

An Exegesis Of I Timothy 2:11-15 And Its Relation To The CHE Statement: “The Role Of Man And Woman According To Holy Scripture”

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Reading of the Greek text

Translation:

Let a woman learn in quietness, in all submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to thrust her authority over a man, but to be in quietness.

For Adam was formed first, then Eve.

And, Adam was not deceived, but the woman was the one who was greatly deceived; she came to be in transgression.

Nevertheless, (a woman) will be saved, and along with her salvation she will have the bearing of children, if they continue in faith and love and holiness with level-headedness.

I.

In these five verses, the meanings of two words are extremely important.

The word *hupotagay* in verse 11 is translated “submission.” The basic meaning of the verb *hupotasso* and the noun *hupotagay* is “to place under” or “to arrange oneself under.” The word is found in Greek papyri in connection with affixing one’s signature under a writing, thus arranging one’s name under the document. In the middle voice, the word can mean “to subject oneself,” “to submit oneself voluntarily” or “to lose or surrender one’s right or will.”¹

The noun *hupotagay* is used four times and the verb *hupotasso* is used forty times in the New Testament. There is little variety in how it is translated. The NIV translates it: “submit,” “be in submission,” “be obedient,” “be subject,” “put under or be put under,” “bring under control.”

Perhaps more significant than the variety of possible ways to translate the word itself are the contexts in which the word is used.

At times the submission that is spoken of is a submission taken by force. This word is used to describe the submission that both the human race and the universe have been put under because of sin:

The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not *submit* to God’s law, nor can it do so (Ro 8:7).

The creation *was subjected* to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who *subjected* it, in hope that the creation itself would be liberated from its bondage (Ro 8:20-21).

The word is used to talk about the subjection that the entire world has been put under to Christ because Christ died and rose again and has ascended to heaven and now sits at the right hand of God:

For (God) “*has put* everything under his feet” (Ps 8:6).

Now when it says that everything *has been put* under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who *put* everything under Christ. When he has done this, then the Son himself *will be made subject* to him who *put* everything under him, so that God may be all in all (1 Co 15:27-28).

God placed all things under (Christ’s) feet and placed him to be head over everything (Eph 1:22).

It is not to angels that (God) has subjected the world to come. . . . “You made (Christ) a little lower than the angels/ you crowned him with glory and honor/ and put everything *under* his feet” (Ps 8:5-6).

In *putting* everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him 2:5,7-8).

(Jesus) has gone into heaven and is at God’s right hand with angels, authorities and powers in *submission* to him (1 Pt 3:22).

The word was used by Jesus’ disciples to describe the subjection that devils were forced to have to them and their preaching:

The seventy-two returned with joy and said, “Lord, even the demons *submit* to us in your name.” (Jesus) replied, “Do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven” (Lk 10:17, 20).

The word is used to show that one day the entire universe will be subjected to Christ in the resurrection:

(The Lord Jesus Christ), by the power that enables him to *bring* everything *under* his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body (Php 3:21).

The word is used to enunciate the fact that the ability to control the prophecies that were spoken in the Corinthian church were under the control of those prophets:

The spirits of prophets are *subject* to the control of the prophets (1 Co 14-32).

At other times—in the majority of times—the submission spoken about is a submission not brought about by force, but a submission taken by choice. Jesus Himself chose submission:

Then he went down to Nazareth with (Mary and Joseph) and was *obedient to* them (Lk 2:51).

In the classic Christological passage concerning the humiliation and exaltation of Christ, Philippians 2:5-11, the word *hupotasso* or *hupotagay* is not used. The word *hupaykoos*, related in meaning, is used:

(Christ), being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became *obedient to* death—even death on a cross!

The nature of these two passages alone is proof that submission does not necessarily imply inferiority of substance. Submission can be and is chosen for the benefit rendered.

Other passages show a submission by choice. Paul laments the situation of the Jews, his “brothers”, who stubbornly refused to believe in Jesus Christ:

Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God, and sought to establish their own, they did not *submit to* God’s righteousness (Ro 10:3).

The Apostle James encouraged “the twelve tribes scattered among the nations”, to whom he wrote his epistle, to

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you (Jm 4:7).

The writer to the Hebrews advises God’s people to be willing to arrange themselves under God’s loving discipline:

We have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we *submit to* the Father of our spirits and live (Hb 12:9).

Christians are encouraged to submit to the government, not merely because the government has the power of the sword, but especially because Christians willingly offer their submission to God’s representatives on earth:

Everyone *must submit* to the governing authorities It is necessary *to submit* to the authorities not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience (Ro 13: 1,5).

Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men. (1 Pe 2:13).

Christians are encouraged to submit to each other in their interpersonal relationships.
Wives to husbands:

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, *submit* to your husbands, as to the Lord Now as the church submits to Christ, so also the wives should *submit* to their husbands in everything (Eph 5:21, 22, 24).ⁱⁱ

Wives, *submit* to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord (Col 3:18).

The older women can train the younger women...*to be subject* to their husbands (Tt 2:3, 4, 5).

Wives, in the same way (that slaves submit to their masters, following the example of Christ) be *submissive* to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without talk by the behavior of their wives The holy women of the past . . . *were submissive* to their own husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master (1 Pt 3:1, 5, 6).

Children, to parents:

(An overseer) must manage his own family well and see that his children *obey* him with proper respect (I Tm 3:4).

Young men to their elders:

Young men, in the same way (that undershepherds of the flock do not lord it over the sheep) *be submissive* to those who are older (1 Pt 5-5).

Slaves to their masters:

Teach slaves to *be subject to* their masters in everything (Tt 2:9).

Slaves, *submit yourselves* to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh (1 Pt 2:18).

God's people in general to those who labor in the Word:

You know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints. I urge you, brothers, *to submit* to such as

these and to everyone who joins in the work, and labors in it (1 Co 16:15-16).

There are two other interesting uses of *hupotasso/hupotagay*, both showing the voluntary nature of the submission one offers to another. In his letter to the Galatians, Paul recalled his actions and motives at the Jerusalem council. The issue was the preservation of New Testament freedom against the legalism of circumcision. When some “false brothers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus,” wishing “to make us slaves,” Paul, to defend that freedom, “did not *give* in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you” (2:5). For the sake of doctrine, Paul did not voluntarily submit himself, lest a false impression of unity be given.

In 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 Paul encouraged the church at Corinth to have a part in the contribution for the church in Jerusalem. Paul pointed out (beginning in 9:12) that, by being involved in this collection, the Corinthians were not merely supplying the needs of another group of God’s people in a different part of the world (they were doing that!). They were also giving witness to the world of commendable Christian service. They would prove themselves by such a service, Paul maintained, and men who would see it “will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ” (2 Co 9:13).

A summary of these passages shows that submission is very often willingly given by New Testament believers. Such submission is, in many instances, a practical way of living out the commandment “You should love your neighbor as yourself.” The admonition in these passages to submit was given directly to the person, asking him to give his willing submission. The Apostles did not want an imposed submission, brought about by show of force. This fact ought to prove that submission does not by any means automatically equal inferiority.ⁱⁱⁱ

The second important word is *authenteo* in verse 12. This is the only time this word is used in the New Testament.

The meaning listed in most lexicons and subscribed to by most commentators is “to have authority” or “to domineer over someone.” Arndt-Gingrich’s *Lexicon* lists three related words: The noun *authentays* is listed as a loanword from Jewish rabbinical literature, and is named as the source of the Turkish word *effendi*, which means “master.” The adjective *authentikos* is something or someone who has authority by virtue of being the first or the only one of its kind; hence, it has the meaning “original” (related to our English word “authentic”). The adverb *authentikoos* denotes the ability to speak from a position of authority, and so it carries the derived meaning of “with perfect clarity.”^{iv}

The etymology of the word is in dispute. The grammarian Phynicus writing about 180 A.D, said that the word is composed of *autos* and *hentos* from the verb *hiemi*, meaning “to thrust from oneself.” From there, it took on a derived meaning of “to desire.” Phynicus said the word ought not be used of tyranny (autocratic rule), but used in contexts in which murder was done by the thrusting of one’s own hand—that is, by using a sword. The “desire” was involved, I believe, because such crimes could be crimes of emotions such as passion or rage. The Greek orator Antiphon used this word in his legal briefs four times to refer to murder and one time to refer to suicide. Dio Cassius, Thucydides, Herodotus, Euripides, and Philo all used the word in this way.^v Admittedly, murdering somebody is an effective way to thrust one’s authority over him.

