?* - David Joel Hamilton

Demosthenes¹⁵ said in one speech “Mistresses we keep for the sake of pleasure, concubines for the daily care of our persons, but wives to bear us legitimate children.” Women were the possessions of men and did not deserve respect or love. When they were young they belonged to their father. Later they belonged to their husband and then in old age they would belong to their sons.

3.1.5. Marriage or a Higher Life

A generation after Aristotle there was another philosopher called Zeno whose followers were called Stoics. Zeno argued that all passions and pleasures were to be avoided by those who wanted to pursue wisdom through the study of philosophy. The Stoics therefore valued asceticism and celibacy for the sake of the high goal of searching for truth.

It is from Stoic tradition grew the idea that the only way for a person to pursue a life of holiness was to follow an ascetic and celibate life. The idea of a monastic life style was born. This is one way that Greek philosophy moulded the church.

3.2. ROMAN

3.2.1. Roman Origins

To understand the Roman view of women we need to know a little of the mythology that they believed with regard to the formation of Rome. Virgil’s story *Aeneid* tells how Roman lineage could be traced back to a Trojan prince named Aeneas who escaped from Troy when they were defeated by the Greeks. In his flight which eventually leads him to Italy, he was opposed by the goddess Juno (Greek name Hera, the wife of Zeus) but was assisted by the goddess Venus (Greek name Aphrodite). Juno was the suffering wife of Jupiter and depicted as being insubordinate and scheming. Venus however was the goddess of erotic love and the protector of prostitutes. Virgil also writes that Aeneas was the son of Venus after she had sex with a mortal. Perhaps these mythological characters help explain the abhorrence of Roman men to marriage.

The city of Rome was supposed to be built by a descendent of Aeneas, Romulus. Livy wrote that Romulus was in fact the son of the Roman god of war, Mars. So Romans believed they had two divine ancestors; Mars the god of war and Venus the goddess of erotic love. These two figures became very important to Roman thought. They named the two closest planets after them and these figures became the ideals for Roman men and women. Men were to be strong, courageous warriors and women were to be sexual, beautiful and available.

3.2.2. Women’s Role in Society

The Romans may not have hated women like the Greeks but women were seen as possessions of men. Roman men had three names; their individual name, their family name and their clan name. Roman women had the family and clan names, but no individual name. Instead they were referred to as the feminine form of their father’s name. For example if the father’s individual name was Julius then his daughter would be Julia. If there were other daughters they too would be Julia. Distinction between sisters would be made by referring to “the elder” and the “younger” or by numbering them.

A girl never became of age. She passed from the guardianship of her father to that of her husband. If she was widowed she would then pass to another male relative. When she married she forsook the gods of her father’s house and now worshipped the gods of her husband.

Husbands had absolute control over his wife. If she committed adultery, or became drunk, the husband had the right to kill her. Men could commit adultery without any shame, but a wife’s

¹⁵ Considered the finest orator in Athens.

infidelity threatened the purity of the family line. Men would use prostitutes and would also use female slaves for sexual pleasure. Some classes of prostitute had more freedom and greater rights than a wife.

The killing of baby girls in families was extremely common to the point that a law was past that a family could not kill the first born girl. Baby boys could not be killed unless they were crippled. The practise of killing baby girls continued by the Romans and Greeks until Christianity became the state religion under Constantine.

3.3. JEWISH

The nation of Israel in Jesus day and in the time of the early church was far from being a people with a well defined and single identity. Culturally they were a deeply divided people, as symbolised by the polarisation within their ruling body, the Sanhedrin, between the Pharisees and the Sadducees. On the one hand there were the Hellenistic Jews and on the other there were the Traditional Hebraic groups. In most ways these two divisions were poles apart in their thinking. Unfortunately when it came to their treatment of women they had a lot in common.

3.3.1. The Hellenists

The Hellenists wanted to embrace the Greek culture of the modern world. Consider the following quote from the apocryphal book First Maccabees:

At that time, lawless men arose in Israel and seduced many with their plea, "Come, let us make a covenant with the Gentiles around us, because ever since we have kept ourselves separated from them we have suffered many evils." The plea got so favourable a reception that some of the people took it upon themselves to apply to the King, who granted them liberty to follow the practises of the Gentiles. Thereupon they built a gymnasium in Jerusalem according to the custom of the gentiles and underwent operation to disguise their circumcision.¹⁶

The Greeks exercised at the gymnasium naked which is why circumcision was an issue. The Gymnasium was not only a place for physical pursuits. This was where Greek education and philosophy was taught.

A number of men managed to greatly influence Jewish thought of the day by trying to combine Greek Philosophy and the teaching of Moses. Among them are men like the famous historian Josephus, Philo of Alexandria¹⁷ and Sirach¹⁸. By accepting Greek Philosophy they took on board Greek thought concerning women.

Philo tried to combine the rational thinking of the Greeks with the writings of Moses. He attempted to interpret Scripture in manner that accommodated Greek thought, but in doing so the revelation contained within Scripture was made subservient to the reasoning of Greek philosophy. The authority and meaning of Scripture were discarded.

Concerning women Philo said that "woman was the beginning of evil" and that the female sex are more wicked, more easily deceived and more prone to deceive.¹⁹

¹⁶ 1 Macc 1:11-15. Quoted from *What Paul Really Said About Women*

¹⁷ Philo lived at the time of Christ.

¹⁸ Sirach (BC 310 – 220) was the author of one of the books of the Apocrypha.

¹⁹ Quoted from *Why Not Women?* - David Joel Hamilton

Sirach blamed Eve for the introduction of sin and death into humanity. In his book within the Apocrypha he wrote “Better is the wickedness of a man than a woman who does good; and it is a woman who brings shame and disgrace.”²⁰

3.3.2. The Hebraic Jews

Sadly, the honour and respect afforded women in the Old Testament Scriptures was not taught or practised under the Tradition of the Elders²¹. Some Doctors of the Law, for example Paul’s mentor Gamaliel, did uphold the value of women. Unfortunately such support was rare and the teaching of many Rabbis was anti-women.

The Tenth Commandment says:

Exo 20:17. “You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbour's.”

Although this command is written to challenge the lust and covetousness within the human heart, the Rabbis in Jesus’ day used this and the laws concerning polygamy, divorce and adultery to justify a man’s wife being treated as his property. Because of this interpretation women were granted few legal rights.

Within the teaching of the Mishnah there is a long section that contains rules for women. But there is no corresponding section of rules for men. Some of the Rabbis blamed Eve for the fall in Genesis, even saying that she had sex with the serpent and that this had “infused her with lust”.²² God’s word that said that Eve was comparable to Adam but some Rabbis wrote that compared to Adam, Eve was more like a monkey.

They taught that women are more prone to sin than men and that they are gluttonous and of unstable temperament. It was thought that women were full of lust but the Rabbis also taught that it was sin in the woman that caused lust within men.

Concerning marriage the Rabbis taught that the husband had exclusive right to his wife’s sexuality, but she had no such claim upon him. He could legally take other wives and have sexual intercourse with unmarried women.²³ A wife was the possession of her husband. With regard to intercourse it was taught that “a man can do whatever he pleases with his wife... Meat which comes from the slaughterhouse may be eaten slated, roasted, cooked or seethed.”²⁴ So a wife is compared to a joint of meat; a possession to be enjoyed in whatever way the man desired.

Most Rabbis of the day not only taught that women were unclean and prone to sin but that they were incapable of learning. It was taught by some that it was an abomination to teach a woman the scriptures. Rabbi Eliezer said “If any man gives his daughter a knowledge of the Law it is as though he taught her lechery.” The Jerusalem Talmud states “Let the words of the Torah be burned up, but let them not be delivered to a woman”.²⁵

²⁰ Sirach 42:12-14 RSV

²¹ Concerning the Tradition of the Elders see *Who Were the Pharisees* by John Tyrell

²² B. Yevamot 103b. Also B. Avodah Zarah 22b and B. Shabbat 146a. Source: David Joel Hamilton in *Why Not Women?*

²³ There is no Mosaic Law that forbids a married man to have intercourse with other women so long as they were not married or engaged.

²⁴ B Nedarim 20b. Quoted from David Joel Hamilton in *Why Not Women?*

²⁵ Quoted from *Why Not Women?* - David Joel Hamilton

Although there was no Mosaic Law that separates women in worship the teaching of Rabbis enforced women to be segregated. In the Temple in Jerusalem and in the synagogue women were isolated at the periphery. Synagogues were designed so that women and children were behind screens or in a gallery²⁶. They could not be seen and they should not be heard. They would even enter the synagogue by a different door. It took a regular gathering of six men to form a synagogue. The number of women was irrelevant. In other words the women don't count.²⁷

It should be noted that although this separation by gender in worship seems strange to current day Western thinking, the situation for Jewish women was better than in many Gentile countries where women were totally excluded from attending public worship²⁸. There had been a moral backlash to the cultic prostitution and obscene practises that had previously been very common in Gentile public worship²⁹. By the first century Gentile people would be very suspicious if they saw men and women together entering a place of worship.

Jewish men were taught to pray the *beraka* everyday as soon as he woke up. "Blesséd be God for not making me a gentile. Blesséd be God for not making me woman, Blesséd be God for not making me a slave [or uneducated man]."³⁰ A wife would hear her husband thank God every morning that he was not a Gentile, woman or slave. Gentiles could convert; slaves could be set free; but she knew there was no freedom for her.

In legal matters women were considered to be unreliable witnesses, so their testimonies were discounted. In the home there was the practise of the wife serving food to her husband at the table and then standing by while he ate. In public it was regarded as improper for a man to speak to his wife. If a woman spoke to another man they were presumed to have an improper relationship and her husband could divorce her without a dowry. A man should never touch a woman in public.

Similarly to the Greek Stoics certain Rabbis held that women distracted men from studying the Law. Rabbi Jahanan wrote:

He that talks much with womankind brings evil upon himself and neglects the study of the Law and at last will inherit Gehenna.³¹

The attitude towards women in Judaism at the time of the New Testament did not solely result from poor interpretation of Scripture but resulted from imposing upon Scripture the ideas from Greek philosophy which were part of everyday life since Judah was conquered by Alexander the Great.

4. BACK TO THE BEGINNING

Jesus' teaching on divorce was different from the instruction given through Moses. When Jesus defended this teaching He went back to the story of Creation. In considering the role of women in church we too should look at the creational principles and ask what was God's design and intention when He made us male and female?

²⁶ As was the synagogue at Capernaum

²⁷ Acts 16:13

²⁸ Egypt was an exception.

²⁹ Cultic prostitution was still practised in some places such as Corinth and Ephesus.

³⁰ Menahoth 43b-44a

³¹ *What Paul Really Said About Women* – John Temple Bristow

How different the Bible's account of creation compared to the Greek / Roman myths. Instead of competing gods and goddesses we see a single creator God. Instead of women being made as a punishment by a vengeful deity, we see that men and women together were made in the image of God. The man and woman were made equal; they had a shared origin; together they were blessed, told to be fruitful and told to share dominion.

Instead of evil entering the world through one woman, Pandora; evil entered the world through actions of the man and the woman. Both were guilty and both were punished.

Scripture teaches that the true value of a person is not in their gender, their race, their age or their abilities.

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

The true value of a person is the price that God is willing to pay for them in redeeming them from sin and death. Jesus suffered the cross of Calvary for all mankind; for women as well as men. This fact alone should be sufficient for every Christian to know that sexual discrimination is contrary to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Scripture also shows that God is not a respecter of person's title, reputation, pedigree or social status. He shows no favouritism or partiality but treats us justly responding to our heart and our actions. A person's gender neither commends them to God or disqualifies them from His favour.

