

# WOMEN'S MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH

by Tony Higton

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

There is no doubt that women have been oppressed and are still to some extent discriminated against in the UK. Interwoven with the recognition of genuine differences and strengths of masculinity and femininity, which are God's gifts, are prejudices and hurtful stereotyped thinking.

It is true that some feminists can be aggressive, rebellious, resentful and hypersensitive. In fact I've come across some women's libbers who find it difficult to relate to Christ because he is a man.

However, on the other hand, I have found it difficult to understand the extreme vehemence of the opposition to women priests. I understand the theological reasons for that opposition but do not understand why, in practice, it has been far stronger than the reaction to bishops who deny credal doctrine or the issue of gay priests. I can only conclude that much (*not all*) of it is the sort of rage kindled by very deeply-felt opinions – actually prejudices - being threatened. It is akin to the irrational hatred and fear inherent in racism. It is misogyny (which *literally* means “hatred of women” but usually means hatred of women in authority). Of course, some people have milder forms of misogyny and they don't realise it is causing impurities in their motives and interpretation of Scripture.

I have seen much arrogance, contempt and rudeness displayed by *some* of those who oppose women priests. This sub-Christian bigotry is hypocrisy of the worst kind since it is lack of love manifested by (*some of*) those who believe that they are doctrinally pure but that women priests and their supporters are not.

The church has repressed and degraded women, wasted their gifts and frustrated their calling (and to some extent still does). Although some women are forced into this position, others accept it and even further it by apathy and lack of vision.

There needs to be a good deal of heart-searching and courageous "unlearning" of prejudices, stereotyped thinking and thoughtlessness. And this should lead to a genuine liberation of women to fulfil their God-given roles within the church.

It is important that we are guided not by emotion and the spirit of the age but by a proper interpretation of Scripture.

## **B. HERMENEUTICS (Principles of Interpretation)**

To interpret the relevant passages correctly we should apply the following general principles:

1. Understand one's own presuppositions and prejudices.
2. Understand the need to let the passage speak for itself, taking the natural meaning of the original Greek or Hebrew.
3. Understand the passage in context:
  - a. Understand it in the light of the whole of Scripture.
  - b. Understand the NT through the OT and vice versa.
  - c. Understand the passage in the light of the historical context of the book in which it arises.

- d. Understand it in the light of the surrounding passage.
- 4. Understand Scripture Christologically (how does it relate to Christ?)
- 5. Understand obscure passages in the light of clear passages and do not base a doctrine on an unclear, isolated passage.
- 6. Understand Scripture in the light of tradition, current scholarship and experience, all of which should, nevertheless be subject to the clear teaching of Scripture.

## **C. THE EQUALITY OF STATUS OF MAN AND WOMAN**

### **1. Both are created in the image or likeness of God**

Gen.1:27 "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them." Gen.5:1-2 "...when God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female; at the time they were created, he blessed them and called them 'man'."

### **2. Both have the rule over creation**

Gen.1:28 "God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in numbers, fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.'"

### **3. Man is incomplete without woman**

Gen.2:18 "The Lord God said, 'It is not good for man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.'" 1 Cor.11:11-12 "In the Lord however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as woman came from man, so also man is born from woman." (This does not contradict the fact that God can and does provide special grace for the single person. The final contradiction of the idea that single people are in some way inferior is the fact that Jesus himself was single!)

### **4. Equality is restored in Christ**

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

## **5. ALL Believers:**

**a. Have authority to minister (Eph.4:11-12)**

**b. Have a duty to minister (Eph.4:11-12)**

**c. Have a duty to submit to each other.**

Eph.5:21 "Submit to one another out of reverence to Christ." So husbands are to submit to wives and men to women as well as the other way round. A man who does not submit to his wife's needs, feelings and opinions (where they prove correct) is unloving. So in the general context, Eph 4:2 says: "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love." Similarly Eph.4:29, in the context, exhorts us to speak in a way which is "helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."

See also Php.2:3f "in humility count others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others." cf Col.3:12; Titus 3:2.

Rom.12:10 "...honour one another above yourselves." means that men will do this for women and vice versa. Also the deepest word for love in the New Testament is the Greek word "agape" which means building someone else up, wanting the best for them, which of course, includes men showing that love to women. *The way to achieve God's order in the church is NOT therefore by degrading women or their ministry.*

**d. Have freedom in Christ**

Gal.5:1 "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm then and do not let yourselves be burdened again by the yoke of slavery." Even though all Christians are servants of Christ, this brings the freedom which is given to his heirs

**e. Have a duty to love**

Ephesians 5 has much to say about the husband's responsibility to love his wife - v.25 "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her." (v.28) "In the same way husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies." (v.33) "...each one of you must love his wife as he loves himself." It is basically about mutual submission.