Sources also indicate that by Paul’s time the word was taking on more of a common, even a vulgar, meaning. The idea of wishing to dominate another person led the definition of the word to become “lord,” “master,” “autocrat,” even “ring-leader,” with the same connotations

those English words have. The second century Greek teacher Moeris advised his students not to use the word *authenteo* in their writing, but instead to use the more refined word *autodikeo*. Apparently the word *authenteo* was too much of a slang word and too vulgar to be used in public speaking or writing. The meaning of *autodikeo* is clear: “to judge by one’s own standards,” “to act on one’s own authority,” even “to make a self-authorized move against someone.” If these two words could be freely interchanged, they must be synonyms. Hence the root meaning of Paul’s expression is “to act in guilty, self-willed, arbitrary behavior.” Paul may have deliberately used a crude word (“a very pithy and juicy expression often used by common folk”), perhaps for its shock value, to get the meaning across, as we would say, “in plain English,” that a woman ought not play the boss and lord it over a man.^{vi}

Does it seem we’re spending too much time on this word? This is necessary because a new and radically expanded meaning of *authenteo* has recently been promoted. This new meaning would decidedly change the meaning of this entire portion of Scripture. It would also cast a different light on many of the Pauline passages which warn against false teachers and false doctrine. This discussion is necessary also because in at least two reaction papers to “The Role of Man and Woman According to Scripture,” this new meaning has been given great attention.

This new meaning for *authenteo* has been presented by Catherine C. Kroeger in two articles appearing in the Reformed Journal.^{vii} Mrs. Kroeger says that *authenteo* did not come to mean “usurp authority” until the third or fourth century A.D. She says that from the time of Euripides, the word had taken on far more of a sexual connotation than has been previously admitted. She cites the apocryphal Wisdom of Solomon, which uses *authenteo* in a discussion of the Canaanite fertility rites, concerning “parents (who) slaughtered their defenseless children” (*New English Bible*, 12:6). She says that in such fertility cult religions, pregnancy resulting from temple prostitution was common, and the children resulting from these pregnancies were often unwanted, even considered accursed.

Mrs. Kroeger touches on other New Testament passages which, she feels, bear out this connection with sexual sins and fertility cult action. “Too often,” she says, “we underestimate the seriousness of this problem for the New Testament church.” She cites 2 Peter 2:1, 14, 18:

There were false prophets among the people (meaning Old Testament Israel), just as there will be false teachers among you. . . With eyes full of adultery. . . they seduce the unstable; they are experts in greed - an *accursed brood* (emphasis hers) . . . By appealing to the lustful desires of sinful nature, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error.

She cites 2 Timothy 3:6:

They (those people who live in the last days, who, among other things, have a form of godliness but deny its power) are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over weak-willed women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires.

She cites Revelation 2:20ff:

You tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality. . . . I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely. . . . I will strike her children dead.

Mrs. Kroeger maintains that the revelation passage offers proof that there was a female heretic in the church at Thyatira who was teaching people to fornicate for religious purposes. Mrs. Kroeger mentions that Clement of Alexandria wrote a detailed refutation of various groups who endorsed fornication as acceptable Christian behavior. Clement complained about those who had turned the love feasts into sexual orgies, and about those women who were ready to “give to every man that asketh thee,” and about those who found a “mystical communion” in physical intercourse. Clement used the word *authentai* to describe in one of these groups. St. John Chrysostom used the word *authentia* to denote “sexual license” in his commentary on I John 5:6.

Mrs. Kroeger concludes from this research, that I Timothy 2:12 is a prohibition directed specifically against those women teachers who sought to introduce fertility rites and practices, left over from pagan religions, into Christian worship. She translates verse 12: “I forbid a woman to teach or engage in fertility practices with a man.” She feels this translation fits the surrounding verses. Paul encourages women to dress modestly so that they would not be confused with the many temple prostitutes living in the city of Ephesus and connected with the worship at the temple of Diana (vv. 9 and 10). These women ought to be on guard, lest they be deceived in the same way that Eve was once deceived by the devil (v. 14). If a woman did fall into such a sin, and if, as a result, she had the unwanted “blessing” of becoming pregnant through such a sin, forgiveness was still available for her, if she would return to the faith and practice Christian virtues (v. 15).

What is the practical significance of such an understanding of *authenteo*? Mrs. Kroeger speaks for herself:

The prohibition against women teachers in 1 Timothy 2:11-15 must be understood in the light of the major concern over false teachers and teaching as it is stressed in the pastoral epistles. . . . As women heretics were known to be involved in sexual-immorality (I Tm 5:11-15; 2 Tin 3: 6-7), we also postulate that they were propounding a religious practice including sex and symbolic death. . . .

That the prohibition does not include orthodox female teachers seems apparent. . . . It is tragic to disbar women from orthodox ministries to which they feel called of God by the use of I Timothy 2:12. There is a greater likelihood that the scripture refers to the heretical doctrines and practice of women. . . . A vaunted superiority, an assumption that God could speak more authoritatively through an individual of a particular sex, does not accord with the economy of Jesus Christ, in whom there is neither male nor female. We deny that any person has a privileged position with God on the basis of gender.^{viii}

What shall we make of this? I don't believe we know enough to speak with certainty about the presence of fertility cult practices within the first century Christian church. There's no doubt it was going on outside the churches. There's no doubt either that the life of sexual morality that Paul preached to the converts in these new churches in Europe and Asia Minor was difficult for them to maintain. But the passages of the New Testament cited against the apparent danger of fertility cults might just as well (I believe, more appropriately) be referring to sexual immorality of every kind.

It is important to note that Mrs. Kroeger has never claimed she has found any new manuscript or papyri evidence. She is working with the same sources we have had for some time. She is looking at what we already have had from a new and different perspective.

While Mrs. Kroeger asserts that the prohibition is directed against only those women who are not speaking in an orthodox way, it must be said that this is not in the text at all.

Both Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150-215) and St. John Chrysostom (ca. 345-407) lived considerably later than Paul (unless you believe that Paul didn't write 1 Timothy, but that it was written at a later time, and then Paul's name was attached to give the letter added authority in the church!). By that later date, it is possible that the word could have had this added meaning, and it is also possible that such practices were going on in certain parts of the church, and that the warnings of Chrysostom and Clement were valid.

I would not totally discount the possibility that in Paul's time *authenteo* may have had a "sexually loaded" connotation. It could be compared to the English word "thrust," which can, in certain instances, have a sexual flavor.^{ix} Obviously, how much of a sexual overtone the word has will depend on where and how it's used. When Prof. Kuske at the Seminary, going through Mark's gospel, would ask, as he often did, "What is the thrust of this passage?", the sexual overtone was non-existent. When Penthouse magazine uses the word "thrust," the sexual overtone may be very strong. I have chosen to retain the possibility of that flavoring by translating verse 12:111 do not permit a woman to teach or to thrust her authority over a man." The sexual connotation may be there. But to translate the verse, "I forbid a woman to teach or engage in fertility practices with a man," strikes me as patented eisegesis.

It's my opinion that Mrs. Kroeger's suggested translation of *authenteo* was given unfair prominence in some of the WELS reaction papers to the statement.^x

II.

I Timothy 2 is often considered to be advice about conducting the public worship service, although the chapter itself never says so. The whole letter of I Timothy is a letter of pastoral advice from the old pastor Paul to the young pastor Timothy, While it is in some ways a personal letter, it is also a letter that speaks to the life of the organized church. Paul's concern throughout I Timothy was order. While the classic passage, "Everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way," is in 1 Corinthians (the passage that some have called the John 3:16 of the Wisconsin Synod), the practical applications for doing things "in a fitting and orderly way" in the church are found in 1 Timothy. Instructions are given on choosing congregational overseers (3:1-7) and deacons (3:8-13). Encouragement is offered to continue "public reading of Scripture" (4:13). Mention is made of the church's list of widows (5:9), apparently an organized activity of the church. Elders who direct the affairs of the church are deemed worthy of double honor when they do well, but are liable for public rebuke if they sin (5:17-22).

Perhaps the phrase "public worship service" is in itself a bit inappropriate, even anachronistic. Public worship, it seems, was not nearly as organized an affair then as it is today.