Acts 10:34. Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality."

4.1. DESTINY & NATURE

Gen 1:26-28. Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." {27} So God created man³² in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male³³ and female³⁴ He created them. {28} Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

God is a plurality of persons living in community. In this passage we see that both the man and the woman were created in the image of God and that their unity and community were part of the reflection of the image of God. Only together could they fulfil their shared destiny of subduing the earth and having dominion over it, because only together could they multiply. This command to multiply explains why mankind was created male and female. It was not so that one half could have opportunity to rule over the other half.

Genesis chapter 1 contains a description of the limits and boundaries that God set within creation, including mankind's authority over every living thing. It is worthy of note therefore that no mention is made of any authority structure that should exist between the man and the woman. If such a hierarchy was intended it would have been more noteworthy than mankind's authority over everything that creeps on the earth.

³² Hebrew *adam*. When preceded by the definite article *adam* is a gender inclusive term referring to humanity.

³³ Hebrew *zakar*

³⁴ Hebrew *naqebah*

Adam was made from the soil of the ground and the woman was made part of Adam's side. In modern terms woman was cloned from Adam's flesh. Initially Adam called his new partner "woman" and only named her Eve after the fall.

Gen 2:21-23. And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs³⁵, and closed up the flesh in its place. {22} Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. {23} And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman³⁶, because she was taken out of Man³⁷."

We now know that the blue print for a physical body is our genes. Genes are made from long molecules called DNA³⁸. We each have one pair of sex chromosomes in each cell; males have one X and one Y chromosome and females have two X chromosomes. So when God made Eve He took two X chromosomes from Adam and zipped them together to produce the pairing required in the woman. If the woman had been first there would not have been any Y chromosomes.

God could have more easily made the woman directly from the soil, but instead he takes some of the man's body. If God had made the woman from some fresh soil, men might have claimed that women, like the animals, were another species and that men have dominion over women as they do with the animals. But men cannot claim that they come from better dirt than women, because we all come from the same dirt; we all have a shared origin.

It has been taught for many years that the woman was inferior to Adam because she was made second and because she was made to be a helper. Some have believed that Paul's writing suggest that the order of creation has bearing upon the role of women:

1 Tim 2:11-14. Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. {12} And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. {13} For Adam was formed first, then Eve. {14} And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.

We will look at this passage in detail later in this study and there refute that this was Paul's intention.

When we look at the creation account we see that humans, the pinnacle of the physical creation being formed in God's image, were created last of all. So being created first does not mean being made superior. As Pastor Alan Hewitt said "Man was formed before women, but pigs were formed before man."

So what does it mean that the woman was a helper?

Gen 2:18. And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."

The Hebrew word for helper is *ezer*. Within Scripture³⁹ this would usually refers to a superior helping an inferior and on seventeen occasions it is used with regard to God, such as in Psalm

³⁵ Nearly all the translators agree that rib is the best translation of the Hebrew word *selah*. The fact that the sentence says God "took one" of Adam's ribs would confirm this.

³⁶ Hebrew *isah*

³⁷ Hebrew *is*

³⁸ Deoxyribonucleic Acid

³⁹ Sixteen out of the twenty two occurrences.

121⁴⁰. There is no way therefore, that being created as a helper infers that the woman was inferior or subject to the man. Aida Dina Spencer writes “Woman was not created to serve Adam, but to serve with Adam.”⁴¹

In the above verse the word *ezer* is qualified with *neged* which means “corresponding to”. So this helper will be comparable or equal to the man. The woman was equal in value, equal in destiny and equal in intelligence. Without *neged* being present in the text we would probably have inferred that this new helper would be superior to the man!

When Adam was alone in the perfect garden God declares that the situation was “not good”. After the creation of the woman the whole of God’s workmanship is declared to be “very good”⁴². There was nothing evil, defective or second rate about the man or the woman. Together their reflection of the image of God was “very good”, something Adam could not achieve when alone.

The statement “It is not good that man should be alone” tells us that individualism and isolation are sins against God’s design and man’s nature. We are designed in the image of God to live in community and serve others. We are not designed to live individualistic, self-absorbed life styles. These are a product of sin.

When the Pharisees’ answering questions about divorce, Jesus quoted the following verse from Genesis.

Gen 2:24. Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

Consider how counter-cultural such a statement was in Jesus’ day. When the Greeks, Romans and Jews saw little or no value in women, God declares that a wife is of so great a value that *the man* should leave everything in order to marry her. The man’s adherence to his wife is of greater importance than his relationship with his parents! God declares that this wife was not a possession of the man but that the two became one flesh. Jesus adds “That which God has joined together let not man separate.”⁴³

In the statement “the two shall become one flesh” the Hebrew word for *one* is a compound singular word. We use similar phrases when we say “a pair of shoes” or “a bunch of bananas”. Interestingly it is the same Hebrew word used in the following:

Deut 6:4. "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!

4.2. THE FALL

Within the garden God had planted the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and He commanded Adam never to eat of its fruit. God did not plant this tree to tempt Adam. But the presence of this tree was a continual reminder that Adam was subservient to God his creator. All the freedom, privilege and authority that Adam had been given was dependent upon him remaining obedient to his God. The presence of this tree reminded Adam that although he was made in the image of God, he was not God.

⁴⁰ Psa 121:1. I will lift up my eyes to the hills; from whence comes my help?

⁴¹ From *Beyond the Curse* by Aida Dina Spencer and quoted by David Joel Hamilton in *Why Not Women?*

⁴² Gen 1:31. Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

⁴³ Matt 19:5

How long Adam and Eve lived together in their sinless state is unknown but things change when the devil comes to tempt them to eat of the forbidden fruit. What did this fallen angel hope to achieve in this? Adam's fall resulted in the devil usurping authority in the earth; something that remains to this day. But probably more fundamentally, Satan's attack is one against the image of God. He seeks to vandalise and deface these creatures who together bear the image of God. He wants to mar creation by isolating it from the creator and filling it with his own image.

The essence of Satan's temptation of Eve is that by eating the fruit of this tree they would become like God, knowing good and evil and that they could therefore be independent of God. Like many since, they were not content with their role but wanted to be their own gods. But the god-likeness that Satan promised was far removed from the godliness they had enjoyed.

Gen 3:6-7. So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. {7} Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.

The usual assumption is that the woman was alone when tempted by the serpent because Adam is not mentioned in the text apart from in verse six where it says "with her". When the serpent says "you shall not die" the word for you is plural, but this neither proves nor disproves Adam's presence. Later in verse 17 God says to Adam "you heeded the voice of your wife" and not "you heeded the voice of the serpent". This would infer that Adam was not present when the serpent tempted Eve. It appears that the devil was applying a divide and conquer strategy in the garden.

The serpent most likely chose to tempt the woman because the commandment not to eat the fruit of this particular tree was given to Adam when he was alone; the woman received it second hand.

There have been numerous preachers who have suggested that the woman succumbed to Satan's temptation because of an inferior intelligence or a predisposition in females to deception. But she like Adam was made in the image of God, and was comparable to him in intelligence. When we consider deception, the majority of cults have been started by men rather than women.

The New Testament blames Adam for the fall⁴⁴. The woman was deceived but Adam ate the forbidden fruit out of rebellion against God's rule.

4.3. THE EFFECT

Gen 3:16-19. To the woman He said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." {17} Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. {18} Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. {19} In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return."

God did not directly curse Adam or the woman but there were severe consequences for their sin. In pronouncing these consequences Scripture does not infer that these effects were God's design or intention. They were the result of Adam and the woman's disobedience.

⁴⁴ Romans 5:12-18, 1 Cor 15:21-23

Adam who had been made from the dust of the ground would now have to work hard in order for the ground to yield its fruit; and then, when his life was over, the same ground would become his grave.

Another of the consequences was a change in the man and woman's relationship. Verse 16 contains a phrase that is difficult to translate; "Your desire will be for your husband and he shall rule over you". This is unlikely to mean sexual desire, for generally it is men who have the biggest problem in that area. Many commentators say that the meaning of this sentence is "You shall desire the intimacy and unity you once enjoyed with your husband but he will rule over you". This ruling over women is a consequence of the fall and not of God's design.

Men certainly have ruled over women since ancient times. In the Old Testament there was no verb "to marry"; a man *took* a wife as though she was his possession. We read in Genesis that after six generations men entered into polygamy.⁴⁵ It wouldn't be long before they started to take concubines as well. Women were seen as possessions that were coveted and taken.

The man and woman were created in the image of God; their unity and equality reflected the plurality of the Godhead. But as a consequence of the fall one ruled over the other; breaking the parallel with the God-head model. The image of God was marred and mankind's place in the created order was severely compromised.

Gilbert Bilezikian says:

Adam became subject to the soil from which he was taken. Eve became subject to Adam from whom she was taken. Adam's toil would make him slave to the ground that would eventually engulf his life. And Eve's life would now be ruled by the slave.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Gen 4:19. Then Lamech took for himself two wives: the name of one was Adah, and the name of the second was Zillah.

⁴⁶ *Beyond Sex Roles* – Gilbert Bilezikian

5. THE OLD TESTAMENT

5.1. THE MOSAIC LAW

We need to be careful how we read the Old Testament and in particular the Mosaic Law. Although this is the word of God it contains some things which are not applicable for people living under New Testament grace. There are truths and principles which are eternally true, but there are also laws and regulations which no longer apply. For example the dietary laws, laws on circumcision, the offering of animal sacrifices and the Levitical priesthood. Most of our modern cloths would violate the following law if it still applied:

Deut 22:11. You shall not wear a garment of different sorts, such as wool and linen mixed together.

Jesus' teaching has superseded the Old Testament dietary laws. There may be more Old Testament commands on the subject, but just one verse from Jesus is sufficient to relegate such teaching to a past dispensation.⁴⁷

In teaching kingdom principles Jesus went further than the Law's expectations by saying "You have read... But I say to you"⁴⁸. The Law dealt with actions but kingdom grace deals also with motives and issues of the heart.

So we recognise that compared to grace in Christ Jesus the Mosaic Law was weak and ineffectual. The difference between the Law and grace is clearly seen when Jesus discussed divorce with Pharisees.

Mark 10:2-9. The Pharisees came and asked Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" testing Him. {3} And He answered and said to them, "What did Moses command you?" {4} They said, "Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce, and to dismiss her."

{5} And Jesus answered and said to them, "Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. {6} But from the beginning of the creation, God 'made them male and female.' {7} 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, {8} and the two shall become one flesh'; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. {9} Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

⁴⁷ Mark 7:18-19. So He said to them, "Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, {19} because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, thus purifying all foods?"

⁴⁸ Mat 5:21-22. "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' {22} But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire.

Mat 5:27-28. "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' {28} But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

Mat 5:33-35. "Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.' {34} But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; {35} nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.

Mat 5:43-44. "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' {44} But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,

The Law was a practical compromise. As a result of the fall peoples' hearts were so hardened as to make divorce an unavoidable reality. This permission did not mean that divorce was God's permanent will or purpose. Clearly we are told that God hates divorce:

Mal 2:16. "For the LORD God of Israel says that He hates divorce, for it covers one's garment with violence," Says the LORD of hosts. "Therefore take heed to your spirit that you do not deal treacherously."

Moses' instruction was there to bring about some restraint and to give women some rights. Jesus' teaching shows God's original intention. The hardness of the heart can be dealt with when we are born again and we can therefore more readily follow the creational purpose of God. Nevertheless the New Testament does give instructions concerning what a couple should do if they can no longer live together.⁴⁹

In like manner the Old Testament laws were a practical compromise when it came to the role and status of women. As a result of the fall the equality of men and women was marred and men began to rule over women. Society was patriarchal and the laws regarding the priesthood only chose males from the tribe of Levi. The Law demanded that males over a certain age travel to attend various holy feasts at the site of the Tabernacle. This demand was not made upon the women; perhaps because it would not be possible with a small child.