## **D. THE DIFFERENCE OF FUNCTION OF MEN AND WOMEN**

We need to look first at the creation narratives.

### **1. Old Testament**

**a. A Husband's Rule over his Wife is a Consequence of the Fall**

Gen.3:16 "Your desire will be for your husband and he will rule over you."

It is important to read the word "rule" in context. Professor S H Hooke graphically describes it. "So the fatal act of disobedience is committed, the free and happy relationship between man and God is broken and the curse falls. All the good and useful activities are darkened and turned to evil. The pleasant care of the fertile soil becomes a weary toil, a struggle against useless and hurtful weeds for a bare subsistence, until man returns from the dust from which he was taken. The natural desire of the man for the woman becomes a thing of shame, and child-bearing becomes a mortal struggle with the pangs of the rending flesh."<sup>1</sup>

Professor Gerhard von Rad comments: "... severe afflictions and terrible contradictions now break in upon the woman's life. There are three facts which because they are related to one another in unresolved tension grind down the

woman's life: (1) hardships of pregnancy, pains at birth, and (2) yet a profound desire for the man in whom she (3) does not find fulfilment and rest (Ruth 1:9), but rather humiliating domination!"<sup>2</sup>

Derek Kidner writes that the passage, "portrays a marriage relation in which control has slipped from the fully personal realm to that of instinctive urges passive and active. 'To love and to cherish' becomes 'To desire and to dominate'."<sup>3</sup>

So the word "rule" here must be seen as a harsh result of the Fall.

## **b. Woman is Man's Companion and Helper**

Gen.2:18 "The Lord God said, 'It is not good for man to be alone...I will make a helper fit for him.'" So Genesis puts women in the helper role. However this does not denote subservience since God is called the Helper of Israel (Psalm 121:2 "My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth."). The Prayer Book Marriage Service speaks in terms of "mutual society, help and comfort" which brings out the mutuality of help in a way consistent with NT teaching.

However we must examine the New Testament passages about the role of women which are written to Christians.

## **2. New Testament**

In turning to the New Testament it should be noted that the argument for solely male leadership based on God having revealed himself as a man and Jesus having chosen only male apostles is inconclusive. There is strong evidence that the New Testament accommodates to cultural norms in this area. It is understandable therefore that, for example, only male apostles were appointed. See Appendix 2 for details of culturally or historically conditioned teaching in the NT which many Christians (including many opponents of women priests) do not therefore put into practice.

### **a. Jesus' Attitude to Women**

#### **i. Compared with ancient extremism**

*In Jewish Law* woman was a chattel owned by her husband just like he owned a sheep or a goat. She couldn't leave him but he could dismiss her at any time. In an orthodox synagogue women still have no part in the service.

*Rabbinic writings:* "Blessed be God who has not made me a heathen, a slave or a woman." "It is better to burn the Torah (Law of Moses) than to teach it to a woman."

*In Greek Civilisation* a woman was "to remain indoors and to be obedient to her husband."

*In Roman Law* woman remained with the status of a child and was just transferred from father to husband. Cato, Censor of Rome, said, "If you were to catch your wife in an act of infidelity, you can kill her with impunity without trial, but if she were to catch you, she would not venture to touch you with her finger and indeed she has no right."

#### **ii. In the Gospels**

Women are prominent in the Gospel stories and Jesus treated them with great respect e.g. Mary, his mother and Mary Magdalene. Then there was the Samaritan woman at the well. The Jews regarded the Samaritans as racially and religiously impure. Centuries of mutual antagonism had existed between the two peoples. The Jews would never ask favours of Samaritans for fear of becoming ceremonially unclean. Shortly after the time of Jesus, Samaritan women became officially regarded by Jews as in a state of perpetual ceremonial uncleanness. To drink from a Samaritan woman's cup would be regarded as especially defiling. The rabbis also regarded talking to a woman, even a Jewish woman, as a waste of time.

In the light of all this, it is clear that Jesus showed great respect and love to the Samaritan woman (even though he also knew she lived an immoral life) by talking to her and asking her to give him a drink in her own cup.

Another woman to whom Jesus showed great respect was the woman caught in the act of adultery. Also Joanna, Susanna and Mary Magdalene travelled with him (Luke 8:1-3). Women were the last of the disciples to remain at the

Cross (Mark 15:47), the first at the tomb on Easter Day (John 20:1), the first to proclaim the resurrection (Matt.28:8), the first to proclaim Jesus to the Jews (Luke 2:37-38). It is difficult for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Westerners to appreciate just how radical was this treatment of women in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century.