The first century church might find our distinction between worship and other, types of assembly (for example, Bible class) somewhat artificial. People then, I believe, hardly had thoughts of “going to church” the way we do. They had no buildings. At all times they were aware that they were the church, and so, whatever they did when assembled in groups of any size must be considered “public.” I prefer here to talk about the “assembled church,” rather, than “public worship.”

Paul’s advice is about prayer in chapter two: “I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone (v 1). Such prayer pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth” (vv 3-4). Paul’s advice turns rather specifically to men (*aner*, the male sex, rather than *anthropoi*, the human race): “I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing” (v. 10). If early Christian assemblies were modeled after assemblies in the synagogue and if there were at times hot disputes among the men concerning the meaning of certain passages of Scripture, this would be disruptive to good order. Paul’s advice: Offer prayers instead of provoking disputes.

This advice was offered in the main to men because, if the assemblies were patterned after Jewish synagogue get-togethers, women would never have attempted such disputing.^{xi} Paul then turns to the women of the assembly and offers advice toward what could be a more specifically female temptation: “I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety.” In Paul’s day, indecency and impropriety in dress and appearance happened to be embodied in “braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes.” A woman’s beauty is not wrapped up in the cosmetic appearance she gives. Her real beauty lies in “good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God” (v 10).

Paul gives added advice specifically for the women of the assembly: “Let a woman learn in quietness, in all submission.” Let her willingly arrange herself in public assemblies under the one who is teaching - not necessarily in total silence, as though she were too terrified to make a peep - but in quietness. Let her show an attitude that is receptive to the words of the teacher and reflective on their meaning.^{xii} She respects her teacher as one put in his place of authority by virtue of the gift God gave to him and by right of the expressed will of the assembly.

This tells us something about worship. Worship is not intended to be a mindless ecstasy trip, where the head is disengaged from the heart. All worship is built on knowledge, communicated by a God who chose to deal with people through words, taught by a teacher. Enthusiasm may well result from teaching. Enthusiasm should never replace teaching.

Is it possible, or, more correctly, is it in the interest of good order, for a woman to teach in the assembly? Paul says no. “I do not permit a woman to teach or to thrust her authority over a man.” In the assembly, her role is to be in quietness. It may appear to us that teaching and thrusting authority are not of necessity the same thing. Teaching is to us often merely a transfer of skills (it has even been called “the process of getting my notebook into your notebook”). Much modern “teaching” does not involve exercising authority over a class, except insofar as a teacher needs to keep discipline (and sometimes, not even that). Even the arrangement of classrooms can be indicative of a teacher’s sense of authority. More and more classrooms and teaching situations are arranged so that teacher as well as students sit around a common table. The teacher often becomes more the moderator of a panel discussion than an “authority figure.” Teacher and students will at times even refer to themselves as “fellow seekers of truth.”

Whatever the merits or demerits of such a trend in modern education, a good case can be made that the Jewish and the New Testament concept of teaching was quite different than ours.

Teaching then encompassed more personal direction and an exercise of authority. The focus of teaching in the New Testament is not merely a set of intellectual propositions, presented in take-it-or-leave, “See how you react to this one!” fashion. Teaching came about within relationships established on the basis of authority: parents to children, elders to younger people, masters who took on disciples. If this explanation is true, it is obvious why Paul would put “to teach” and “to thrust authority” in the same phrase.^{xiii}

Paul offers two justifications, if you will, or two bases for denying women the privilege of teaching and taking authority in the assembly. At first sight, his two reasons seem to have nothing in common aside of that they are both drawn from quite ancient history. But the common thread that runs through them both, and keeps them in harmony with Paul’s larger concerns in these verses and throughout the epistle, is order. The church in assembly ought to be the place on earth where the order God intended for all humanity is most clearly and most joyfully exhibited.

Reason one: “Adam was formed first, then Eve.” Obviously, Adam was formed first chronologically. That, I don’t believe, is a point in dispute, and merely saying that Adam was formed before Eve chronologically doesn’t prove Paul’s point at all. Being made first does not of itself make something either superior in quality or more important function (“Gee, June, aren’t those the same Doggie Bow-Wows we’ve always had?” “No, Ward, these are *new and improved* Doggie Bow-Wows!”) First (*proton*) can also mean “first, foremost, most important, most prominent”.^{xiv} Adam was created, to use that definition, in the position of greater importance by role. Then came Eve, alongside him but next in importance by role. We aren’t talking about inferiority of material – we couldn’t be. It’s obvious that they came from the same material, since Eve was made from Adam. When God began human society, and the entire human race was embodied in two human beings, his action in their very creation showed that man was put in a headship role: God’s church, intent on reflecting God’s design for His creation, will have the man assume that same role in its assemblies.

Reason Two: “And, Adam was not deceived, but the woman was the one who was greatly deceived.” Paul is not saying that a woman ought to be silent in the church because hers is a more deceivable nature - or, to put it more positively, because she is more open to outside influence. Nor is the man allowed to teach because his nature is less likely to be adulterated by outside interference - or, to put it less positively, because he’s more bullheaded. That may be true, but that’s not the point.^{xv} Paul does not say that a woman is more deceivable, but that the woman was greatly deceived. Hence, it’s not a question of nature, but order.

Paul is not saying, either, that a woman should not teach because it’s her fault that the world is in sin. At first sight it would seem that this passage is in conflict with Romans 5:12ff:

Just as sin entered the world through one *man*, and death through sin. . . .

If the many died by the trespass of the one *man*...

If, by the trespass of the one *man*, death reigned through that one *man*. . . .

Just as through the disobedience of the one *man* the many were made sinners

But, understood correctly, these two passages are not in conflict. They are in, harmony. More than that, if we see the harmony between the two passages we also see how Paul uses this passage to make his point.

Adam was the father of the race. When Paul in Romans 5 puts the blame on him for the introduction of sin into the world, he is correct, because the man stands in the place of responsibility. Yet, the history of it shows that the woman was greatly deceived. When Satan told her the persuasive half-truth, “Your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (Gen 3:5), Eve accepted the devil’s trickery. In doing that, she broke faith with her Lord. That was and that remains the greatest and most damaging significance of her sin. Every sin is at bottom a break of faith with God. But, in conjunction with that, she also overstepped her place alongside of Adam. She gave the orders: “Here, Adam, you eat this too.” Adam was not deceived by Satan’s lie, as Eve was - that’s all Paul says - yet Adam ate too. By my thinking, that hardly makes Adam’s responsibility less. If anything, it’s greater. He acted contrary to better knowledge. And his greatest sin, too, was that he broke faith with his Creator. But, in addition, he also did not take his headship role correctly. He did not assume the responsibilities of leader.

When God confronted Adam and Eve, he reminded them that they had rearranged His order for them. The NIV translates Genesis 3:17 - “Because you listened to your wife.” The KJV has the more archaic but, I believe, the more correct translation: “Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife.” The verb *Shammah*, a verb quite common in the Old Testament, often carries far more than the simple meaning “to hear.”- It often means “to listen and agree”, “to hear, in the sense of obey”, “to be obedient”, “to hear and understand.”^{xvi} The resulting curses that came upon all man’s work - the ground cursed, painful labor, thorns and thistles, and, finally, death itself - would come because Adam had not upheld his role as head. He had failed to exercise proper dominion over his wife. Consequently, he would now lose a great share of his dominion over nature.

In order to use the Genesis account as the justification for the order he promoted in the church, Paul must have understood two things about it. 1.) Although Adam and Eve were husband and wife, he must have understood their places as symbolic and representative of the whole race of men and women. He could never have made such broad prescriptions to the church if this had been merely a domestic quarrel. 2.) Paul must have seen that there was a basic position of headship for Adam and submission for Eve. If Eve’s advice, “Here, eat this fruit” had been a piece of advice given merely between two people of equal role and responsibility, Paul could hardly have cited this story as proof that man ought to speak in the church and woman ought not.

Paul recalls this bad episode in history, and he sees a lesson for the present. Uncounted misfortunes have come into the world through that first violation of order. God’s will is still that his roles for men and women be followed. Surely the church—the assembly of the redeemed, adopted sons and daughters of God will want to reflect God’s order in their assembled life.

This, I believe, is the crux of the entire exegesis. We are agreed that God has established an order within marriage and in His church. But it has been said that there is no such order in society. It is almost as though there were two separate sets of roles: one role for marriage and the church, another entirely different role (actually, no role at all) in society. That’s incorrect. Here, obviously, Paul is giving directive to the church, but he draws his support from two instances in the *history of human society*. It was and it is God’s will for all people at all times that men have the headship role and women have a role next to, not equal to men.