Without endorsing various practises, the Law limited the damage caused by the hardened heart of mankind. But for those living under the New Testament we have to look for divine and eternal principles. One such principle is given in the following verse.

1 Sam 16:7. But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

It's not the physical appearance that is important to the Lord but the state of the heart. The outward appearance of the body, its' height, weight, age or gender, does not attract or repel divine favour. God searches the heart.

Whenever the church follows Old Testament laws rather than New Testament principles the end is always a Christ dishonouring travesty. In South Africa the Dutch Reformed Church used the Old Testament laws that forbade Israel to intermingle with surrounding nations. They justified racial segregation that eventually turned into the official national policy of Apartheid. Similarly for centuries the church in the West used Old Testament laws on slavery as well as Paul's advice to believers who were slaves to justify the slave trade.

5.2. OLD TESTAMENT LIGHT

Contained within the Old Testament are various statements, laws and prophecies that do teach creational principles, that do honour the female sex with value and worth and which foretell of a future age when a person's gender will not prevent them from fully serving the Lord.

Joel 2:28-29. And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. {29} And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

⁴⁹ 1 Cor 7:10-11. Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband. {11} But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife.

The women in the Old Testament weren't hopeless, unteachable, mindless articles. They were real people. Godly women demonstrated faith, prayerfulness, wisdom, courage and some changed the course of history. There are many men in the genealogy of Jesus whose only contribution was being "begat" and then they "begot". To be a women recorded in this list required that they demonstrated extraordinary qualities. So we read of Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Mary.

Most of us will be familiar with these words from psalm 68:

Psa 68:11. The Lord gave the word; great was the company of those who proclaimed it:

The Hebrew word for "those who proclaimed it"⁵⁰ is feminine and plural. The NASB reflects this in its translation saying "The women who proclaim the good tidings are a great host". In a culture where women were not regarded as reliable witnesses, God declares that He will use an army of women to proclaim His word. This is fulfilled in the New Testament period.

When the serpent was judged in the garden, he was told that from the woman a Seed would come who would crush his head.

Gen 3:15. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."

This deliverer would come from a woman but not from a man, foretelling the virgin birth of Christ.

Interestingly in the book that records Israel's deliverance from Egypt, Exodus; the first key figures in the story are all women. There are the two midwives, Shiphrah and Puah⁵¹, there was Moses' mother Jochebed⁵² and there is Miriam.

5.2.1. Honour were honour is due

On close inspection we see that the principles in the Old Testament taught equality. Within the Ten Commandments, the only commandments written by God's own hand, we read;

Exo 20:12. Honour your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

Mothers were to be honoured as well as fathers.

Sarah was honoured by God along with Abraham as being an example of righteousness and faith. Both of them received a name change. He is called a father of many nations and she is called the mother of many nations.⁵³ Isaiah also honoured Sarah along with Abraham:

Isa 51:1-2. "Listen to Me, you who follow after righteousness, you who seek the LORD: Look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the hole of the pit from which you were dug. {2} Look to Abraham your father, and to Sarah who bore you; For I called him alone, and blessed him and increased him."

The book of Hebrews commends Sarah as well as Abraham:

⁵⁰ *hamebasserot*

⁵¹ Pharaoh was never named but Hebrew midwives were!

⁵² Jochabed means Jehovah's Glory. Later Moses would say to the Lord "Show me your glory".

⁵³ Gen 17:15-16. Then God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. {16} And I will bless her and also give you a son by her; then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall be from her."

Heb 11:11. By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised.

Peter states that Sarah was a fine example of a wife who honoured and submitted herself to her husband.

1 Pet 3:5-6. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, {6} as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.

It is noteworthy therefore that in Genesis Sarah's submission was not a mindless or silent subservience. At times she took the initiative and Abraham was told by God to do as Sarah said:

Gen 21:10-12. Therefore she [Sarah] said to Abraham, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, namely with Isaac." {11} And the matter was very displeasing in Abraham's sight because of his son. {12} But God said to Abraham, "Do not let it be displeasing in your sight because of the lad or because of your bondwoman. Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice; for in Isaac your seed shall be called.

5.2.2. The Prophet

The prophet in the Old Testament could be considered as the highest spiritual office in the land. Prophets called and anointed kings. Prophets directed kings and also reproved them. Prophets reproved wayward priests. The prophet spoke to the nation on God's behalf.

Although the majority of prophets in Scripture are male, there are 13 female prophets⁵⁴ in the Bible.⁵⁵ Some of these had a significant role, equivalent to that of their male counterparts.

Miriam, Moses elder sister, was designated as a prophet and was Israel's first worship leader.

Exo 15:20. Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took the timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances.

The word of God honours her as being one of the three God-given leaders of Israel during the Exodus.

Micah 6:4. For I brought you up from the land of Egypt, I redeemed you from the house of bondage; and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.

The prophet Huldah was a female contemporary of Jeremiah and Zechariah. King Josiah sends a delegation of priests and officials to enquire of the Lord through this woman's ministry. Her prophetic messages warns of God's anger and judgment but encourages the young king to lead one of the greatest religious reforms in Israel's history.⁵⁶

Perhaps the most famous female leader of Israel was Deborah who was also a prophet. She was both the spiritual and governmental leader of Israel. She gave the prophetic call to Barak to lead an army of Israelites against a Canaanite army that had nine hundred armoured chariots.

⁵⁴ The English language is moving away from having male and feminine forms of nouns. Prophetess is therefore a term no longer used.

⁵⁵ The Talmud states that there were seven women counted as prophets whose message is relevant to all generations. They are Sarah, Miriam, Deborah, Hannah, Abigail, Huldah and Esther.

⁵⁶ 2 Kings 22 & 23

Judg 4:4-6. Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, was judging Israel at that time. {5} And she would sit under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the mountains of Ephraim. And the children of Israel came up to her for judgment. {6} Then she sent and called for Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, "Has not the LORD God of Israel commanded, 'Go and deploy troops at Mount Tabor; take with you ten thousand men of the sons of Naphtali and of the sons of Zebulun;

Deborah's leadership ability was such that Barak would only set the battle against the enemy if she also came along. This she did and the Lord gave the oppressors into Israel's hands.

5.2.3. Marital Life

One of the women whose actions were considered sufficiently noteworthy to be recorded in the Bible is Abigail. The thing that makes her noteworthy is how she saves all the members of her own household through her wisdom, quick thinking and decisive leadership. The counter-cultural aspect to this was that in doing so she knowingly contradicted the commandments of her wealthy, land-owning husband Nabal. The story is told in 1 Sam 25. Abigail and Nabal are firstly described in the following verse:

1 Sam 25:3. The name of the man was Nabal, and the name of his wife Abigail. And she was a woman of good understanding and beautiful appearance; but the man was harsh and evil in his doings. And he was of the house of Caleb.

Nabal reacts to a message from David with harsh and ill-advised words and as a result David plans to attack Nabal's house and kill every male there. One of Nabal's servants reported to Abigail the events and the unjust and recklessness nature of Nabal's action. The servant even says:

1 Sam 25:17. "Now therefore, know and consider what you will do, for harm is determined against our master and against all his household. For he is such a scoundrel that one cannot speak to him."

Not only does this servant have a low opinion of his master, but he recognises that their only hope is for Abigail to defy her husband's wishes and act quickly. This she does. She sends to David the food he had requested and goes and presents herself humbly to the enraged warrior. In her speech she demonstrates great wisdom and it is apparent that she understood the way God was dealing with David and that he would certainly reign over Israel one day. Her actions stayed David's hand and saved her household from disaster.

So like Sarah before her, Abigail was a worthy woman who could take the lead in the household and judge righteously and with prophetic insight.

5.2.4. The Entrepreneurial Wife

King Lemuel⁵⁷ recorded the wise teaching of his mother and includes a description of a perfect wife.⁵⁸

When we read the description of this rare woman we would conclude that she was Super Woman; achieving things that few people, men or women do. Interestingly there is no physical description of her. She isn't chosen for her beauty. Although we are told she provides food for her household, she isn't noted for her cooking. This woman is noted for her entrepreneurial skills.

⁵⁷ This is an unknown king. There was no king in Israel or Judah with that name. So he is either a godly foreign king or the name is a pseudonym or it is symbolic. Lemuel means *dedicated to God*.

⁵⁸ Prov 31:10-29

A summary list of her attributes are:

- Loyal
- Hardworking
- Selfless
- Wise and Prudent
- Industrious
- Generous
- She plans ahead
- She is watchful

This idealised woman is strong, confident and a leader. She is not a dumb, subservient inferior. Not only did she receive the gratitude of her husband but “her children rise up and call her blessed.”

6. CHRISTIAN REVOLUTION

Liberation for women from the oppressive and chauvinistic cultural backgrounds of the day came through the Christian gospel. It would take years for the salt and the light characteristics of the church to transform societies for the benefit of all its women, but for those individuals who accepted Christ as their own Lord and Saviour there was an immediate change. Even if their domestic circumstances did not alter, instead of counting themselves as being worthless, stupid and a curse they knew they were precious to their God and made in His image.

Sadly, the liberation of women in society of so-called Christian countries has been far too slow. As a result in Great Britain women only received the right to vote on equal terms as men in 1928.⁵⁹

Today in the West true equality for women is not found even in many churches. Some denominations, old and new, forbid women to hold certain ministries.⁶⁰ The reason for this has been the belief that such a stance is what the New Testament preaches.

6.1. CHRIST LIFTED WOMEN

When we read the gospels we fail to recognise how revolutionary Jesus’ actions were in that day. Jesus’ example has become our norm; but his actions broke many social taboos in his day. Anybody who has had the privilege of travelling and spending time amongst people of a totally different culture will appreciate how we can be shocked by the subtle differences that exist. Our culture is the background noise for our whole life. When that noise changes we find it very unsettling. Jesus’ actions would have stood out like someone unexpectedly playing a trumpet in a library.

6.1.1. Jesus Spoke to and Listened to Women

The gospels record Jesus speaking to women in public and the answers the women made. As we have seen it was unheard of for a man to speak to a woman in public. But it was also very rare in ancient literature that a woman’s words would be recorded. Greek and Roman literature contain very few quotes from women. Even their playwrights had little dialogue from female characters. Women were spoken about but rarely spoke themselves. In Jewish literature such as the Mishnah and Talmud, women are totally silent. So in the ancient world women had no voice. The social norm was that women had nothing of consequence to say; nothing worth writing down.

⁵⁹ New Zealand was the first country to give the right to vote to all citizens in 1893. In 1906 Finland was the first nation to grant full suffrage (the right to vote and run for office) to all its citizens.

⁶⁰ Such as elder, pastor or apostle.

Then along comes the gospels recording the words of women.

“It has been noted that the most striking thing about the role of women in Jesus’ life and teaching is the simple fact that women were there. It was nothing short of revolutionary. Jesus saw women as persons he came to reach and to serve. He treated them as individuals of worth and dignity, unlike Jewish society which often viewed women as property.”⁶¹

But not only did Jesus speak to women, he spoke to them about theological issues. He even asked them questions! He spoke to women as though they were equal. He was not condescending. Once when he was teaching a woman in the crowd shouted out in her excitement:

Luke 11:27. ... "Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts which nursed You!"

This woman’s thinking was a product of her cultural constraints. To her the highest a woman could attain was being the mother of man who achieved significance in life; especially if he became a Rabbi.