## b. 1 Cor.11:3-16

As always, it is important to look at the context of a passage in order to interpret it correctly. We should note that the main purpose of this passage is to ensure women wear headcoverings and do not have short hair. On the other hand men must not wear long hair. Clearly these are culturally-conditioned matters. The passage follows teaching about meat offered to idols which, again, is culturally-conditioned. So, in approaching Chapter 11 verse 3, we must remember it is embedded in a culturally-conditioned context.

In the wider context of 1 Corinthians we should note:

*Chapter 5: 1-5* Not many churches act on "delivering an erring brother to Satan".

*Chapter 6:1-8* Many Christians would not regard the ban on taking legal action against a fellow Christian as absolute.

*Chapter 7:1* Many Christians do not take Paul's suggestion that it is good not to marry as generally applicable and timeless teaching. (cf. verses 25-38).

*Chapter 7:20-24* Christians today would not agree with Paul's teaching that slaves should remain in slavery if they could not gain their freedom.<sup>4</sup>

Against this somewhat culturally and historically conditioned background we need to examine Chapter 11 v.3 "...the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man and the head of Christ is God."

### i. "Head"

According to many commentaries, in Greek "head" is most often "source, origin, starting point" like the head of a river.

Professor F F Bruce comments: "By 'head' in this context we are probably to understand not, as has frequently been suggested, 'chief' or 'ruler' but rather 'source' or 'origin' - a sense well attested for Gk *kephale* .... In the light of the account of the formation of Eve from 'her husband' (Gen.2:21-23), man is the source of woman's existence ('she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man'). Since it is not true of married couples in general that 'the head of a woman is her husband' (RSV) in this sense of 'head', it is better to translate with NEB (cf. RV), 'woman's head is man' (and so also in Eph.5:23, even if there the principle is applied more particularly to the husband-wife relation than here). Again 'Christ' is the source of man's existence because he is the archetypal Man (but cf.15:46-49) and also because he is the agent in the creation of all things (8:6; cf.Col.1:16)...There is a reference back to the creation of woman out of man as there is also a reference to Christ being begotten of the Father."<sup>5</sup>

David Prior writes: "...The word for 'head' is *kephale*, which on rare occasions means the ruler of a community, but normally carries the sense of source or origin... A third sense of *kephale* (apart from its literal meaning) is the determinative and directive sense, which is far closer to what we mean now by headship or leadership."<sup>6</sup>

However in a recent study Professor Wayne Grudem writes: "The evidence to support the claim that kephale can mean 'source' is surprisingly weak, and, in fact, unpersuasive."<sup>7</sup>

a. All the articles and commentaries depend on only two examples of *kephale* in ancient literature: Herodotus 4.91 and *Orphic Fragments* 21a, both of which come from more than four hundred years before the time of the New Testament, and both of which fail to be convincing examples: Herodotus 4.91 simply shows that *kephale* can refer to the 'end points' of a river-in this case, the sources of a river, but elsewhere, the mouth of a river-and since 'end point' is a commonly recognised and well-attested sense of *kephale*, we do not have convincing evidence that 'source' is the required sense here. The other text, *Orphic Fragments* 21a, calls Zeus the 'head' of all things but in a context where it is impossible to tell whether it means 'first one, beginning' (an acknowledged meaning for *kephale*) or 'source' (a meaning not otherwise attested).

- b. A new search of 2,336 examples of *kephale* from a wide range of ancient Greek literature produced no convincing examples where *kephale* meant 'source'...."

He continues: "The evidence to support the claim that *kephale* can mean 'authority over' is substantial:

- a. All the major lexicons that specialize in the New Testament period give this meaning, whereas none give the meaning 'source'.
- b. The omission of the meaning 'authority over' from the Liddell-Scott *Lexicon* is an oversight that should be corrected (but it should be noted that that lexicon does not specialize in the New Testament period...)"

Grudem then examines in great detail criticisms made of his earlier work on *kephale* and, allowing for four minor inaccuracies in it, he concludes: "The meaning 'ruler, authority over' is still found quite clearly in forty-one ancient texts from both Biblical and extra-Biblical literature, and it is possible in two or more other texts. In addition, there are six texts where *kephale* refers to the literal head of a person's body and is said to be the part that rules or governs the rest of the body, and there are two texts which are similes where a ruler or leader is said to be like a head...."