There are a number of ways that interpreters try to tone these words down. One way is to say that Paul was just a child of his times, and the words he wrote are applicable only to the culture in which he lived and to which he spoke. This approach, you can see, plays greatest

havoc with the doctrine and the implications of the verbal inspiration of the Bible. I'd like to think that approach is the least of our worries.^{xvii}

A second way to tone down these words is to say that Paul's words are to be applied only to certain women in that particular context who were teaching false doctrines. This is basically what Mrs. Kroeger is saying in her understanding of *authenteo*. This approach would say that women as a group ought not be barred from ministry as such, but only those women who are teaching a false doctrine.

In answer to that approach, it must be pointed out that the text itself says nothing about false doctrine. Paul is greatly concerned about the introduction of false teachings into the church. In many places he speaks directly to the problem. Here, he does not mention it. His words are general: "I do not permit a woman to teach . . ." If Paul had been concerned about certain women teaching false doctrines, he most surely would have touched on those false doctrines. And he would have been equally concerned about false doctrines being taught by men.^{xviii}

A third way to tone down Paul's words is to say they ought to be applied only to those women who attempt to speak in the church *in a domineering way*. In effect, such an understanding puts an adverbial force in the verb. It does not lay stress on the action itself, but only on the manner of doing the action. Some have suggested that the women who were acting in such a domineering way were wealthy women who assumed that their exalted social status entitled them to places of leadership in the church. Others have said that these were bossy women who were publicly demeaning their husbands.

There are a number of answers to this objection. First of all, we must look at the entire context of the admonition. Verses 9-15 focus simply and completely on women as a group. The section is preceded (v. 8) and followed by admonition directed simply and completely to men as a group.

There is not a hint that the women being spoken to are only women who act in a domineering way. Secondly, "teach" and "thrust authority" are parallel phrases. To teach meant to thrust authority, and thrusting authority was done by teaching. There could be (if we understand the function of teaching correctly in Paul's day) no way to teach without thrusting authority. Thirdly, if the admonition were intended for people were acting in a domineering way, it would also be directed toward men who acted that way. Paul's words in Ephesians, "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ" (5:21), applied equally to men and women. Fourthly, in going back to the stories about Adam and Eve, Paul shows that the problem was not women acting wrongly, but that it was wrong because it was women who were doing the acting. The passage does not deal with individual women who were domineering. It gives directions to women because they are women and to men because they are men.^{xix}

A fourth way to tone down Paul's words is to say that the verses ought to be translated: "Let a *wife* learn in quietness . . . I do not permit a *wife* to teach or to thrust her authority over (her) *husband*." This understanding is backed up by saying that both of Paul's justifications for his admonition refer back to Adam and Eve, *who* were husband and wife. This understanding is also backed up by saying that verse 15 talks about childbearing, an activity which God obviously intended to be restricted to men and women who are married to each other.

The basis for this understanding is that, unlike the English, neither Hebrew nor Greek has separate vocables 'for "husband" and "wife" that are distinct from "man" and "woman." The words used here are *aner* and *gunay*. These words can mean, in some contexts, the male and female sexes. In other contexts, they mean "husband" and "wife."

While this argument has been a strong one in our own circles,^{xx} I was surprised that it is not even mentioned for serious discussion in virtually all of the commentaries I read on these verses.

I believe that the understanding “husband” and “wife” in these verses, limiting the admonition only to those women in the assembly who happened to be married, is unacceptable, for a number of reasons

First of all, the entire context is a discussion of the assembled church, not marriage. In the assembled church there were bound to be more kinds of people than merely husbands and wives. Yet the admonitions are so general and so unable to be restricted to certain types of people within the assemblies that we are left with the broader distinctions of males and females. Does it make sense to say that only husbands are “to lift up holy hands in prayer”? Is it right to say that only wives ought “to dress modestly, with decency and propriety”? The context speaks simply about two broad categories, male and female.

Secondly, the singular forms *gunay* and *aner* without the definite article are understood best when they are understood generically “Let a woman learn in silence” means every woman involved, or women as a class.

Thirdly, although the dictionaries and grammars do not give definite directions about when and under what circumstances *aner* and *gunay* can be understood as husband and wife, (at least I couldn’t find such direction) one of the common ways to identify this is by adding the possessive pronoun. Once a woman becomes “his woman”, she is his wife. If the possessive pronoun “his” or “her” is not added, then the contextual proof has to be very strong before we can assume the intended meaning was “husband” or “wife.” Here I believe you come to a problem: If you translate, “Let a wife learn in quietness, in all submission. I do not permit a wife to teach or to thrust her authority,” how then do you translate *andros*? . “a husband” or “her husband”? The Greek has no article. If you say, “No wife should thrust her authority over any husband, you’re back to a generic understanding of males and females. If you say, “No wife should thrust her authority over her man (her husband) why is this being discussed in the context of public worship?

Fourthly, although Adam and Eve obviously were married to each other, Paul must be thinking of them generically, otherwise it would make no sense for him to use their history as an admonition to the entire assembled church.

Fifth, the reference to childbearing does not restrict these verses only to wives and husbands. For a person to be a wife, or to even entertain the hope of becoming a wife, or to be a childbearer, or even look forward to any possibility of becoming a childbearer, the person’s got to be a woman.

Sixth, Luther has been used as support that Paul was referring to husbands and wives, and, it is true, he says that. However, in reading all of Luther’s remarks, one finds that Luther waffles back and forth between talking about husbands and wives, and talking about men and women in general.^{xxi} I feel Luther shouldn’t be used in this context to support one side of the discussion or the other. His remarks are unclear.

Seventh, finally, I feel that much of the argumentation which seeks to read “wife” and “husband” into these verses is an attempt to force present day customs and situations onto Scripture, and perhaps even an attempt to produce justification for them, rather than letting Scripture speak to its own situation and then to ours.

Verse 15 remains. There are, to my knowledge, six ways this verse can be understood.

1.) “She will be saved (receive salvation) because of bearing children.” This is perhaps the coarsest interpretation. She will receive salvation on account of her meritorious work of childbearing and upbringing. St. John Chrysostom apparently opted for this understanding.^{xxii} This interpretation does harm to the accepted understanding that *dia* with the genitive ought to express means, not cause. This understanding is rejected as simple work-righteousness.

2.) “She will be saved (receive salvation) even though she must bear children.”^{xxiii} This understanding could be coupled with ‘Mrs. Kroeger’s interpretation of the previous verses above. If a woman had sinfully engaged in fertility cult practices, and if she became pregnant, there is still salvation for her, even though she must bear the child. The salvation of both her and the child does depend, of course, on their continuing in “faith, love, and holiness, with propriety.” Arndt-Gingrich lists no such use of *dia* with the genitive.^{xxiv} If you discount Mrs. Kroeger’s exegesis, most likely you will discount this interpretation of verse 15 too.

3.) “She will be saved (spared from falling into this kind of an error again) if she is engaged in childbearing.”^{xxv} Paul mentions in this letter a number of instances where women were unhappy with their lot in life. Very often, according to this interpretation of the passage women are unhappy because they are pursuing aims and ends for their lives which are not in keeping with God’s intentions for them. When they are unhappy, perhaps because they aren’t busy enough with proper activities, they run the risk of becoming disruptive and domineering in assemblies of the church. However, if the women would remain busy with childbearing and raising, they would be so occupied with proper things that they would be spared even the opportunity of ever falling into such a sin again.

In some ways this is an intriguing interpretation. The verb *zodzo* however, seems to have a stronger meaning in the New Testament. At very least it means “to bring rescue from some sort of physical danger.” More often it refers to “eternal salvation.”^{xxvi} I don’t believe this is the best understanding of *zodzo*.