Jesus replied:

Luke 11:28. "More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"

Women were no longer restricted to being blessed through the achievements of their men. They could experience God’s blessing directly by hearing and responding to God’s word.

6.1.2. Teaching Women

The longest recorded conversation that Jesus had with another individual is found in John chapter four. It is when Jesus met a Samaritan woman at the well. He approaches her and asks for her for a drink of water. His actions shock the woman. We can presume she would be very wary and defensive suspecting that if a Jewish man dares speak to her when they are alone, he had one thing on his mind.

John 4:9-14. Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. {10} Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."

{11} The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? {12} Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?" {13} Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, {14} but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

Jesus talked to this Samaritan woman about theology, an unthinkable thing for the day. Later her testimony would bring people to Christ, again something unthinkable. In his discourse with this woman Jesus says:

John 4:24. "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

⁶¹ *Why Not Women?* – David Joel Hamilton

This is a very famous verse and is often quoted. It is a unique revelation about the nature of God and it is given to a woman. How poorer the gospel record would be if this conversation was not included and this treasurer was not revealed.

Another lengthy and significant conversation Jesus had with a woman is when he spoke with Martha after Lazarus' death.

John 11:21-27. Then Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. {22} But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You." {23} Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." {24} Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." {25} Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. {26} And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" {27} She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

Again one of the clearest and greatest theological statements that Jesus makes is given to a woman: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live." Like Peter, Martha confesses her belief that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

On a previous occasion we read of how Martha's sister Mary was taught by Jesus.

Luke 10:38-42. Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. {39} And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. {40} But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." {41} And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. {42} But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."

Jesus is teaching theology to a group that includes women. Mary sat at Jesus' feet, learning. This is a phrase that denotes a teacher pupil relationship and not necessarily a physical seating arrangement. In his youth Paul sat at the feet of Gamaliel.⁶²

Jesus both permitted and encouraged Mary participation in learning. This was more important than fulfilling the stereotypical woman's role.

6.1.3. Female Followers

In total contradiction to all the norms of his day Jesus had female disciples. No Rabbi ever had female followers. Radically the gospels even give us the names of seven of Jesus' female disciples:

Mary called Magdalene, Joanna the wife of Chuza and Susanna.⁶³

Mary and Martha, sisters of Lazarus.

Mary the mother of James and Joses.⁶⁴

Salome, the mother of James & John.⁶⁵

⁶² Acts 22:3. "I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers' law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today.

⁶³ Luke 8:1-3.

⁶⁴ Matt 27:56

⁶⁵ Mark 15:40

We could also include Mary the mother of Jesus among his followers.

It is evident from Scripture that the early church accepted women as part of the group. Hear the words of Cleopas:

Luke 24:22-23. Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us. {23} When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive.

Luke records:

Acts 1:14. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

Acts 5:14. And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women,

Acts 8:12. But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized.

6.1.4. The Resurrection

We have already seen that in that day women were not considered reliable enough to be a witness in a court of law. But God chose women to be the first witnesses of the resurrection.

The following verses are from when the Sadducees questioned Jesus concerning the resurrection.

Mat 22:28-30. "Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her." {29} Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. {30} For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven.

The Sadducees suggested that because in this life we are sexual beings, then if there was a heaven we would also be sexual beings there. Many people today assume that because they are married in this life, the same relationship will be continued in heaven and after the resurrection. It will not.

There will be no sexual differences in glory. Our spirits, which are currently housed in a physical body, will be re-housed in a body like Jesus' glorified body. We shall not be male or female, but like the angels we shall no longer be sexual beings.

There is no difference in personal value or eternal destiny resulting from our gender.

6.1.5. Daughter of Abraham

From our western mindset we often read the following story and consider it to be a simple story of Jesus healing someone. But this is a particularly powerful passage where Jesus totally defies the conventions of the day.

Luke 13:11-16. And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up. {12} But when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said to her, "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity." {13} And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

{14} But the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath; and he said to the crowd, "There are six days on which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day."

{15} The Lord then answered him and said, "Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead it away to water it? {16} So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound; think of it; for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?"

Within the synagogue the women were separated from the men, but Jesus called this woman forth to stand where he was. She was no longer hidden behind a screen but Jesus brought this woman into the business part of the synagogue and made her the centre of attention. Next Jesus did the unheard of thing and laid his hands on her. Thirdly, He uses this unique phrase "daughter of Abraham". It honours her as a co-descendant of the patriarch and describes her as a person of faith.

Jesus states that her needs were a priority, requiring immediate action. She wasn't to be put in some back room and ignored.

6.1.6. Divorce and Creation

Mark 10:2-12. The Pharisees came and asked Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" testing Him. {3} And He answered and said to them, "What did Moses command you?" {4} They said, "Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce, and to dismiss her." {5} And Jesus answered and said to them, "Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. {6} But from the beginning of the creation, God 'made them male and female.' {7} 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, {8} and the two shall become one flesh'; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. {9} Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

{10} In the house His disciples also asked Him again about the same matter. {11} So He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. {12} And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

Moses' Law was seen by liberals amongst the Jews to mean that a man could divorce his wife for any reason, so long as he gave her a certificate. This law had been given to provide the wife some protection and rights within the relationship. The Rabbis taught that only a man could divorce his wife, never the other way round. The wife was the possession of the husband.

When Jesus taught on divorce he referred back to the creational principle. Moses' law had been a compromise because of the hardness of the human heart, but it was contrary to God's intention or design.

Women were not possessions that could be acquired and later disposed of. Marriage was not simply to satisfy a man's needs or desires. Marriage was an act of God in which two equals became one entity. Marriage is a covenant relationship of mutual love, co-operation, support and fellowship which forms the basic building block of human society.

6.1.7. A Man's Heart

Mat 5:28-29. But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. {29} If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

Mat 15:19-20. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. {20} These are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man.

Dealing with adulterous thoughts was a problem the Rabbis had considered. They blamed the woman for being alluring and having their face uncovered. They never considered that it was the fault of the man. Jesus clearly states that the sin is committed by the man whose heart is filled with lust. What a wake up call that would have been to Jesus' hearers.

6.1.8. Taboos

Luke 7:37-39. And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, {38} and stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil. {39} Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he spoke to himself, saying, "This man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner."

We probably cannot understand the shock that people at this dinner party would have felt. Even if the woman had been a respectable member of society, her actions were extremely inappropriate for the day. The fact that she was commonly regarded as a sinner compounded the situation.

This woman touched a strange man in public; she kissed his feet and she uncovered and unwound her hair before wiping his feet with her hair. The uncovering of a woman's hair was normally only witnessed by her husband and was considered to be the first act of intercourse!

But through all of this Jesus never upbraids her but he defends her actions. He even went on to say that her actions put the Pharisee's own actions to shame!⁶⁶ Jesus was not shocked or embarrassed by her because he knew the attitude of her thankful and worshipping heart. She was not acting in a lewd manner but she was expressing her thanks and relief for finding a new start and a sense of worth.

6.1.9. New Religious Sacraments

The defining rite of the Hebrew faith was circumcision. But this was only performed to the males. Jesus commanded that a new initiation rite was performed by all his adherents; water baptism. This was to be done to both male and female followers.

Acts 8:12. But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized.

Jesus also inaugurated a new rite for his followers; the communion table. Women as well as men were to partake in this celebration.

6.2. PAUL LIBERATED WOMEN

Paul's writings initially appear to be the most misogynistic of all the Biblical text. We shall look at Paul's letters in great detail in due course and there refute such a conclusion. But before we do that we shall quickly look at Paul's attitude towards women in the church.

6.2.1. One in Christ

Paul gives us the clearest of all statements regarding sexual equality.

⁶⁶ Luke 7:44-47. Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. {45} "You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. {46} "You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. {47} "Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little."

Gal 3:28-29. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. {29} And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Previously we saw that everyday Jewish men upon waking prayed the *beraka*: "Blesséd be God for not making me a gentile. Blesséd be God for not making me a woman. Blesséd be God for not making me a slave."⁶⁷ Paul's words in these verses smash such an attitude.

There is no discrimination in the gospel, either on the grounds of race or sex. The gospel breaks down barriers of discrimination. Before Jesus' sacrifice the Jews were the only people of God, the only people having hope, the only people having promises and a covenant. Now salvation is to go to every nation to the ends of the earth.

Equally, before Jesus' sacrifice women were seen as second class people, who were denied access to the Scriptures and side-lined in spiritual issues. But now all these barriers are broken down. All believers are equal, although some have a calling and responsibility within the church. Even so leaders are to be servants⁶⁸ and are not to lord it over other believers⁶⁹.

6.2.2. Husbands Love their Wives

Eph 5:25. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her

Eph 5:28. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.

Paul commands husbands to love their wives. This might seem a little superfluous to a modern western mind when marriage partners are supposedly chosen for love. But in that ancient world marriages were often arranged for financial or political convenience and love was not a priority or expectation.

Paul commands husbands to love their wives as they love themselves! Their wife was not just a possession but an equal whose feelings and needs mattered as much as their own.

Even greater than this, husbands are to love their wives as Christ loves the church and sacrificed himself for her. Jesus' relationship to the church was the example to every marriage and believer's marriages should reflect the glory of that mysterious relationship. A wife was no longer the disposable possession but someone worth laying your own life down for.

6.2.3. Women to Partake in Services

The following statements are taken from passages that we shall later consider thoroughly but a quick look will highlight the radical way women were to participate in ministry.

Firstly Paul commands that the women were to learn Scripture;

1 Tim 2:11. Let a woman learn in silence with all submission.

Secondly Paul gives instruction on how women should pray and prophesy in public services.

1 Cor 11:5. But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonours her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved.

⁶⁷ Menahoth 43b-44a

⁶⁸ Matt 10:25

⁶⁹ 1 Peter 5:2-3

1 Cor 14:5. I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification.

Paul states that all the believers, women included are to speak in tongues and prophesy.

6.2.4. Women who Paul Commended

One very good argument against the notion that Paul believed that women should not hold office or teach in the church is the fact he gives commendations to various women whom he designates as his fellow labourers.

Phoebe, who was a faithful servant in the church at Cenchrea, a suburb of Corinth. She was a *diakonos*, that is, a deacon and appears to be the person Paul entrusted to carry the letter to Rome.

Rom 16:1-2. I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea, {2} that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also.

Paul states that Phoebe has been a *prostatis* of many. This is the only time that this word appears in the New Testament. It means:

1. A woman set over others.
2. A female guardian, protector, patroness, caring for the affairs of others and aiding them with her resources.⁷⁰

Prostatis is used in other ancient literature to describe the noble and gracious rulers, including kings and emperors. Phoebe did not help people by making the tea or putting the chairs out or taking people shopping. She had a leadership position.

Normal Roman tradition named a household after the patriarch who lived there. There are a number of times when Paul names a household after a women. Consider Stephanas:

1 Cor 16:15-17. I urge you, brethren; you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints; {16} that you also submit to such, and to everyone who works and labours with us. {17} I am glad about the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, for what was lacking on your part they supplied.

This woman's household could have been a house church rather than just family members, since they provided a noted ministry centre. Paul urges the brethren to submit to leaders such as this woman Stephanas.

Another household Paul names after a women is also found in First Corinthians:

1 Cor 1:11. For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you.

Chloe appeared to be a house church leader at Corinth.

6.3. WOMEN WHO MINISTERED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

In his letters Paul refers to 39 co-workers; 10 of these were women. On the day of Pentecost all 120 believers who were gathered were filled with the Holy Spirit, regardless of Gender. The holy anointing oil had never been applied to a woman in the Old Testament, but God treated men and women the same.

⁷⁰ Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible; no 4368

Acts 2:17-18. 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men⁷¹ shall see visions, your old men⁷² shall dream dreams. {18} And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy.