"On the other hand, the evidence for the meaning 'source' is far weaker, and it is fair to say that the meaning has not yet been established. There are some texts which indicate that the physical head was thought of as the source of energy or life for the body, and therefore the possibility exists that the word *kephale* might have come to be used as a metaphor for 'source' or 'source of life'. There are two texts in Philo and one in the *Orphic Fragments* where such a meaning is possible, but it is not certain, and the meaning 'leader, ruler' would fit these texts as well. There are still no *unambiguous* examples before or during the time of the New Testament in which *kephale* has the metaphorical sense 'source' ... Moreover, even if the meaning 'source' ... were adopted for some examples of the word *kephale*, we would still have no examples of 'source' or 'prominent part' *without the additional nuance of authority or rule*. Even in texts where 'source' or 'prominent part' is alleged as the correct meaning, the person who is called the 'head' is always a person in leadership or authority. Therefore there is no linguistic basis for proposing that the New Testament texts which speak of Christ as the head of the church or the husband as the head of the wife can rightly be read apart from the attribution of authority to the one designated as 'head'."<sup>8</sup>

Grudem's work has been seized upon by those opposing the ordination of women. They confidently affirm that he has finally settled the dispute and that *kephale* cannot mean 'source'. However, in a review Kevin Giles comments "[Grudem] ... makes so many concessions that the force of his original case is lost. He allows that the term may be translated 'source' in Herodotus 4:91 (p.432), that there are two texts in Philo where the meaning 'source of life' is possible (p.455), that in one Orphic Fragment it means 'beginning' or 'source' (p.433) and that several Greek speaking Church Fathers took *kephale* as a synonym for *arche* which means 'beginning, origin, first cause' (A&G Lexicon) - or in terms of this debate, 'source'. What is shown is that *kephale* usually has the metaphorical meaning of pre-eminent, or possibly head over, not that it cannot mean 'source'. The force of the term in 1 Cor.11:3 and Eph.5:22 thus remains open. I am of the opinion that a translation of 'source' in the first passage makes most sense and 'head over', or leader or something similar, the most sense in the second. In the Ephesian text Paul calls the husband the head of the wife but so transforms the idea of male leadership that in the end there is mutual subordination, the goal of which is unity." Kevin Giles, *The Evangelical Quarterly*, July 1993, p.278f.

In another review Stephen Motyer makes equally fundamental criticisms of Grudem's work. He writes: "Does 'head' mean 'authority' or 'source'? But this is a completely misconstrued question, I believe. 'Head' is a *metaphor* in both these passages [1 Cor.11:2-16; Eph.5:21-33] and therefore does not actually *mean* anything. A metaphor can only *suggest*, and what it suggests may vary greatly from context, depending upon the nature of its correspondence to the topic in each place. In Ephesians, 'head' in 5:23 depends upon the earlier use of the metaphor, applied to Christ, in 1:22f. and 4:15-16. And in all three places its meaning is shaped by the presence of the related metaphor 'body', applied to the church in chapters 1 and 4 and by analogy to the wife (who is the husband's body) in 5:28-30.

"I believe the balance between 'head' applied to Christ/the husband, and 'body' applied to the church/the wife, strongly qualifies the note of authority which the metaphor expresses when it appears in the phrase 'head over'(e.g. Eph.1:22). Heads and bodies need each other - are incomplete without each other, are committed to maintaining and fostering their union for the good of the other ...."

"[The essays including Grudem's] devote no space to the *social background* of these texts ... The words 'head' and 'submit' were used by other ancient writers also, both Jewish and Gentile, to describe a *patriarchal hierarchy* in the

home far more intense than the gentle paternalism this volume commends. If asked, the authors of these essays would agree that Paul is using the same *language* as, for instance, Aristotle or Josephus, but qualifying its *content* with the gospel of the self-sacrificing Christ. But because they do not consider this background, they never ask *how much* he is qualifying the content. This is the vital question! I think Paul changes it *radically*." <sup>9</sup>

One argument in favour of "head" being interpreted as "source" is verse 8 "For man did not come from woman, but woman from man..." And even here Paul goes on to stress mutuality (verses 11-12) "In the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman." The NT teaching on submission is always in the context of mutual submission.

So the debate on the meaning of *kephale* will continue, although I agree with Stephen Motyer that the debate over male "headship" does not depend upon the meaning of this word. Rather it depends upon the general teaching of the Scripture.

## ii. Headcovering

The passage goes into teaching about women wearing a headcovering when praying or prophesying in public. The word used for "headcovering" here is the Greek word "*exousia*" which means "authority". So a woman wears her authority. i.e. the headcovering is a sign of her authority.