4.) “She will be saved (preserved from physical harm,) as she goes through childbirth.”^{xxvii} While God had intended from the beginning that women bear children, the privilege of childbearing was put under a curse by sin. “I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing,” God had said to the woman, “With pain you will give birth to children” (Gn 3:16). We recognize that fact every time we pray the prayer in the Agenda: “We thank Thee that Thou hast preserved this mother in her peril and pain. . . .” It must be said that God does not absolutely keep this promise (some mothers do die in childbearing), although God has in most cases kept this promise (how else could the world’s population have increased from two people to four billion?). I feel

that suggesting the thought of physical preservation during childbirth is foreign to the context. Paul had been talking about the roles of men and women. Veering off onto the subject of physical preservation through childbirth seems an unnatural turn, even for a man as given to bursts of doxology and anacolouthen as Paul was

5.) “She will be saved (receive salvation) by the birth of The Child.”^{xxviii} The Child is Jesus. Even though childbearing had been inflicted with a curse because of sin, yet God chose that very method to bring his remedy for sin into the world. I believe this translation, too, introduces an unlikely element into the context, although it surely expresses a correct theological thought.^{xxix}

6.) “Nevertheless, (a woman) will be saved, and along with her salvation she will have the bearing of children.” This understanding is possible if we understand the *dia* with the genitive as a genitive of attendant circumstance: “She will be saved, with the attendant

circumstance of childbearing.” The verse would then mean: She will receive salvation, and, along with her eternal rescue, another blessing comes with it: she will have the bearing (and nurturing) of children.^{xxx}

This seems to fit the context the best. Paul had instructed: “Let a woman learn in quietness”; “I do not permit a woman to teach or to thrust her authority over a man.” Paul had recalled past history: “For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And, Adam was not deceived, but the woman was the one who was greatly deceived.” A woman may begin to wonder, is there anything left for me? Paul first of all assures her, yes, there is salvation for you. “You are all sons (and daughters) of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have been clothed with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Ga 3:26-28).

Additionally, in this life, where it may seem so many privileges have been denied her, a woman does have this blessing: she will have childbearing. Women have not only the physical equipment to give birth to children, but they are also uniquely involved in those most formative years of every human being’s life. It is obviously true that God wants childbearing to be done in marriage. Yet, it is more obviously true that childbearing is given only to women. I see this as a blessing given to all women, not only to those women who do in fact become mothers. I see the great number of women who serve as the teachers of little children in Sunday School and other agencies of Christian education for little children. Some of these women may never have married, or they may have been denied the blessing of childbirth. I see women who have shared a great deal in the responsibilities of raising a child, although they were aunts or grandmothers or governesses.

I believe Paul’s intent was to say: No, God’s role, for you, generally speaking, is not that you have these places of obvious leadership in the church. Your role is more personal and more direct. Your role is to yield your influence on children.^{xxxi} Tell that to Gloria Steinem, and I’m sure she will call that inferiority or worse. Tell that to a mother who remembers teaching her three year-old, “Jesus loves me, this I know,” and now, twenty years later, she hears her son preaching “Jesus loves you” to a Christian congregation—there’s no way you could convince her she played an inferior role in her child’s life.

III.

This exegesis could not and ought not attempt to answer every question relative to the Statement: “The Role of Man and Woman According to Holy Scripture.” I can only attempt to respond to those portions of the Statement that draw on I Timothy 2:11-15 for support.

1.) The statement says: “The distinctive roles of man and woman in their relation to each other for this earthly life were ordained by God at creation. This is clearly established by a careful study of Holy Scripture, especially of Genesis 2:18-24; 1 Corinthians 11:1-9; 1 Corinthians 14: 33b-35; 1 Timothy 2:11-15” (p. 14).

Quite obviously, one’s understanding of the three New Testament passages will be determined to a great degree by his understanding of the Genesis passage. The Statement makes its main case for the establishment of the roles of man and woman from the Genesis passage, and sees the New Testament passages as offering confirmation and support.

In relation to the 1 Timothy passage itself, the Statement says:

Now what basis does St. Paul adduce for saying that a woman is not to exercise authority over a man? He leads this--that

she is not to exercise authority over man--back to something that was bound up with her creation. . . .

As a second basis, Paul adduces the fact of the fall. . . . In this argument, too, Adam and Eve come into consideration simply as the individuals that they were by the aforementioned creation (p. 13).

In view of the exegesis of these verses, I have no problem accepting these words of the Statement.

2.) The author of the Statement is aware that some have understood 1 Timothy 2 and other passages to be referring only to married women. The Statement counters that understanding:

The terms 'woman' and 'man' are general, generic. The burden of proof rests upon anyone who contends that 'man and woman' here mean 'husband and wife.' Since this proof cannot be produced, the contention must fall and the terms 'woman' and 'man' must be taken to be general and generic (p-13).

The author proves that Paul's admonition was intended for all men and women by pointing out that Paul bases his case not on women's position within marriage, but on women's position by virtue of their creation:

Now what basis does St. Paul adduce for saying that a woman is not to exercise authority over a man? Does Paul point to the marriage bond in which a woman finds herself? Does Paul point to the relation in which she stands over against the man in the No, he leads this . . . bond of marriage? back to something that was 'bound up with her creation, No reference whatsoever is made to the marriage relationship of Adam and Eve in this argument.^{xxxii}

As a second basis, Paul adduces the fact of the fall. . . . The facts set forth concerning, them in this argument are again not brought into relation to their status in marriage, in their relation to each other as husband and wife. It is impossible, therefore, to hold. that what St. Paul asserts on the basis of these two arguments, namely, that the woman is not to exercise authority over man, is restricted only to a wife in her relation to her husband (p. 13).

The author of the Statement realizes that sometimes the reference in verse 15 is used to furnish proof that Paul must have been talking about the husband-and-wife relationship. The Statement responds:

(They) seek support in verse 15. There the apostle exhorts women to lead their lives in faith, love, and holiness amidst childbearing, i.e., the tasks and pursuits of motherhood. In this

they see evidence that Paul is speaking throughout about married women. The remarks of the previous paragraph (that such a remark is to be taken *a potiori*, that is, in a way which covers the majority of cases) apply here also and invalidate such an argument (p. 14).

While I might prefer that this conjecture concerning verse 15 would have been answered more fully, I have no problem accepting these words of the Statement.

3.) The author of the Statement is aware that some have understood verse 14 of 1 Timothy 2 to mean that woman's subordination is the result of sin. Some have gone so far as to say there would be no subordination of men to women in any context, were it not for sin.^{xxxiii} The Statement says:

Some have thought of Paul's second argument on the basis of the fall in this sense that it is a punishment for her transgression that woman is not to exercise authority over man. Yet there is nothing in Paul's statement to support this understanding. In the context, Paul's argument must rather be understood to be this: having set forth the woman's subordinate position assigned to her in creation, he now points to the sad consequences that ensued when woman assumed the initiative, took on the leadership role for which she was not made (p. 13).^{xxxiv}

I accept this portion of the statement, in view of the exegesis of verse 14.

4.) The Statement is clear that roles of leadership and subordination do not imply superiority and inferiority:

We want to state . . . that "subordinate" must not and should not be equated with being of lesser quality, value, or importance. It has to do with God's order, which is something quite different (p. 12).

The author recognizes that our sinful flesh may not agree:

Of course, the Old Adam of the Christian, too, has little understanding and appreciation of any kind of subordination. Ever since the entrance of sin into the world, man wants to be autonomous, he himself wants to be God. That is also the thinking of the Christian's Old Adam (p. 15).

Yet the author of the Statement appeals to the New Man in each of us:

Yet, the Apostle Paul himself reminds us that being subordinate to a head in itself does not imply anything degrading, nor does it debase the one who is subordinated. . . .

Headship and subordination to a head are a matter of wholesome order which deals with the assignment of different realms of responsibility.” (p. 15)

In the joyful confidence of faith the Christian will accept (the order of creation) as altogether good and salutary. With such confidence the Christian accepts every aspect of God’s immutable holy-will (p. 15).

I find no problem accepting these words of the Statement.

5.) The author of the Statement makes it clear that human society and government do not and cannot operate on the basis of God’s revealed Word in the Bible. They operate on the basis of human reason and the inscribed law, tarnished by sin:

God has not, however, entrusted His written Word to human government. He has left government to carry out its assigned function in the light of human reason. This includes the knowledge of God and the inscribed law; but neither are perfect in sinful man. Hence the precepts and regulations of human government will never conform, fully with God’s immutable will (p. 18).

But, the Statement says, in God’s church this order should be followed:

It is different with the church of believers. To them and to them alone, God has entrusted His revealed Word, the Holy Scriptures. It sets forth His immutable will in full clarity. In the work and worship life of the Church God therefore wants this immutable will, including also His order of creation as it pertains to the distinctive roles of men and women, to be reflected (p. 18).

However, although God wants His immutable will to be reflected in the life of the church, and although His Word is most direct in talking to the life of the church, it is wrong to assume that God’s order of creation does not apply to all of society. The headship of man and the subordination of woman is God’s original intent for the entire human race:

If we take any of St. Paul’s injunctions which he voices stressing the order of creation as special precepts for the New Testament church, as regulations that hold good only in the church in its worship life and has no application outside of the church or to any other setting, then we are misunderstanding, them (p. 18).