Peter, quoting the prophet Joel, announced the inauguration of the age of the Spirit. In these last days men and women as well as young and old will receive the Holy Spirit and will prophecy and be divinely directed.

Philip's four daughters certainly fulfilled this in a noteworthy manner:

Acts 21:9. Now this man had four virgin daughters who prophesied.

Euodia and Syntyche were co-labourers with Paul and leaders at Philippi:

Phil 4:2-3. I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. {3} And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life.

An often mentioned married couple in the New Testament is Priscilla and Aquila. This married couple are only ever mentioned together in the New Testament. On five of the seven occasions when they are mentioned in Scripture Priscilla is named first, which is something contrary to all cultural practises of the day. It suggests that her ministry may have been the lead ministry of the two.

Rom 16:3-4. Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, {4} who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

Paul calls Priscilla a fellow worker. Early church fathers record that Priscilla was the pastor of the church at Corinth after Paul left.

Acts 18:26. So he [Apollos] began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

In the above verse we see that Priscilla was involved in teaching⁷³ Apollos, who went on to become a noted minister of the gospel. These words in Acts were recorded by Luke, Paul's companion. If Paul believed that a woman should not teach a man then surely Luke would have either included some word of censure or he would not have recorded the event. The inclusion shows us that there was no variance between this event and Paul's ecclesiology.

One of the most important verses with regard to this subject is as follows:

Rom 16:7. Greet Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

Andronicus is a man's name and Junia is a female's name. They were Jews, prisoners for Christ and both noteworthy apostles. For 13 centuries it was accepted that Junia was a woman, but then the Roman church changed the name by adding an "s" to the name to make it sound like a

⁷¹ Greek: *neaniskos* which means young attendant or young servant.

⁷² Greek: *prebyteros* which means elder man or elder woman

⁷³ Some have tried to argue that "explain the way of God more accurately" did not involve teaching! How?

masculine name. However scholars of ancient manuscripts tell us that a name Junias is unheard of and Junia was never a man's name.

This couple were Jewish like Paul, had been imprisoned because of their ministry and were "of note among the apostles". This final statement is ambiguous. Does it mean that this couple had been noted by the apostles; or does it mean that they were noteworthy apostles?

If the Paul it was the second interpretation then Junia was an apostle whose ministry was recognised by the early church. If a woman can be an apostle then there is no role a woman is forbidden from because of her gender.

However many Greek scholars believe that the first interpretation of the passage is correct. Junia was a woman whose ministry had been noted by the apostles.

7. NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING AND THE DIFFICULT PASSAGES

There are verses in Scripture which appear to forbid women participating in ministry within church or even speaking at church at all. These are found in 1 Corinthians, Ephesians and First Timothy. The letter to Timothy was written when he was a young pastor serving at Ephesus. All of these passages were written by Paul.

7.1. CULTURAL BACKGROUND

We have considered the cultural mix found in the Mediterranean countries at the time of the writing of the New Testament. We now need to consider the specific situations found in Corinth and Ephesus.

Corinth was situated on a major land trade route and was a thriving seaport. It was wealthy and the largest Greek city in the first century. It rivalled Athens for culture but was the most sexually immoral part of Greece. The chief deity of the city was Aphrodite⁷⁴ who was the goddess of licentious love. Her temple employed 1,000 prostitutes to enable men to perform acts of worship.

Ephesus was a principle port in what today is Turkey. It was the site of the Temple of Artemis⁷⁵. She was the goddess of love and fertility. Her image was a multi-breasted woman. The temple of Artemis was the greatest of the seven wonders of the ancient world. It was magnificent in its size and famed for its orgies and religious prostitutes. In a time when half of the women died in child birth, people prayed to Artemis for protection. When Paul was in Ephesus he was careful not to publically blaspheme the goddess because that would just have hindered the gospel.⁷⁶ But everything he taught undermined the pagan beliefs.

Both the worship of Aphrodite and of Artemis were extremely immoral sexual religions and their attitude concerning women was contrary to the normal Greek thinking. Both sects taught female dominance and supremacy. Other deities were also worshipped but the only ones open for female participation were the secretive mystery cults in which the participants engaged in sexual immorality as part of their worship. One such cult was that of Dionysus – the god of wine and madness. The cult of Narcissus taught that woman was created before man and that only man was responsible for the fall. This was something Paul would refute in his writings.

⁷⁴ Roman goddess Venus

⁷⁵ Roman goddess Diana

⁷⁶ Acts 19:37. For you have brought these men here who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of your goddess.

7.2. NEW TESTAMENT TRANSLATIONS

Whatever the misogynistic horrors of the ancient Greek culture their language was a very rich and precise resource that Paul the apostle used very skilfully. He had a vast number of words and a precise system of tenses and gender at his disposal so that he could write without causing any ambiguity. Nevertheless translating ancient foreign languages is not easy.

One difficulty in translation can be that the translators are looking through the eyes of their own culture and, perhaps unknowingly, distort what is really being said. We presume we know what Paul meant but we are viewing his words through our own culture and tradition.

John Temple Bristow writes:

Theoretically if I took our English translations of his words and translated them back into Greek, my words would be similar to Paul's original words. But when I tried doing this, such was not the case, not at all! In reality the words that Paul chose to use imply different ideas from those conveyed by the English words we use to translate his writings. In fact the English words imply ideas that Paul deliberately avoided!

If Paul had wanted to say what we think he said then he would have chosen quite different words when he wrote... Paul deliberately avoided those Greek terms that, if he had used them, would have communicated to his readers precisely what our English translators imply.⁷⁷

Bristow concludes that the misinterpretation of Paul's writings happened some years later when church leaders who were educated and brought up in a culture dominated by Greek philosophy, interpreted Paul's letters from that perspective and infused the ideas of Aristotle within Christian theology. They read into the text what they expected to find (eisegesis) rather than letting the text speak for itself (exegesis).

Tertullian (AD 160 – 230) was a Roman lawyer who was schooled in Stoic Philosophy before he converted to Christianity. He became a famed apologist of Christianity but he maintained his Greek view of women and interpreted the Scriptures in this understanding. He condemned all women for the Fall of mankind.

The famous church father, Augustine, had also been schooled in Stoic thought. He regarded marriage as a covenant with death. The famed Bible translator, Jerome, believed that celibacy as a more holy state than marriage for believers. By the second century there were Christian groups who promoted celibacy and regarded marriage as "simple prostitution and a practise introduced by the devil."⁷⁸

Bristow states that Thomas Aquinas (1225 – 1274):

⁷⁷ *What Paul Really Said About Women*

⁷⁸ *The Stomateis* - Clement of Alexandria. Quoted from *What Paul Really Said About Women*

“did more than any other to systematise Christian beliefs and to harmonise them with Greek philosophy... [He] interpreted Paul through the mind of Aristotle, and the Greek deprecation of women became solidly focused within Christian theology.”⁷⁹

7.3. A NEW COMMUNITY - EPHESIANS FIVE & SIX

In Ephesians chapters 5 and 6 Paul redefines something that is at the heart of the ancient Mediterranean’s culture: the Household Code. This code defined the relationships within the house by three pairings:

- The husband and wife
- The father and the child
- The master and the slave

A man was in complete control of his wife, child and slaves. No one could question his decisions and his position of total authority was backed by civil law. His wife, the children and the slaves all had to submit to him; but he submitted to no one. Every Greek, Roman and Jewish mind would expect Paul to confirm this privilege for the man of the house, but instead he turns it upside down. Instead of solely demanding obedience to the house’s patriarch Paul writes about the man’s responsibilities towards the others. No wonder the early church were described as those who turned the world upside down.⁸⁰

Paul describes the way in which faith in Christ Jesus should revolutionise our relationships; both in the community of the church and in the home. He makes a parallel between the God-designed marriage partnership and the relationship between Christ and His church.

The New King James version offers a typical English translation of this passage.

Eph 5:15-33. See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, {16} redeeming the time, because the days are evil. {17} Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. {18} And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, {19} speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, {20} giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, {21} submitting to one another in the fear of God. {22} 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 Saviour of the body.

{24} Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. {25} 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.

⁷⁹ *What Paul Really Said About Women*

⁸⁰ Acts 17:6

{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.

Eph 6:1-9. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. {2} "Honour your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: {3} "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth." {4} And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

{5} Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; {6} not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, {7} with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, {8} knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free. {9} And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

Paul calls for a lot of submission in this passage:

- Submitting to one another in the fear of God.
- Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.
- Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.
- Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.
- Slaves obey your masters.

All believers are told to be submissive towards each other and wives are to demonstrate the same attitude within the home. Unlike in the customary household code wives are not commanded to obey their husbands. Husbands are commanded to love their wives, even with the sacrificial love that Christ demonstrated towards the church. In his version of the household code Paul elevates the position of the wife from a possession to that of a precious partner who is to be cherished and cared for. The husband is to treat his wife as he would his own body and even as Christ does the church.

Paul uses verse 33 as a summary on the husband and wife's relationship:

Eph 5:33. 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.

The imperative verb (a command) is in the first half of this verse; husbands loving their wives. The second half of the verse is a dependent clause. In other words it is the husband's responsibility to set the tone of the relationship by loving his wife. She is to respond to this new elevation and attention in the relationship not by domineering or demanding but by showing respect.

Children and slaves are to obey, but even here Paul instructs the patriarch on how he is to behave with regard to his children and slaves. He is emphasising the responsibility rather than the privilege.

7.3.1. Primary Theme

To understand what Paul is saying in the chapters 5 and 6 we need to consider the way he carefully constructed the passage. Firstly in the Greek verse 15 to 23 are all one sentence! There are none of the paragraph breaks or subheadings we find in the English translations. These have been added to aid reading, but their addition does distort the passages emphasis. The ideas in this large sentence are not meant to be separated but they are fused together.

There are two imperative verbs in the sentence, that is to say there are two commands. Every other verb is used in subordinate clauses. The commands are "Do not be filled with wine" and "Be filled with the Holy Spirit". The subordinate verbs are speaking, singing, making, giving thanks and submitting. In other words these subordinate verbs are describing what to means to be filled with the Spirit.

Submission is an expression of a Spirit-filled life. An arrogant, dominant self-serving person is not a spirit-filled person; even if they use spiritual gifts! Paul states that all members of the church are to be submitted to each other. What does Paul mean by submit? He doesn't mean obey since we cannot all run around obeying each another! The Greek word translated as submitting is *hypotassio* means "a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility and carrying a burden."⁸¹ The same idea is conveyed in the following verses:

Rom 12:10. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honour giving preference to one another;

Phil 2:3-4. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. {4} Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

The Spirit filled life is characterised by the way we related to each other. There is to be mutual submission and co-operation. Men who traditionally had been masters in their own house are instructed to have an attitude of giving in, cooperating and assuming responsibility towards the other members of the church.

Now let us consider verse 22.

Eph 5:22. Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

This is still the same sentence and in fact in the Greek there is no verb in this verse. The associated verb is in the previous verse. Paul is giving one example of the outworking of the mutual cooperation he is talking about. It's no good have broad charismatic smiles and polite manners to other people in church, if when we get home there is antagonism. Wives are to respect their husbands and allow them to fulfil their responsibilities in the home. But submission is not servility, silence or stupidity.

7.3.2. Head

In verse 23 we read "the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church". In western culture we understand head to mean ruler, chief or boss; someone who had authority. People have therefore assumed that this was the intention in this phrase. But is that the meaning that Paul intended?