Commenting on v.10 Bruce says; "In the synagogue service a woman could play no significant part: her presence would not even suffice to make up the requisite quorum of ten (all ten must be males). In Christ she received equality of status with man: she might pray or prophesy at meetings of the church, and her `veil' was a sign of this new authority... Its ordinary social significance was thus transcended. As man in public worship manifests his authority by leaving his head unveiled, so woman manifests hers by wearing a `veil'. Her status in Christ does not mean that the creation ordinances are already things of the past: she should keep her head covered `because of the angels' who are guardians of the created order (cf G B Caird, *Principalities and Powers* (1956), pp.17-22, especially p.18)...needless breaches of convention were to be discouraged..."<sup>10</sup>

David Prior comments on 1 Cor 11:3-6: "The only women who did not wear [headcoverings] were the *hetairai*, who were the `high-class' mistresses of influential Corinthians. Also, slaves had their heads shaved, and the same practice was enacted as punishment for convicted adulteresses. It has further been suggested that the sacred prostitutes from the local temple of Aphrodite did not wear veils.

"...Bruce thinks that Paul knew that pagan prophetesses in the Graeco-Roman world prophesied with uncovered and dishevelled heads. This naturally caused severe distraction to the men at worship and was, in addition, a denial of the submission in the Lord of married women to their husbands. In Jewish temple-worship, the women were kept on their own, out of sight behind a screen; the men also prayed with their heads covered."<sup>11</sup>

Professor Charles Talbert comments on the significance of head-coverings in the ancient world including that "in a pagan milieu, the sight of dishevelled hair was connected with the worship of Oriental deities."<sup>12</sup>

Rabbi Simeon said, `If a woman's head (or hair) is uncovered, evil spirits come and sit upon it, and destroy everything in the house.'

Antionette Clark Wire writes: "...Paul argues that an uncovered woman leading in worship disrupts or dishonours the glory of God because she represents man's glory at the time and place where God alone is to be glorified. Only the man, whose head represents Christ's glory, is to be uncovered in this setting."<sup>13</sup>

"If angels are to worship God, Paul may be arguing that woman must be covered to keep the heavenly host from a misplaced worship of man whose glory she reflects...The danger is not only that human males will be drawn away from the praise of God's glory toward their own glory reflected in women but even the angels will be enticed to defect. Sexual implications may not be completely absent ..."<sup>14</sup>

The primacy of man over woman in v.8 (as of Jew over Greek in Gal.3:28) is merely a primacy in time, not in authority. What authority does Jew have over Gentile?

Woman is made for man (v.9) but vv.11-12 say that man is not independent of woman being born from her; she is his glory v.7 and has authority v.10; also man is incomplete without woman Gen.2:18. This balances out verse 9 into a beautiful mutuality.

It is important to note that in this passage, to a church which Barclay describes as “probably the most licentious city in the world”, Paul:

- is solely concerned to prevent women causing offence and scandal through immodesty (according to social convention) by having their heads uncovered in worship.
- specifically allows women to pray and prophesy publicly but does not refer to the issue of church leadership.
- even if he did define “head” in terms of authority, again, he does not refer to the issue of church leadership. Some may claim, rather, that, in line with the NT teaching on the submission of wives, he is referring to male leadership in marriage. See Appendix 3 on this subject.

The onus is on those who want to extend the passage to refer to church leadership or male-female relations in general to prove their point, which I do not believe they have. In any case, the passage is clearly socially conditioned because of the Corinthian context: e.g. women required to wear head coverings and long hair; men having to avoid long hair. So, even if they did prove their point that in this passage Paul meant to exclude women from church leadership they would have to prove this was of timeless relevance whilst regarding the main thrust of it (head-covering) as of only temporary relevance. (The obviously timeless principle underlying the passage is modesty, not the exclusion of women from church leadership, which is not mentioned).

This passage does not substantiate the view that women are excluded from church leadership. And if the headship statement in verse 3 did rule out women in church leadership then, if it is a fundamental biblical principle, it would rule them out of any leadership in society, a view which perhaps few opponents of women priests would hold. This being the case, again, they would need to defend their inconsistency.

### iii. Summary

**To summarise, the debate on the meaning of "head" in 1 Cor.11:3 continues. Grudem seeks to make out a case for the meaning "ruler" or "leader". Others like Giles say his argument is inconclusive. But whatever translation is chosen, the strong culturally-conditioned teaching in this passage (which is therefore of temporary relevance) and the absence of any reference to church leadership shows that it does not substantiate the view that women are excluded from church leadership. Also the issue cannot be settled on this metaphor, but only on the general teaching of scripture.<sup>15</sup>**

### c. 1 Cor.14:34-35

The references to the culturally and historically conditioned context at the beginning of the section on 1 Cor 11:3-16 are relevant here. We should remember them in approaching this passage:

“Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.”