In this exegesis I have attempted to show that the crux of the entire understanding of Paul’s words is that, while Paul is giving admonition to the *church*, he draws his justification for this admonition from the history of *human society*. I believe that Paul has established a principle of man’s headship and woman’s subordination that is meant for the whole world. And so I accept these words of the Statement.

IV.

“The role of Man and Woman According to Holy Scripture” doesn’t tell us what to do. It gives no direct commands to the church of today. The Statement admits that the relationship between men and women in society “is not defined as precisely in Holy Scripture as it is . . . in the marriage bond” (p. 16). For that very reason, “it cannot be fully delineated by us” (p. 16). The Statement speaks only in general terms, that “the Christian woman will always keep the ideal of the home before her mind” (p. 16). She will “conduct herself in the spirit underlying the order of creation” (p. 16). “She will not seek to dominate men with her will and delight in exercising authority over them” (p. 16). “She will carry out (leadership) in a spirit of service” (pp. 16-17). “She will endeavor to (make good stewardship of her possessions) in a spirit that does not violate God’s order of creation” (Co. 17). “In applying the broad moral principles that woman is not to exercise authority over men to her activities in public life outside the home,” the Statement says, “Scripture leaves a great deal to our conscientious Christian judgment” (p. 17).

Some have viewed this absence of direct commands in the Statement as a weakness. “I wish they’d tell us what it is they want us to do, is a reaction. “How can we ever expect to have uniform doctrine and practice if we don’t have more directives? My daughter is an assistant manager at Burger King. Is it right for her to have that job? Can she move up to being the manager?” And so we wait patiently for a detailed list, complete with *nihil obstat* from 3512.

What may be seen as a weakness is, in my opinion, the Statement’s greatest strength. The New Testament is intent on giving us the principles. These broad principles, based on God’s unchanging will for all people of all times, need to be fitted to the prevailing customs of each society and in each generation. We should expect no ceremonial law from the New Testament, and we are reading the New Testament incorrectly if we assume that we see one there. In 1916, Prof. August Pieper wrote an article about just this subject for the *Quartalschrift*: “Are There Ceremonial Ordinances in the New Testament? He directed his article, in part, at a parallel passage in the New Testament discussing the customs and underlying principles concerning women in the church at Corinth. Prof. Pieper said:

Paul in no way wishes to institute a Christian style of dress, but to inculcate the two moral matters which are based on God’s order of creation: the modesty and the subordination of the woman under man. . . . (Paul) is not concerned about a social custom for its own sake, but only insofar as it expresses a general moral principle. If the outward custom is different in a different society, then this custom takes the place of the other command, while the actual sense always remains the abstract moral principle. The outward action and form is never in itself a moral command. A woman’s dress, which in mid-summer is altogether inoffensive in New Orleans may be altogether indecent in winter in St. Paul. The behavior of a boy which one accepts as self-evident can in the case of a Lutheran pastor become the basis for disciplinary action. Morality and immorality depend on the customs of the people.^{xxxv}

When we miss the underlying moral principle, intended for all God’s people at all times, we turn the Bible into a dropped-straight-from-heaven code book. We then read it with

wooden-headed literalism, and we become fussy about such things as how long a woman's hair or a man's hair has got to be, that a woman must have a hat on in church, that we have to wash each other's feet and greet each other with holy kisses. In the meantime, we miss the underlying moral principles.

Martin Franzmann has said that someone has said that the New Testament is case law, not code law; Franzmann adds: "The expression is not a very happy one, but it does serve to indicate the 'occasional' yet normative character of much of the New Testament teaching."^{xxxvi}

On this subject, as on many others, the real agony and the real struggle is to stand fast in the freedom with which Christ has made us free, and not to weigh ourselves down with a yoke that was laid on Old Testament believers, or a yoke that was laid on the New Testament church, or a yoke that may have been appropriate for the church in Germany in 1522 or for the church in Dodgeville in 1903, but not for here and now. Our sinful flesh is still charged with legalism, and, as Martin Franzmann also said,.

"The agony of freedom is another one of Satan's stratagems. We grow tired of liberty; we cannot bear the freedom with which Christ has set us free. We long for a tyrannous bishop to tell us exactly what to do. We long for a martinet of an abbot to spell 'it out: 'Thus far and no farther!' We should like to believe what the church believes (*fides carbonaria*) and let the church worry about it. That would put an end to all exegesis and all systematics and a lot of other things besides."^{xxxvii}

I believe I Timothy 2:11-15 clearly shows the general principle of a woman's subordination to man. I believe "The Role of Man and Woman According to Holy Scripture" correctly expresses that principle. It is the continuing business of the church to understand it and apply it to the needs of real people living in a real and changing world.

Cf. Exegesis of I Tim. 2:11-15 in 1981, Oct., WLQ.

ENDNOTES

ⁱ *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 8, pp. 40-1.

ⁱⁱ Interestingly, in the Ephesians passage the Greek text uses the verb *hupotassomenoi* in verse 21: “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.” But the Greek text does not have the verb in verse 22. The Greek says, literally, “Wives, to your own husbands, as to the Lord.” The NIV and most other translations repeat the verb for the sake of English clarity. Again, in verse 24, the Greek has the verb *hupotassetai* in the phrase, “As the church submits to Christ” but the Greek does not repeat the verb in the second half of the phrase; literally, “so also the wives to their husbands in everything.”

ⁱⁱⁱ Of course, many people *have* equated submission with inherent inequality. Some examples from ancient and modern philosophers:

Aristotle, *De Generatione Animalium*: “A boy is like a woman in form, and the woman is as it were an impotent male, for it is through a certain incapacity that the female is a female, being incapable of concocting the nutriment in its last stages into semen. . . .“The male is by nature superior, and the female inferior.”

Soren Kirkegaard, *The Banquet*: “To be a woman is something so strange, so mixed, so complex, that no predicate expresses it, and the many predicates one might use contradict one another so sharply that only a woman can endure it, and, still worse, can enjoy it. . . .

“For my part, if I were a woman, I had rather be a woman in the Orient where I would be a slave.”

Arthur Schopenhauer, *Studies in Pessimism: Of Women*: “Women are directly fitted for acting as nurses and teachers of our early childhood by the fact that they are themselves childish, frivolous, and short-sighted; in a word, they are big children all their life long.”

Sigmund Freud, *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*: “The difference in a mother’s reaction to the birth of a son or a daughter shows that the old factor of lack of a penis has even now not lost its strength.”

(All of the above are quoted from the *Milwaukee Journal*, January 22, 1978.)

Some examples from the ancient and Medieval church:

Tertullian: “Women, do you not know that you are Eve? You are the devil’s gateway. . . . How easily you destroyed man, the image of God.

Ambrose: "She who does not believe is a woman and should be designated by the name of her sex, whereas she ' who believes progresses to perfect manhood, to the measure of the adulthood of Christ."

The *Decretum* of Gratian, 1140 A.D.: "Woman is not made in God's image."

All of the above are quoted from Madonna Kolbenschlag: *Kiss Sleeping Beauty Good-bye*, p. 184

Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*: "Woman is defective and misbegotten, for the active force in the male seed tends to the production of a perfect likeness in the masculine sex; while the production of woman comes from defect in the active force or from some material indisposition, or even from such external influence, such as that of a south wind, which is moist." The *Milwaukee Journal*, January 22, 1978

Much current feminist literature also assumes that submission means inferiority, and that it is impossible to talk about the one without also meaning the other. For example:

"Many Christians speak of a wife's being equal to her husband in personhood but subordinate in function. However, this is just playing word games And is a contradiction in terms. Equality and subordination are contradictions. Letha Scanzoni and Nancy Hardesty: *All We're Meant to Be*, p. 110

"I view the hierarchical concept of dominance and submission, even when softened to male 'headship' and female 'supportive role,' as an unbiblical and anti-Christian concept. I regard the idea that one category of persons must submit to the authority of another category as the root concept not only of sexism but of racism, economic exploitation, and imperialism. . . . I believe sexism is the most pervasive and profound expression of the egocentric nature that is hostile to genuine godliness." Virginia Ramey Mollencott: "Evangelicalism: A Feminist Perspective," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*, Winter, 1977, p. 95

However, the above quotes do not fairly view the subject from the viewpoint of Scripture. The following quote is helpful:

"Neither 'inferiority' nor 'equality' have any conceptually necessary link to 'subordination' unless the terms are defined with

such a link. The head and subordinate can both be of equal worth and value. In fact, they can be equal in many other ways, and still be in a relationship involving subordination. . . . The equation of subordination with inferiority is often an attempt to exploit the ambiguity involved in English usage to obscure the real issue.” Stephen B. Clark: *Man and Woman in Christ*, p. 44.