There are two Greek words which are translated head. The first is *arche*⁸² and it means point of origin⁸³, beginning or leader of a group. In English arch is used as a prefix for a leader; for example

⁸¹ Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible

⁸² Pronounced ar-KAY

archduke, archbishop, archangel.⁸⁴ The word *arche* is used throughout the New Testament to describe someone in authority. If Paul had wanted to say that the husband was the boss of his wife he would of used *arche* here, but he did not.

The Greek word that Paul uses is *ketholae* which means physical head, foremost, source or origin⁸⁵. *Ketholae* was also used as a military term where it referred to the one who leads into battle. Not in the sense of an officer commanding from a safe distance, but as the soldier who takes the point or is first to lead the men into the affray.

In choosing *ketholae* Paul divides the New Testament image on marriage from Greek thinking. The husband does not command a position of dominating authority and power over his wife, but he is responsible to take the lead and to shoulder the risks. As Christ went before the church, making a trail for her to follow, so the husband is to go before his wife. It is this type of leadership Paul calls wives to submit to.

Jesus taught about authority structures within his new community of believers:

Mat 20:25-28. But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. {26} Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. {27} And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave; {28} just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

The world's system is top-down. Prestige and power is owned by those at the top. Jesus said that this was not the way for grace filled, kingdom communities. Leaders are to be first among equals and they are servants of the church. In like manner the husband should lead the household by ensuring the needs of the family are met. The world's system would emphasis the privilege and authority of the husband as the head of the wife. The teaching of Christ emphasises the responsibility and purpose. The first is power seeking and the second is love giving.

7.4. FIRST CORINTHIANS

7.4.1. A Church with Problems - 1 Cor 5 & 6

1 Cor 6:9-11. Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, {10} nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. {11} And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

The Corinthian church had some serious problems. In his letters to this church Paul has to address problems of sexual immorality within the church and answer questions on marriage and divorce. Many of the new believers within the church had previously been involved with the immoral practices that the city was famous for. They had been brought up with Greek thinking and this was now affecting their understanding of God's grace. Some had been taught the Greek Gnostic ideas which stated that the physical and spiritual realms were separate and what was done in the physical

⁸³ In old English the source of a river was called the head-waters.

⁸⁴ We also use it with regard to beginnings or old things such as archaeology and archives.

⁸⁵ The Greeks thought that semen came from the male brain (head) and contained miniature human beings. They taught that during intercourse the male sowed these in the woman's soil and there they grew. It was believed that the woman added nothing to the nature of the child.

body didn't affect the soul. So if a man sinned in the body, say by sleeping with a prostitute, it was okay because it didn't taint the soul. Paul had to give these believers a new moral compass.

The first major problem Paul addresses was the condoning of a particularly heinous act of sexual immorality. A man has taken his step-mother as a lover! Paul stamps on this fire and leaves the church with no doubt about what their attitude should be. Those who practise sexual immorality should be put out of the church. It is not honouring to God by extending grace to such people and allowing the sin to continue. The church's spiritual cover as well as their fellowship was to be removed from this man. He would then suffer the full consequences of his actions.

1 Cor 5:1-5. It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles; that a man has his father's wife! {2} And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you. {3} For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed. {4} In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, {5} deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Paul makes it clear that there is a moral standard that is expected of every believer. Those who claim to be a follower of Christ but who willingly continue in sin are to be shunned by the church.

1 Cor 5:9-13. I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. {10} Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. {11} But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; not even to eat with such a person. {12} For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? {13} But those who are outside God judges. Therefore "put away from yourselves the evil person."

Paul addresses those men who saw women as means of gratification. Sexual intercourse is not a harmless act without spiritual or moral consequences.

1 Cor 6:13-20 ... Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. {14} And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power. {15} 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." {17} But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.

{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. {19} Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? {20} For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

God is spirit but what a man does with his body is also spiritual. The physical is not detached from the spiritual realm. Our physical bodies are the temple of God's Holy Spirit and members of the body of Christ. Sexual immorality is sin against God and is a sin against our own body. Believers cannot indulge in illicit sexual activities.

7.4.2. Singleness, Marriage and Divorce – 1 Cor 7

It is evident that the Corinthian's letter to Paul asked questions about celibacy and marriage. His answer is masterful, being practical and balanced. It is also totally counter-cultural since Paul affords the same rights and arguments to men and women. Let's look at his reply.

1 Cor 7:1-6. Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. {2} Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. {3} Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. {4} The 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. {5} Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. {6} But I say this as a concession, not as a commandment.

The culture of the day saw the wife as a possession. The husband had all the rights. But Paul treats the husband and wife as equals. They both have a right to the body of the other and neither should deprive the other of sexual intercourse. Verse 4 is the only time in the New Testament where it says that a husband has authority over his wife, and it goes on to say that the wife has authority over her husband. In both cases this authority is the right to the other's body.

People who get married should realise that they are committing themselves to meet the legitimate sexual needs of their partner. These verses do not mean that a person can demand that their partner be available at an unreasonable frequency or for unhealthy practises. A husband may have authority over his wife's body, but he should love her as Christ loves the church and therefore he would not abuse that right.

1 Cor 7:7-15. For I wish that all men were even as I myself. But each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that. {8} But I say to the unmarried and to the widows: It is good for them if they remain even as I am; {9} but if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband. {11} But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife. {12} But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her. {13} And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him. {14} For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy. {15} But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace.

With regard to single men and women and married men and women, Paul treats the different genders as equal. Men and women can choose to remain single or to marry. A married man does not have the power to divorce his wife and a wife should not leave her husband. But if a marriage cannot be made to work a couple may separate but both should then remain single.

1 Cor 7:25-34. Now concerning virgins: I have no commandment from the Lord; yet I give judgment as one whom the Lord in His mercy has made trustworthy. {26} I suppose therefore that this is good because of the present distress; that it is good for a man to remain as he is: {27} Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be loosed. Are you loosed from a wife? Do not seek a wife. {28} But even if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Nevertheless such will have trouble in the flesh, but I would spare you...

{32} But I want you to be without care. He who is unmarried cares for the things of the Lord; how he may please the Lord. {33} But he who is married cares about the things of the world; how he may please his wife. {34} There is a difference between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman cares about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But she who is married cares about the things of the world; how she may please her husband.

In view of the “present distress” Paul advocates celibacy. But again throughout this passage he treats the genders equally. Men and women are to care for the things of the Lord and serve Him. Married people are both to care for and please their partner.

7.4.3. Head – 1 Cor 11

In First Corinthians Chapter 11 Paul deals with permanent spiritual truths concerning creation and ministry in the church as well as the temporal Corinthian social customs. The context of this passage is found in chapter 10.

1 Cor 10:32-33. Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God, {33} just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.

Paul does not want to hinder the gospel by causing un-necessary offense to people. But in a cosmopolitan city full of different ethnic groups that means using a great deal of wisdom.

1 Cor 11:3. But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.

In this verse we read “the head of woman is man”. The Greek word is *ketholae* which is the word we studied when looking at Ephesians chapter 5. It means physical head, foremost, source or origin. It is only very rarely used in any ancient literature to refer to a superior. And yet that is the normal English understanding of this verse.

If Paul had intended *ketholae* to be understood as ruler or superior then this verse would present some problems since he would be saying that God was the superior of Christ. But Jesus is not inferior to God because he is God.

Phil 2:5-6. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, {6} who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,

So we could accurately write verse 3 as “the source of every man is Christ, the source of woman is man, and the source of Christ is God”. Rather than speaking about authority structures Paul is teaching the Corinthians the Biblical order of creation. The source of every man is Christ because “all things were created by Him”⁸⁶. The woman and man in the middle of this verse refer to Adam and Eve. Adam was the source of Eve because she was taken from his body. God is the source of Christ because the Father sent the Son into the world as a man. Christ came from God and willingly

⁸⁶ Col 1:16. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

submitted to the will of the Father. But Jesus was and is not inferior to God because He is God. In like manner the fact that Eve came from Adam does not mean she was inferior to him.

Paul writes about the order of creation to counter pagan versions of creation and the fall. The major Greek / Roman religions claimed the women had a different and inferior origin than men. Some cults propagated myths in which the woman was created first and superior to the man.

7.4.4. Head Coverings – 1 Cor 11

Paul's words on head coverings in chapter 11 have been interpreted in many ways and have at times become a divisive issue in churches. Before we look at the text let us briefly consider who Paul was writing to.

There were Roman, Greek and Jewish believers in the church at Corinth and there well may have been people from other cultural backgrounds in this thriving sea port. Traditionally Roman men and women prayed with their heads covered. Roman men kept their hair short while the fashion for Roman women's hair constantly changed. Greek men had their heads uncovered during worship. Greek women's hair would be covered in the more conservative idol worship, but uncovered in the sexual cults. The length of Greek men's hair varied but was generally worn short in the first century. Long hair was considered beautiful for Greek women but they kept their heads covered when in public. Jewish men and women prayed with their heads covered. Jewish males usually had long hair. The most religious men would cover their heads when in public. Jewish women covered their hair in public.

Now people from all three cultures were turning to Christ and worshipping together. Should they cover their heads or should they not?

1 Cor 11:4-6. Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered⁸⁷, dishonours his head. {5} But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonours her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved. {6} For if a woman is not covered, let her also be shorn⁸⁸. But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered.

1 Cor 11:13-16. Judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? {14} Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonour to him? {15} But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given to her for a covering. {16} But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God.

We need to remember that when we read Paul's words we are hearing one side of a dialogue. We haven't seen the letter from the Corinthians to Paul. We don't know what questions they have asked him. Some of his statements are vague to us but the Corinthians would know the context and would have understood his answers.

We should note that Jesus and his disciples would have had relatively long hair and would have covered their heads when they prayed. Does Paul consider that Jesus was wrong? No of course not. Does Paul think that the church at Jerusalem should change their practises and men should uncover their head? Again no. Paul's instructions here were to a specific cultural problem and they are not timeless truths for every circumstance.

⁸⁷ Greek *katalupto* (kata-ka-LOOP-toe). It is a strengthened form of *kalupto* which means "to cover" and so is translated as "to cover down over".

⁸⁸ Greek *keiro* and means shear or cut short.

The Greek text for verses 4 to 7 is very unusual and difficult to translate. We should be careful how much weight we give verses when the translation is uncertain. Vague verses about a theme that is not repeated or collaborated in the rest of Scripture should not form the basis of Christian practise.

In verse 3 Paul had been speaking about creational order and uses head to speak about source or origin. Now Paul speaks about covering physical heads bringing dishonour to our origin. He does not use the normal Greek word to cover, *kalupto*. Instead Paul use a strengthened form *katakalupto*⁸⁹, which would be more literally translated “to cover down over”. Further more the normal Greek word for hair is *thrix*, but in this passage Paul uses *kome* which means long, ornamental hair. It is hard for us to know exactly what practices Paul is referring to.

Let us consider what was special about the situation in Corinth? We saw earlier that many Greek people equated women attending places of worship with cultic prostitution and obscene sexual practises. Corinthian prostitutes usually were recognisable on the streets because they walked around with their hair uncovered in order to invite lust. Dr William J Martin in *Apostolic History and the Gospel* states writes that at the time of Paul writing there was a group within Greek society known as ‘shorn women’. The hair of these women had been cropped for pagan religious reasons, but now some of them were coming to Christ.

What conclusion would people outside jump to if they saw women with uncovered hair or shaven heads going into a Christian church service? They would have concluded that prostitutes or sexual services were available in Christian meetings.

Remember the contextual verse we quoted earlier:

1 Cor 10:32-33. Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God, {33} just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.

Paul wants to ensure that people outside the church would not jump to erroneous and damaging conclusions. The manner in which believers dressed would be crucial to this. The dress restrictions are therefore to do with maintaining a good and unambiguous reputation within the community and are not spiritual truths which apply to all people in all times.