This passage must be understood in the light of Cor.11:5 which allows women to pray and prophesy aloud in church. Also the gifts of the Spirit mentioned in 1 Cor.12 and 14 are given to all believers, not just men. What then does Paul mean here?

Bruce comments on 1 Cor 14:34-35: “... the imposition of `silence' on women may be explained by verse 35 as forbidding them to interrupt proceedings by asking questions which could more properly be put to `their husbands at home', or by taking part with more ardour than intelligence in the discussion of prophetic messages. (It is doubtful, however, whether such expressions as `they are not permitted to speak' and `it is shameful for a woman to speak in church' can be understood to mean no more than this.)”<sup>16</sup>

Dr Margaret Thrall comments: “The only possible answer to the difficulty [relating this passage to 1 Cor.11:5] is that here Paul is referring not to woman’s exercise of the gift of prophecy, which he did not forbid, but to the practice of women joining the congregational discussion of what a prophet or a teacher had said. The Greek does not in fact say ‘women should not address the meeting’ (a translation which suggests a prophetic discourse) but that women should remain silent in the assembly.”<sup>17</sup>

David Prior writes: “Although we cannot uncover the details of what was going on, we can discern some of the attitudes prevalent at Corinth. It seems that the principle of submissiveness was being ignored (‘they should be subordinate’, 34), that a spirit of defiance was uppermost (‘it is shameful...’, 35) and that an isolationist tendency was turning these wives into arbitrators of their own church order and even doctrine (‘Did the word of God originate with you?’, 36). In other words, these married women were the source of some of the arrogance in the Corinthian church which Paul has already had cause to castigate.”

“Some commentators think that Paul is checking these women’s garrulousness in church gatherings... ‘Lalein’ can carry the connotation of chattering, but Paul does not use it this way on other occasions. Barrett’s comments are apt: ‘it is not impossible that Paul should now use it in a new sense, but it is unlikely.’”<sup>18</sup> See also Talbert.<sup>19</sup>

## SUMMARY

**To summarise, it is not possible, in view of 1 Corinthians 11:5 to hold that Paul meant women were never to address the church. They were allowed to pray and prophesy publicly, and a prophecy could be a fairly lengthy message of exhortation or encouragement.**

**It seems that the context of Paul’s remarks is disorder and chaos in the Corinthian church (see v.32f). What may have happened in Corinth was that suddenly the women, previously kept in ignorance of religious matters, were emancipated. Therefore they had many questions to ask and were disrupting the worship by asking them. Paul therefore tells them to wait and ask the questions of their husbands at home, not to disrupt the services. There may also have been some arrogance in the women now they were suddenly liberated.**<sup>20</sup>

### d. 1 Tim.2:8-15

The following culturally or historically conditioned references in the context should be noted:

- a. Verse 8 Men (the word refers to males) should lift up holy hands in prayer. (Yet we know the NT allows women to pray publicly too 1 Cor 11:5)
- b. Verse 9 Women should not have braided hair or wear gold, pearls or expensive clothes. (Many of those who take verses 11-12 as excluding women from preaching or ordination do not take this verse as a literal or of timeless relevance in all cultures!).

See also:

- c. Chapter 5: 3-16 Not many churches obey the command to have a list of widows (but only older ones who have washed the feet of the saints!) it supports and which seems to involve some special dedication to Christ on their part.
- d. Chapter 5:23 Nor do many churches make wine drinking for medicinal purposes mandatory!

Against this somewhat culturally and historically conditioned background we need to examine Chapter 2 v.11-12: "A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent."

### i. Women teaching

Prof. Gordon Fee comments that Paul is not referring to women being totally silent but having a quiet disposition, not being disruptive. Paul was concerned about false teaching so he does not say what he says elsewhere that women can prophesy and probably teach from time to time. He goes on to say that the word “authority” is actually “to domineer”.

It seems there were dominant women in Ephesus who had been led astray by the false teachers and were spreading them aggressively.

Fee points out that this prohibition on women was not general as Rom.16:1-3; Phil.4:2-3 indicate. He even uses low key language "I want" which is clearly not an universal imperative. He says the same thing about young widows remarrying 1 Tim 5:14 which is clearly advice rather than a universal command.

Prof. Fee writes that the argument from the "order of creation" in Genesis 1 and 2 is not used by Paul (or Moses). Paul is only talking about Eve's deception.