^{iv} William F. Arndt and F. Wilburg Gingrich: *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 120.

^v Catherine C. Kroeger: “Ancient Heresies and a Strange Greek Verb.” *Reformed Journal*, March, 1979 p. 13.

^{vi} N. J. Hommas: “Let the Women Be Silent in Church.” *Calvin Theological Journal*, April, 1969, pp. 17-22.

^{vii} Kroger, *op cit.*, pp. 12-15. Also: “May Women Teach? Heresy in the Pastoral Epistles.” *Reformed Journal*, October, 1980, pp. 14-18.

^{viii} Kroeger, 1980 *op. cit.*, p. 18.

^{ix} In a small book about English usage, which I bought and read at one time, but could not find in preparation for this paper, I remember reading that one of the words best avoided in common English is the word “thrust.” The reason given was that it has a sexist tone not appreciated by many women.

^x It is not my purpose or my place to refute any of the reaction papers to “The Role of Man and Woman according to the Holy Scriptures.” I did find it helpful to find what was written for presentation and discussion in other conferences around our synod.

I do feel, however, that the possibility of understanding *authenteo* in the way Mrs. Kroeger does was vastly over-emphasized in at least one reaction paper, and a resulting misunderstanding could be taken. The author of the reaction paper spent the better part of two and a half pages summarizing Mrs. Kroeger’s findings without quoting precisely what she said. It was hard to tell where the thinking of the author of the reaction paper left off, and where Mrs. Kroeger’s thinking began. After presenting the body of information that Mrs. Kroeger offered, the author of the reaction paper simply asked, “What happens to the notion of subordination, if this is true? Should a major tenet of our faith rest, even in part, on a verb whose origin and meaning are uncertain?”

I believe such a presentation could give an unfair picture for three reasons:

1. The assumptions offered by Mrs. Kroeger’s article were given equal weight (perhaps more than equal weight) with all the other information available on *authenteo*. In preparation for this paper, I went to Andrews University Library and tried to read every article appearing in theological journals over the last twenty years on this passage. No other article came remotely close to suggesting the radical meaning that Mrs. Kroeger suggested for *authenteo*. This vastly diminished the importance of her article in my thinking.

2. Even if much of the scholarship of Mrs. Kroeger’s paper is correct, I don’t believe that the basic meaning of the root word *authenteo* is in dispute. I don’t believe the meaning of the word is as uncertain as the question asked in the reaction paper would indicate.

3. Even if everything in Mrs. Kroeger's article were true, other passages of Scripture amply support the teaching of subordination.

^{xi} Alfred Edersheim: *Sketches of Jewish Social Life*, p. 146: "Of all qualities, those most desired in woman were meekness, Modesty, and shamefacedness. Jewish women would never have attempted 'teaching' in the synagogue, where they occupied a place separate from the men—for Rabbinical study, however valued for the male sex, was disapproved of in the case of women. Yet this direction of St. Paul (1 Tm 2:12): 'I suffer not a woman to usurp authority over the man' finds some kind of parallel in the *Rabbinical saying*: 'Whoever allows himself to be ruled by his wife, shall call out, and no one will make answer to him.'"

^{xii} Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

^{xiii} *ibid.*, pp. 195-6. cf. also *TDNT*, Vol 2, p. 137f: "How strong is the intellectual and authoritative element in *didaskhein* may be seen from current usage as attested in the papyri and ostraka. In addition to the sense of 'to instruct,' 'to appraise of,' etc., *didaskhein* can also have the sense of 'to demonstrate,' 'to prove,' 'to show.'"

^{xiv} 14 Arndt-Gingrich, *op. cit.*, p. 733. Luther, apparently, also understood the verse this way: "God Himself has so ordained that man be created first—first in time and first in authority. His first place is preserved by the Law. Whatever occurs first is called the most preferable. Because of God's work, Adam is approved as superior to Eve, because he had the right of primogeniture. In human affairs it can happen that a later work can be better. It also happens that whoever does not do evil does good. In Scripture, however, this is not so." *LW* 28, p. 276.

^{xv} Luther is not too helpful here. "Satan's cleverness is perceived also in this, that he attacks the weak part of the human nature, even the woman, not Adam the man. Although both were created equally righteous, nevertheless Adam had some advantage over Eve. . . . In the perfect nature the male somewhat excelled the female. Because Satan sees that Adam is the more excellent, he does not dare assail him; for he fears that his attempt may turn out to be useless. . . . Satan, therefore, directs his attack on the weaker part and puts her valor to the test, for he sees that she is so dependent on her husband that she thinks she cannot sin." *LW* 1, p. 151.

Fritz Zerbst: *The Office of Woman in the Church*, pp. 54-55, lists a host of quotes from commentators on the nature of women. Among them: "woman is weak, and by nature more subject deception"; she is "more exposed to temptation than is man"; "she lacks the power of sharp discrimination between true and false"; "the statement concerning the great guilt and sinfulness of woman and her moral and religious inferiority is for Paul an article of faith."

Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 382f, cites modern psychological studies that attempt to discuss the emotional differences between men and women.

In one study, F.J.J. Buytendijk, *Woman, A Contemporary View* p. 154, mentions an experiment in which men and women were allowed to see and react to a series of cartoons. His conclusions were that the more a cartoon made a direct appeal to the emotions, the less women found it to their taste. He felt this proves that women could not maintain the "emotional distance" necessary to find the humor in the cartoons.

In another study Erik Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crises*, p. 28, says that girls are able at an earlier age than boys to have a

fine discrimination of things seen, touched and heard. Girls also react more vividly, more personally, and with greater compassion. However, because they are more easily touched and touchable, they leave themselves open to being touched again and again.

Clark concludes: “Men have more distance from their emotions, and a greater capacity to detach themselves from immediate reactions, whereas women respond to situations more immediately and spontaneously, and find it harder to distance themselves from the way they feel.”

^{xvi} William L. Holladay: *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, p. 396.

^{xvii} A study document prepared by the faculty of Christ Seminary - Seminex, concerning the ordination of women said:

“The restricted role of women in the New Testament needs to be viewed in the light of attitudes prevalent at that time. . . . It is clear that the New Testament authors quoted above did not introduce a subordinationist view of women as a new, central divine teaching that was in conflict with the views of Jewish and pagan society around them. Rather, they shared, or at least did not fully oppose, the view of their environment.”
Photocopied in *Christian News* May 28, 1979.

Taking this tack, it is easy to discount Pauline passages on this subject (and on any other subject) if they appear to be out of step with modern thinking:

“I think that the pastoral commentary of Paul comes off to the modern woman as pre-historic. You know, women should be silent in the church, women should cover their heads in church, the man is the head of the family, the woman must be obedient to her husband. All of those things have to be seen in the context of history. After all, Paul was not married, and it was a patriarchal society in which he lived.” Lois Snock: “An Interview with the Rev. Barbara Andrews.” *Dialog*, Vol. 10, Spring, 1971, p. 123.

At times Paul can even be viewed with a certain amount of sympathy:

“Like all of us, Paul was a product of his’ own culture. . . . Some of Paul’s words contradict much of his own behavior and even certain passages he himself wrote. (They) show his struggling. . . . (He was) an honest man in conflict with himself.”
Virginia Ramey Mollencott: *Women, Men, and the Bible*.

Similar to this cultural-argument is the method of discounting certain Scripture passages because it is assumed there are divergent streams of theology in the Bible, often running counter to each other. For example:

Pastor Philip Siddons, pastor of Wrights Corner United Presbyterian Church, in a book review in *Christianity Today*, February 10, 1978: “Christian feminists have shown that despite the heavily male-dominated culture, there were some advancements for women in Old Testament times. The fact that Jesus was a feminist has been demonstrated by contrasting his actions with the laws and customs of his first-century culture. But-then there was Paul.”