Previously in Corinthians we saw in regard to marriage, divorce, singleness and sexual relations Paul treated men and women equally. In this chapter in regard to hair Paul makes a difference between men and women not because of some theological or creational differences but because of the social circumstances the church was working.

Let us look at the verses we missed out.

1 Cor 11:7-16. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. {8} For man is not from woman, but woman from man. {9} Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man. {10} For this reason the woman ought to have *a symbol of* authority on her head, because of the angels. {11} Nevertheless, neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord. {12} For as woman came from man, even so man also comes through woman; but all things are from God.

The word translated man in verse 7 is the gender specific Greek word *aner*. Paul really does mean male here rather than humanity. Most English versions of the Bible use the conjunction *but* in this verse which suggests that the male alone is the image and glory. We have already seen that this is not what Genesis teaches. The Greek conjunction Paul uses is the word *de*. It is usually translated

⁸⁹ Pronounced *kata-ka-LOOP-toe*

as *and* or *and also*. Rarely is it translated as *but*. Paul had wanted to say *but* he could have used the Greek word *alla* which would have left us in no doubt. A better translation that would agree with the Genesis account would therefore be:

“the man is the image and glory of God; as is the woman who is also the glory of man.”

The forming of Eve was the finishing touch of the creation of humanity, bringing glory to mankind. Women are not deformed males as the Greeks taught but are the glory of man. Paul appears to be reminding the Greek minded men in the church that creation was only pronounced very good when both partners of this divinely ordained team were present. In the same manner the church will move from “it is not good” to “it is very good” when all members of the church, male and female, are valued and released to do their God ordained tasks.

In verse 11 Paul talks about the interdependency we all have upon each other. He specifically says that “in the Lord”, that is in the kingdom of God, men are not independent of women and women are not independent of men. Creation was not designed that way and neither is the church.

Paul reminds the church that the first woman was created for the man because it was not good for man to be alone. God therefore gave Adam what Genesis calls a comparable partner. Not for his pleasure or for him to dominate but because of his need, because of his incompleteness. Paul also states that the order of creation is not significant since although man was made first since then every man has come from a woman.

Verse 10 talks about a head covering being a symbol of authority, except that the words “*a symbol of*” do not appear in the original Greek text. Translators have added them in order to try and make sense of an unusually constructed sentence. The inclusion of these words have caused the verse to be interpreted as “a woman should wear a head covering as a sign of her submission to her husband’s authority.” Other apostolic teaching calls us to focus on internal attitude rather than external dress.

1 Pet 3:3-4. Do not let your adornment be merely outward; arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel; {4} rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.

Neither God nor angelic beings are impressed with the wearing of symbols of holiness or submission if a person’s character displays neither.

The construction of verse 10 in Greek is such that the authority mentioned is the woman’s own authority and not that of her husband or a male elder. So Paul appears to be saying that a woman ought to have her authority on her own head. David Joel Hamilton suggests that:

Paul was simply saying that women have the right to wear whatever they want on their heads – just as men do.⁹⁰

So we all have the right to make decisions and choices. But Paul immediately reminds us all that this authority does not mean that we can live independently of each other.

This passage is written in the context of discussing worship. So unlike many pagans that excluded women, or the Jews that side lined women, the church of Jesus was a place where each person could take their place and contribute.

The reference to angels in verse 10 remains totally unclear. Although there have been many explanations proposed none have been singularly convincing and some have even been bizarre.

⁹⁰ *Why Not Women?*

Some have suggested that Paul was saying unless women wore hats during worship, a symbol of their submission, they would offend godly angels or attract demonic spirits. Tertullian wrote that women needed to wear a veil to prevent angels from falling in love with them! I conclude that Paul's intended communication was understood by the Corinthians but is lost to us.

7.4.5. Order in the Church - 1 Cor 14:26-40

Paul is writing in the following passage about order in church services. His primary point is that everything should be done decently and in an orderly fashion because God is a God of order. This is the main theme and it is repeated at the beginning of the passage (verse 26), half way through the passage (verse 33) and at the end (verse 40).

Teaching the New Testament churches concerning orderly conduct in meetings was a very necessary task.⁹¹ This was because many of the new converts were not familiar with worshipping the living God who, as Paul insists, is a God of order. They had come from idol worshipping backgrounds where various false deities were served in frenzied emotional and sensual ways. But Christian meetings were to be characterised by order and peace, and in a way that was conducive to teaching and edification. There should not be a cacophony of noise and neither should there be unruly emotional outbursts. Paul teaches them to share one by one in the service, with everyone else keeping quite.

In talking about orderly services Paul writes about three areas where order is to be ensured; speaking in tongues, prophesying and women. Paul teaches about each of these subjects areas twice. The first time through he does so in the order of tongues, prophesying and women (verses 27-28, 29-31, 34-35). He rebukes misuse of spiritual gifts and disorderly conduct that disrupt church services. The second time he reverses the order; women, prophesying and speaking in tongues (verses 36-38, 39, 39). This time, as we will see later, he defends the right of tongue speakers, prophets and women to minister.

Nearly all of the women in the church would have come from oppressive situations. Some may have never previously been allowed out of the home; never allowed to socialise. Most would never have been allowed to be present during worship or if they were Jewish, never being allowed to participate in worship. Women who had been involved in Gentile idol worship were only allowed to participate by crying and wailing in a loud manner. The verb for this is *ululate* and is done either in a time of grief or great joy. Today women from the middle-east are seen on news-channels practising ululation at public funerals.

Those women who were only recently saved would most likely be ignorant of Biblical teaching; it was all new to them. They had to be instructed how to handle their new freedom in a way that allowed the church services to be unhindered. They could not chat with their new friends during the service and neither could they ask their husbands questions about the teaching whilst the service was going on.

Let us read the passage that has caused controversy with regard to women in church.

⁹¹ It still is!

1 Cor 14:26-40. How is it then, brethren⁹²? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. {27} If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret. {28} But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God. {29} Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge. {30} But if anything is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent. {31} For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged. {32} And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

{33} For God is not the author of confusion⁹³ but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

{34} 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. {35} 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. {36} Or did the word of God come originally from you? Or was it you only that it reached? {37} 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. {38} But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant.

{39} Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues. {40} Let all things be done decently and in order.

The section starts with Paul affirming the right of people to participate in church services “each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.” When he says “each of you” he includes the women.

Paul’s point is that whatever is done must be done for edification. Things should not be done for vainglory or to self justification. Things should not be done in a chaotic manner that brings confusion or where anything of value is lost in a torrent of words.

When Paul teaches on spiritual gifts he limits the number of occurrences within a meeting and he warns that when people claim to be speaking by divine inspiration what they say is to be publically evaluated⁹⁴. He states that “the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets”. Spiritual gifts do not make us loose control; causing mad outbursts and disrupting the order of the meeting. God is a God of order and our meetings should reflect that. Paul bans chaos. If people say they can’t control the utterance it is because it’s not from God.

There are some translation difficulties with this passage that are to do with where we place punctuation. There are no punctuation marks in the Greek text, so the translators have to choose where to place them. But their position can alter the meaning of a passage. The later half of verse 33 “as in all the churches of the saints” is either put before a full stop or after a full stop. The above translation is the New King James Version and its translators place this phrase with “God is not the author of confusion but of peace.” Other versions, such as the New International Version, place it with “let your women keep silent...” Which is right? The fact that God is not the author of confusion is a universal truth relative to all the churches of Christ, both then and now. Does Paul

⁹² The Greek word *adelphos* is written in a gender inclusive form meaning brothers and sisters.

⁹³ Greek *akatastasia* (pronounced aka-tas-ta-SEE-a); translated as confusion , disorder or tumult.

⁹⁴ Verse 29

mean that the silencing of women was something that all churches should practise? No, not when he teaches on how women should pray and prophesy in public. So this author favours the New King James rendering of the verse.

So how can Paul on one hand give instruction on how women are to pray and prophesy and then in verse 34 apparently command that women should remain silent? The two instructions are incompatible. When considering this we firstly should notice that in this passage there are three groups that Paul says should keep silent: tongue speakers (verse 28), those who prophesy (verse 30) and women (verse 34). Although some translations use different English words⁹⁵, it is the same Greek word in all three cases, the word *sigao*⁹⁶ and it means a voluntary silence. *Sigao* is used in in the following verse:

Acts 15:12. Then all the multitude kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul declaring how many miracles and wonders God had worked through them among the Gentiles.

The multitude voluntarily kept quite in order for visiting missionaries to be heard.

There is a Greek word used throughout the New Testament which denoted a forced or commanded silence, *phimoo*, but Paul did not use that word here. So then Paul was saying that tongue speakers are to keep quiet if there is no interpreter. Those who prophesy are to keep quiet when another is sharing a revelation. Neither instructions are a permanent prohibition on speaking in tongues or prophesying but they are teaching the orderly use of spiritual gifts.

In like manner Paul's instruction for women to keep silent in church is not forbidding all women in all ages to pray, prophesy or share in public ministry but is an instruction for women in the congregation to keep quiet during the service. They are to be submissive to the leaders of the meeting. They should not turn around and talk to their friends. They should not shout out using meaningless emotional ululations. They should not disrupt the service by asking questions but they should wait till they get home and then ask their husbands. Paul says that this disruption caused by unruly women is shameful (verse 35).

Women were singled out by Paul because many of them did not have the cultural background to know how to behave in church. Throughout church history when there has been a harvest of souls in an unreached people group similar problems have appeared. The new converts have to be taught how to conduct them self in church. They have to learn how to dress in an appropriate manner. They have to learn to respect the leaders of a meeting. They have to learn how to use spiritual gifts in an appropriate way.

In verse 34 Paul used the phrase "be submissive as the law says". There is no such Old Testament command and neither is there any known law in Corinth demanding silence from women during worship. Commentators conclude that Paul is referring to the New Testament law of love.

Let us consider specifically verses 35 to38.

1 Cor 14:35-38. 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. {36} Or did the word of God come originally from you? Or was it you only that it reached? {37} 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. {38} But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant.

⁹⁵ The NIV uses "keep quite", "should stop" and be "remain silent".

⁹⁶ Pronounced sig –AH-o

In the book *Why not Women?* David Joel Hamilton expresses an interesting opinion on these verses. He believes that the second half of verse 35 should be in quotation marks, and that Paul is quoting a statement made by some at the Corinthian church. Paul does quote a number of sources in this letter⁹⁷ and English versions normally include quotation marks or use italics to indicate the fact. There are no quotation marks in the Greek so the translators have to identify various quotations. Hamilton feels that having this phrase as a quotation maintains the structure of Paul's arguments; especially in light of the first word of the next verse.

In the Greek the first word of verse 36 is ἤ. There is no direct translation for this tiny word. It is called an "expletive of disassociation" and is translated as "what", "nonsense" or "never". Paul uses it a lot. Fourteen times he places ἤ before various questions he asks in 1 Corinthians⁹⁸, and it appears before each of the questions in verse 36.

Hamilton therefore translates verses 35 and 36 in the following way:

"It is shameful for women to speak in church." Nonsense! Did the word of God come originally from you? What! Are you the only people it has reached?

In Hamilton's version Paul is defending the right of women to minister before those who want to totally ban them. The "you" in his two questions refer to these men Paul has quoted.

7.5. FIRST TIMOTHY

The second chapter of Paul's first letter to Timothy has been one that has been used to forbid women in ministry. Paul is writing to Timothy about situations known to them both but not known to us. He also deals with some cultural issues. In addition there are some difficult to understand phrases within this chapter. We need to read the passage very careful.

Many Christian leaders believe that in this chapter Paul clearly forbid women to teach, but was that's Paul intention?