Thomas D. Lea and H P Griffin comment: "One feature of Ephesus that may have spawned the trouble Paul addressed was the presence of the Temple of Artemis. The temple was one of the ancient world's Seven Wonders. The cult connected with it used women in sensuous, orgiastic practices. The prominence of women in the cult may have affected even Christian women, but its relationship to the church troubles at Ephesus is a moot point. {S H Gritz... concludes that the context of Paul's discussion is a gnosticizing form of Jewish Christianity that reflects affinities with the Artemis cult.}

[v.11] "...First, she was to learn in 'quietness.' The word 'hesychia' emphasised the attitude or spirit with which the woman was to learn and prohibited her dashing about as a busybody (5:13) {The adjective 'quiet' in 1 Pet.3:4 and the noun 'quietness' (KJV) in 2 Thess 3:12 reflect the same root. Both verses appeal for orderly, teachable behaviour more than for physical silence. The NASB gives well the sense of 2:11: 'Let a woman quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness.'} Paul was not demanding physical silence but a teachable spirit. Second, she was to learn in 'full submission.'... The submission did not demand a surrender of the mind or conscience or the abandonment of the duty of private judgment. It was a warning against abusing the leadership of the congregation by disrespectful, boisterous actions."

2:12 "...I do not permit' (epitrepo). This tense indicates that Paul was delivering authoritative instructions for the situation he encountered at Ephesus, but it is tenuous to decide for or against the permanence of Paul's injunctions based on the evidence of tense alone...."

"{There is no intent by Paul to ban all teaching by all women at all times. In Corinth women prophesied (1 Cor.11:5) and provided some teaching (Acts 18:24-26). The teaching Paul commended for women is more informal and less 'official' (2 Tim.1:5; Titus 2:3-4).}"

"...Nothing in Paul's words need be seen as a suggestion that women were incompetent to serve in the office of elder/overseer..."

"... The New Testament has examples of significant teaching roles by women (Acts 18:26 - both Priscilla and Aquila were involved; Titus 2:3-4; 2 Tim.1:5; 3:15 - women teach the faith to other women and children; 1 Cor.11:4-5 - women prayed and prophesied). Paul was not suggesting that the woman is incompetent to occupy the role of pastor/teacher...."

"Paul's favourable comments on women as teachers (2 Tim.1:5; Titus 2:4) seem to rule out the likelihood that his intent was to characterise all women as naive and gullible. The Ephesian women may have been credulous pawns in the hands of false teachers, but Paul knew most women were not."<sup>21</sup>

Interestingly, Professor J I Packer, a conservative theologian, writing in *Christianity Today* in 1991 pointed out that "Scripture presents presbyteral leadership as a man's job ... in practice, ordaining women presbyters has regularly proved divisive without being particularly fruitful..." He adds: "Even if, unlike some of its critics, one does not find oneself able to maintain that Scripture actually forbids it, one can hardly claim that there is much sense in it."

But, in the conclusion of his article, he writes: "Since authority resides in the Word of God rather than in the preachers and teachers of either sex, it is my opinion that a woman's preaching and teaching gifts may be used to the full in situations where a male minister is in charge and the woman's ministry of the Word has the effect of supplementing and supporting his own preaching and teaching. (We in the West are no longer in the Bibleless situation to which 1 Tim.2:12 was directed.)" Coming from a respected conservative theologian regarded as a guru by Conservative Evangelical opponents of women priests, this is an illuminating comment. However we must later examine his claim that ordained women should be under the authority of a senior male pastor.

## ii. Saved through childbirth

Dr. B S Easton comments on verse 15: "of the ... interpretations that have been proposed for this verse, the most common has been to interpret it by Gen.3:15-16 ('Protevangelium'), reading 'she shall be saved by the child-bearing of Mary'... Augustine explained 'child-bearing' as 'bringing forth good works,' Ambrosiaster as 'faith,'... Pelagius as 'baptism,' ..."<sup>22</sup>

Dr. J H Bernard writes that there are: "Two other interpretations ... (1) Chrysostom, who regards *teknogonia* as identical here with *teknotrophia*, the Christian education of children, and supposes an implied *tekna* to be the subject of *meinosin*. But *teknogonia* cannot be thus explained; *teknogonein* is used in this very Epistle (v.14) in its ordinary sense of bearing children. And further such an interpretation does not harmonise with the context. (2) Many modern commentators lay stress on the article *tes* and interpret *dia tes teknogonias* as 'through the child-bearing', sc. of the Blessed Virgin, the *teknogonia* in the Apostle's mind being the Saviour's Birth, foreshadowed in Gen.3:16. But it is impossible to suppose that St. Paul would have spoken of the Nativity of Christ as *he teknogonia* without any further explanation."<sup>23</sup>

Robert Falconer comments: "The Pastoral Epistles", Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1937, p. 131 v.15 "...by motherhood, through the suffering of childbearing, women will themselves find salvation; but they must also live a life of chastity in faith, love, and sanctification... The other interpretation is that by 'the childbearing' is meant the great childbearing of the Man, Christ Jesus; Mary redressed the balance of Eve (Matt.1:20,21; Lk.1:35,42). The Greek fathers in general gave no place to this interpretation, but in the Latins this mystical sense was general (Swete)."<sup>24</sup>