Judith Moore: “Rose MaCauley; A Model for Christian Feminists.” *The Christian Century*, November 15, 1978, p. 1099: “There is a theory that women may not handle the vessels (in the Mass) I wonder why. I suppose it is the oriental basis of Christianity; and one feels that St. Paul would not have liked the idea at all! On the other hand, one can imagine our Lord saying that. such distinctions were nonsense, and that there were neither male nor female in such matters. . . . But obviously, . . . the Orientalists had it their own way.”

Perhaps the most abused passage in this regard is Galatians 3:28:

“Galatians 3:28 does not say, ‘God loves each of you, but stay in your places’; it says that there are no longer places, no longer categories, no longer differences in rights and privileges, codes and values. Richard and Joyce Boldrey: *Chauvinist or Feminist? Paul’s View of Women*, p. 47.

^{xviii} One example: Richard and Joyce Boldrey, *op. cit.*: “. . . Paul was not so anxious to protect men from subversive females as he was to protect the gospel from false teaching.” Other books that hold this view are:

Gladys Hunt: *Ms. Means Myself*

Dorothy R. Pape: *In Search of God’s Ideal Woman*

Don Williams: *The Apostle Paul and Women in the Church*

^{xix} Clark, *op. cit.*, pp. 197-199. Other writers who believe that Paul is speaking against the use of authority in a domineering way:

Boldrey and Boldrey, *op. cit.*

Catherine Booth: *Female Ministry: Women’s Right to Preach the Gospel*.

Hunt: *op. cit.*

Scanzoni and Hardesty, *op. cit.*

Perhaps the most “domineering” quote I read for this entire paper is something said by Sonia Johnson, the woman excommunicated from the Mormon church in 1979 for supporting the Equal Rights Amendment. She said., “If I could have gotten my hands on God, I would have killed Him.” (*Chicago Tribune*, December 7, 1980)

^{xx} Allow me to quote from two of the reaction papers given in our Synod:

“we certainly object to the Statement’s’ sweeping statement that it is ‘impossible’ to restrict this passage and its mandate ‘only to a wife in her relation to her husband.’”

“The writer believes that statements which apply to husbands and wives have been improperly applied to male-female relationships The writer believes that (the) idea of ‘self-subordination’ of a wife has been improperly applied to man-woman relationships; that is, those passages which speak of wife-husband are improperly applied to woman-man. . . . Female believers accept and try to observe the leadership principles that are stated in Ephesians and are read at marriage ceremonies. But to believe that there is a woman to man ‘subordination’ taught in the Bible is another matter! Christian wives bristle at that suggestion. They may, for it is not in the Bible!”

^{xxi} Luther’s words used for support of the “husband-wife” understanding are:

“Why does Paul say here that he deprives (the woman) of the administration of the Word as well as of work? You should solve that argument this way. Here we properly take “woman” to mean wife, as he reveals from his correlative phrase (v. 12) “to have authority over man,” that is, over her husband. As he calls the husband “man,” so he calls the wife “woman.” Where men and women are joined together there the men, not the woman ought to have authority. LW 28, p. 276.

Here are the preceding and following comments of Luther which, I feel, render Luther’s entire discussion unclear.:

“I believe that Paul is still speaking about public matters. I also want it to refer to the public ministry, which occurs in the public assembly of the church. There a woman must be completely quiet because she should remain a hearer and not become a teacher. She is not to be the spokesman among the people. She should refrain from teaching, from praying in public. She has the command to speak at home. This passage makes a woman subject.”

“Where there is a man, there no woman would teach or have authority. Where there is no man, Paul has allowed that they can do this, because it happens by a man’s command. He wants to save the order preserved by the world—that a man be the head of the woman. . . . Paul does not entrust the ministry of the Word to her. He considers this the greatest thing that goes on in the church. You must always understand this with the condition that men are present. Paul says this that ‘there may be peace and harmony in the churches when the Word is taught and people pray “ There would be a disturbance if some woman wished to argue against the doctrine that is being taught by a man.” pp. 276-7.

^{xxii} S. Jebb: *Expository Times*, April, 1970, p. 211

^{xxiii} *Ibid.*, p. 222.

^{xxiv} Arndt-Gingrich, *op. cit.*, pp. 178-180.

^{xxv} Webb, *op. cit.*, p. 222.

^{xxvi} TDNT, Vol. 7, pp. 989ff.

^{xxvii} Moffatt: “woman will get safely through childbirth”

NASB: “women shall be preserved through the bearing of children.”

NEB (footnote) “she will be brought safely through childbirth”

New Berkeley Version: “she will, however, be kept safe through childbirth”

^{xxviii} RSV: (footnote): “woman will be saved by the birth of the Child”

NEB (footnote): “saved through the Birth of the Child.”

A. D. B. Spencer: “Eve at Ephesus (I Tm. 2:11-15)?” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Fall, 1974, pp. 215-222.

^{xxix} R. C. H. Lenski: *The Interpretation of Colossians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, p. 574: “The fact that the Son of God was conceived and born of the Virgin Mary by God’s miraculous act means no more than that God used this one woman for his saving purpose. Nor does this affect women as a class more than men as a class, or, stated in a different way, all have the Savior alike. It is idealizing to see either all mothers or all womanhood in the Virgin. So we might idealize all crosses and all tombs by way of Christ’s cross and tomb.”

^{xxx} Some examples of the *dia* of attendant circumstance:

Romans 2:27 - “The one who is circumcised physically and yet obeys the law will condemn you, who, even though you have the written code and circumcision (*dia grammatos kai peritomays*; literally, though having the written code and circumcision) are a lawbreaker.”

Romans 4:11 - “(Abraham) received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So, then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised (*dia akrobustias*; literally, having the uncircumcision), in order that righteousness might be credited to them.”

2 Corinthians 2:4 - "I wrote to you out of great distress and anguish of heart and with many tears (*dia pollov dakruov*; literally, many tears attending)."

^{xxxii} William Hendriksen: *New Testament Commentary, Exposition of Pastoral Epistles*, p. 111: "It is (God's) will that the woman should influence mankind 'from the bottom up' (that is, by the way of *the child*), not 'from the top down' (that is, not by way of the man)."

^{xxxiii} Prof. Lawrenz elaborated on the generic understanding of "man" and "woman" in this verse, and a number of other passages. In speaking about 1 Timothy 2:13:

"Even here where St. Paul uses the proper names of the first two human individuals, it is nevertheless evident that he thinks of them generically, that their respective creation henceforth determines the role of man and woman in their relationship to one another in this life. Only with this understanding can St. Paul use what he says in verse 13 as his first basis for not permitting a woman 'to have authority over a man.'"

^{xxxiv} A quotation from one of the reaction papers to the Statement given in our Synod:

"After the fall, God's plan for the human race was drastically, tragically altered. God predicted to the woman, 'Your desire shall be to your husband and he shall rule over you.' This certainly was not an 'Order of Creation' any more than was the curse pronounced upon the man. It was the result of sin."

A stronger statement: Under the heading, "*Authority Systems Came Into the World Through Sin*":

"The cases of subordination which are pertinent and have meaning for Christians today were not established until the fall into sin. One form of 'subordination' of woman-to-man, which Scripture describes originated after the Fall, is a result of sin, and applies only in marriage."

^{xxxv} Prof. Lawrenz cites a number of reasons why the understanding that subordination is the result of sin is not in keeping with Scripture. He mentions that the Bible nowhere places the sole or even the primary responsibility for sin on the woman. He shows that presenting woman's subordination to her husband in marriage as a punishment and consequence of sin is not in keeping with the scriptural concept of the marriage relationship. And he further elaborates on the fact that the relationships established by God at creation are a part of the moral law.

^{xxxvi} August Pieper: "Are There Ceremonial Ordinances in the New Testament?" *Quartalschrift* July, 1916, pp. 179ff.

cf. also the Augsburg Confession, Art. 28, 53ff: "It is lawful for bishops or pastors to make ordinances that things be done orderly in the church. . . . It is proper that the churches should keep such ordinances for the sake of love and tranquillity, so far that no one does not

offend the other, that all things be done in the churches in order, and without confusion. . . . But so that consciences be not burdened to think that they are necessary to salvation, or to judge that they sin when they break them without offense to others; as no one will say that a woman sins who goes out in public with her head covered, provided only that no offense be given.”

^{xxxvi} Martin Franzmann: Exegesis of Romans 16:17ff” *Concordia Journal*, January 1981, p. 14.

^{xxxvii} Martin Franzmann: *Ha! Ha! Among the Trumpets*, p. 16.