1 Tim 2:1-6. Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men [people], {2} for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. {3} For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, {4} who desires all men [people] to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. {5} For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men [people], the Man [person] Christ Jesus, {6} who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,

In this passage Paul deliberately did not use the Greek word *aner* which means man / male. Instead he uses *anthropos* which means human beings – male and female. Although we may understand that when the NKJV uses "men" it means all people, we would not have noticed from the English Translation that in verse 5 Paul didn't call Jesus a man but a person. It was not his masculinity which made Jesus a mediator but his humanity; he died for us all representing us all. Paul was again nailing the Greek heresies concerning the origins and nature of men and women.

⁹⁷ 1 Cor 1:19, 31; 2:9, 16; 3:19-20; 5:13; 6:16; 9:9; 10:7, 26, 28; 14:21; 15:27, 32, 33, 45, 54-55

⁹⁸ 1 Cor 1:13; 6:2, 9, 16, 19; 7:16; 9:6, 7, 8, 10; 10:22; 11:22; 14:36a, 36b

7.5.1. Appropriate Dress

1 Tim 2:8-10. I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; {9} in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, {10} but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.

In this section Paul does use gender specific words. He does want all males (*aner*) to “pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting”. Then in verse 9 he goes on to speak to women. The words “in like manner” indicate that Paul wanted women to pray as well as the men.

Paul gives the women instruction against worldly displays of vanity. These verses are not forbidding wearing smart cloths or jewellery, but rather it is speaking about a believer’s priorities and attitudes.

The Romans prized pearls above all other jewels. Today it would be inappropriate for a woman to come to church dressed in an evening gown with a diamond necklace and a tiara. Why? Because the purpose of such attire is to make the wearer stand out, be the centre of attention and to demonstrate wealth. But such motives are totally inappropriate for believers. We all need to be free from vanity and worldly display at all times, particularly in worship.

So the men were to forsake anger and the women were to dress appropriately. Later Paul addresses the attitude of some rich people:

1 Tim 6:17. Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.

There are fashions which are not fitting for saints of God to wear. This is because they are too revealing or provocative. The Western world currently values sexuality over beauty. To quote from Pastor Alan Hewitt:

In society when femininity and virtue are no longer honoured as noble, women are tempted to turn to the lesser powers of seduction and sensuality.

We are to be a holy people showing moderation and restraint. We need to walk in love, considering how our actions, words and even our dress affect other people. We all need to value the inner beauty of a Christ-like character (godliness and good works). However being a follower of Christ does not mean we have to dress in drab attire or shun appropriate make-up. There is nothing wrong in all of us attempting to look our best. Consider how God adorns the flowers and birds.

7.5.2. A Learning Environment

Many people have stated that the following passage commands that women should not teach men in church. It has been taught that women may teach in Sunday school or in women’s groups but they should never teach men. A woman may be allowed to give her testimony in church and could possibly be allowed to share a word of encouragement – but not teach.⁹⁹

But as we shall see Paul’s intention was not to forbid all women teaching for all time. Such a ban would be at variance with other statements he made.

⁹⁹ In the first century Jewish women were not allowed to teach even the youngest of children in a school.

1 Tim 2:11-12. Let a woman learn in silence¹⁰⁰ with all submission¹⁰¹. {12} And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence.

We should note that Paul has changed from speaking about men and women and writes about “a woman” and “a man”. If he had wanted to say that women should keep silent in church and never teach he would have surly continued to use the plural noun. His deliberate shift has made commentators¹⁰² suggest that he was specifically speaking about a specific woman who was a false teacher known to Paul and Timothy.

When Paul writes to Timothy about false teachers and false teaching he uses gender inclusive terms referring to men and women.

1 Tim 1:6-7. from which some [gender inclusive], having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, {7} desiring to be teachers [gender inclusive] of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm.

1 Tim 6:3. If anyone [gender inclusive] teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness.

Paul actually commands Timothy to teach faithful people that they in turn might teach others:

2 Tim 2:2. And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

Paul uses the genderless noun *anthropos* which means human being or person rather than the gender specific noun *aner*. Timothy is to teach faithful men and women in order that they may teach others!

The normal attitude expected from students in the middle-eastern culture was silence and submission. What Paul is requiring from this individual woman is no different from what was expected from all members of the congregation.

Up to the coming of the Christian gospel, women had been forbidden to study the Law of Moses. Therefore many did not have a good foundation in the Scriptures. Neither did they understand the etiquette of the meeting where people listened without chatting or interrupting. Now however they are encouraged to learn and study for themselves, but without a contentious or argumentative attitude. Paul is demanding order in the church meetings.

Paul does not mean that women are forbidden to preach, exhort, share and encourage. But like all speakers they must remain under the local church authority. Before anyone can teach Scripture they first have to learn.

In verse 11 Paul uses an imperative verb. That is he states a command rather than a suggestion. “A woman must learn” rather than “a woman should or may learn”. This strengthens the argument that Paul was referring to a specific individual. If this woman is going to continue in the church she must learn and must submit to Timothy’s teaching. Unlike the male false teachers male Hymenaeus and Alexander¹⁰³ Paul had not given up on this woman.

¹⁰⁰ Greek word *hesuchia* (hey-soo-KEY-ah) meaning quietness and stillness.

¹⁰¹ The Greek word translated as submitting is *hypotassio* means "a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility and carrying a burden."

¹⁰² Eg. David Joel Hamilton

¹⁰³ 1 Tim 1:20. of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.

7.5.3. Authority

1 Tim 2:12. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence.

What about the question of authority? The word translated as authority in verse 12 is a very rare Greek word and is not used anywhere else in Scripture. It is not the word Paul normally uses for authority. The word is *authenteo* and it means autocratic domination, absolute rule, wicked or sadistic manipulation. It is even used to mean a murderer. Paul uses an unusual word here for an unusual situation.

The weight of Scripture would forbid any person utilizing this type of authority over another human being. No church leader has this type of authority over any believer. No husband has this type of authority over his wife and family. Anyone who engages in *authenteo* is in sin. Jesus said:

Mark 10:42-45... "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. {43} Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. {44} And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. {45} For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

The use of this word here with regard to "a woman" again suggests that this is a particular situation known to Paul and Timothy.

7.5.4. Creational Order

1 Tim 2:13-14. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. {14} And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.

In verse 13 Paul appears to be countering the erroneous ideas from Greek cults and philosophies. The Narcissus cult which stated that woman was created before man. Gnosticism taught that the first man was created androgynous but was later cut in two becoming Adam and Eve. Perhaps this woman was teaching one of these false doctrines. Paul is not saying that men are more important, spiritual or in charge because Adam was created first.

Paul may also have been drawing a comparison between the particular female false teacher and Eve. Both were deceived. Interestingly verse 14 says "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression". In his other writings Paul lays the blame for the fall upon Adam not Eve¹⁰⁴. So when he uses the phrase "the women" in this verse is he referring the woman in the Corinthian church who like Eve has been deceived and fallen into transgression.

7.5.5. Child Bearing

1 Tim 2:15. Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.

This is an awkward verse to translate and it is difficult to know what Paul had in mind. Having mentioned Eve and in light of God's pronouncement to Eve that in pain she would bring forth children, did Paul want to encourage women to look to the Lord for safe keeping in childbirth? Ephesian women would pray to Artemis, the Greek goddess of fertility, for protection through child birth, but believers should look to the Lord.

2 Tim 2:17. And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort,

¹⁰⁴ Rom 5:14, 1 Cor 15:22

But Paul's phrasing suggests he is not speaking to believers in general. He states that "she" will be saved if "they" continue in Christian virtues. Is he refereeing to the same woman and her husband?

We know that Paul was not teaching that this or any woman is redeemed through giving birth to children. Paul was adamant that we are all saved by grace through faith. His own opinion was that in the circumstance of the day both men and women would better serve the Lord by remaining celibate.¹⁰⁵

The Greek word translated as childbearing is not in fact a verb but a noun, and is preceded with a definite article – "the". So was Paul referring to a specific birth rather giving birth. David Joel Hamilton suggests that Paul is referring to the incarnation of Christ. We can all be saved because Christ was born of a virgin.

7.5.6. Qualifications for Leaders

Immediately after chapter two Paul tells Timothy the qualifications required in prospective leaders. Among his advice are the following statements:

1 Tim 3:1-4. This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. {2} A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behaviour, hospitable, able to teach; {3} not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; {4} one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence

1 Tim 3:10-12. But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless. {11} Likewise their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. {12} Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.

The English translation of these verses describes the candidates as being male. Are the Greek words that Paul used so definite? In verse 1 the word man does not appear in the Greek. Paul simply said "If any desire the position of a bishop..."

Does the reference "the husband of one wife" disqualify women from serving as elders? We understand that Paul's statement does not disqualify single men from being an elder; he himself was single. The purpose of this verse was to prohibit men with more than one wife serving as an elder. So this verse does not prohibit female elders in the same way it does not forbid single male elders.

Many English translations use the word wives in verse 11 for the Greek *gune*. But *gune* may equally be translated as women. So the New American Standard Version renders this verse as:

1 Tim 3:11. Women *must* likewise *be* dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things.¹⁰⁶

In this case verse 11 is not referring to the partners of male candidates but to female candidates.

We noted in sections 6.2.4. and 6.3. that Paul recognised, commended and valued certain women in leadership. For example Priscilla, Junia, Phoebe, Stephanas, Chloe, Euodia and Syntyche.

¹⁰⁵ 1 Cor 7:25-35

¹⁰⁶ *New American Standard Bible*

8. CONCLUSIONS

In early church history women ministered and were in leadership without restriction. But in AD 363 the council of Laodicea stopped women in leadership as well as banning communion being shared in people's houses.

Since the four century AD the church generally accepted the misogynistic Greek philosophical teachings of Aristotle and the Stoics; twisting and changing Paul's radical teaching to suit. The resulting restrictions against women have greatly harmed the cause of the gospel, demobilising and demoralising the greatest proportion of the church's membership. The failure to follow the grace-filled structures taught by Jesus, both in home and in the church, has restricted the blessing we have been able to receive.

Most importantly the prejudice against women within the church has also dishonoured the name of Christ. His death and resurrection proclaimed liberty and life for everyone. The power of his gospel is such as to transform societies and cultures. The church should have been radically pioneering liberty and equality for women, but instead has been part of the problem.

I conclude that the New Testament does teach equality of the sexes. Men and women have the same origins, share the same fall, are redeemed by the same saviour, partake in the eternal purpose and are equally loved by God. A person's gender does not commend them nor disqualify them for service in the kingdom of God or ministry roles within the church.

A husband is to take responsibility for the lead within the home. But his role does not afford him the rights to treat his wife as an inferior, a slave or as a sex toy. He is to love her and cherish her "as Christ loves the church". He is to look after her as he would his own body. We looked at what the New Testament means when it speaks about submitting to one another. It's not a call to mindless obedience but rather a voluntary attitude of giving in and cooperating with. This is the style of submission wives are called to display. Marriages endure, thrive and are fulfilling when we are committed to the teaching of Christ to love one another and serve one another.

There are a couple of passages within the New Testament which contain phrases that are difficult to translate or whose context is no longer known. But these should not distract us from the clear Scriptural principles. It has been an aim of this study to show that the New Testament church believed in, taught and practised full equality for all its members regardless of the race, class or gender.

The truth is that until the church allows every redeemed person to take their place and obey the call of God then the verdict "it is not good"¹⁰⁷ will remain. But when true unity exists we shall move to "it is very good"¹⁰⁸.

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

¹⁰⁷ Gen 2:18

¹⁰⁸ Gen 1:31