R T Hanson comments: "...'saved through the childbearing'. The alternative translation in RSV margin is 'by the birth of the child'. Some editors have seen here a reference to the birth of Jesus and have claimed that we have here the origin of the idea later elaborated by Irenaeus and others that Mary is the counterpart to Eve as Christ is the counterpart to Adam. But the Greek will hardly allow this sense... S. Jebb (Exp T 81 [1969-70], pp.221-2) has suggested that the true meaning is 'she will be saved from the error of lording it over her husband by devoting herself to bearing and bringing up children'. But v. 15 is rather too far away from v. 12 to make this plausible."<sup>25</sup>

Lea and Griffin believe v.15 teaches that women prove the reality of their salvation by becoming model wives. They dismiss the interpretation that women gain salvation through childbirth, or will be kept safe in childbirth (some die). They also reject the idea that it refers to the birth of Jesus because salvation comes through his death."<sup>26</sup>

Prof. W Lock comments on v.14f: "...Two interpretations seem possible. (a) 'By bearing children,'... (b) By the great child-bearing... (b) is probably right..."<sup>27</sup> Prof. J L Houlden believes it is most improbable that v.15 refers to Mary and the birth of Christ.<sup>28</sup> See also Dr A R Leaney.<sup>29</sup>

The interpretation of this passage is, therefore, unclear but it does not alter our interpretation of verse 12. It may be that Prof. E F Scott's interpretation of v. 15 is the best one: "It seems best to take the Greek preposition in the phrase 'through childbearing' not in its usual sense of 'by means of' but as denoting a condition. 'She will be saved even though she must bear children.' That is, Eve, the representative woman, was condemned to painful child-birth as the penalty for her sin, and this penalty is still exacted. But woman, no less than man, will be saved, in spite of the continuing mark of Divine displeasure, if women live the true Christian life. The writer, in fact, is making a sort of apology for what he has said about women..."<sup>30</sup>

## iii. Overseers to be husband of one wife

Paul uses the masculine in speaking of overseers (1 Tim.3). But this may well be conventional. We tend to do the same in our culture: using the male to mean both male and female (at least until recently!). The NT frequently does this.<sup>31</sup>

And when it speaks of the overseer having only one wife (v.2), some would say that is proof we should only have male overseers/presbyters. But, by the same token it would mean there should be no single (male) overseers? If so (quite apart from Jesus being single) this would rule out Paul, or many contemporary single men who are ministers.

Arguments from the masculine in 1 Tim.3 are therefore inconclusive.

#### **iv. Summary**

To summarise, the following factors seem relevant in interpreting 1 Timothy 2:12:

- 1. It seems possible that Paul's unusual language ("I do not permit...") implies that this command was for the Ephesian church rather than a permanent command for the whole church.**
- 2. Ephesus was the centre for the immoral, idolatrous worship of Artemis in which women figured prominently. Paul would therefore be concerned to avoid any appearance of impropriety concerning the position of women in the church.**
- 3. It appears that the church was influenced by an early form of Gnosticism which was leading the women, particularly, into false teaching.**
- 4. There are suggestions of women seeking to dominate and to be busybodies.**
- 5. Also this passage was written before the whole church had the New Testament so the teaching ministry had more authority in those days and there was greater possibility of deception without a written Scripture.**

It seems from these considerations that this passage does not substantiate the view that women are excluded from church leadership.

### ***E. THE BIBLICAL MINISTRY OF WOMEN***

The ways women who are mentioned in the Bible ministered include the following:

#### ***1. Prophecy***

Ex.15:20 Miriam conveys God's Word from Moses to the women. (Later she rebelled and the Lord took this ministry away from her.)

Judges 4 Deborah was a prophetess and judge in Israel. She had great authority; she summoned General Barak in v.6 and Barak would not go up to battle without her.

2 Kings 22:14 Huldah was a prophetess at the same time as Jeremiah was prophesying. King Josiah consulted her.

Luke 2:36 Anna was a prophetess.

Acts 21:9 Philip's four unmarried daughters were prophesying.

Acts 2:17 quotes Joel 2:28 that after Pentecost "daughters shall prophesy".

1 Cor.11:5 "Every woman who prays or prophesies..." shows the early church allowed women to fulfil these ministries.

Now according to 1 Cor.14:3 the gift of prophecy is for strengthening, encouragement and comfort, i.e. to promote spiritual growth. Prophecy may be (a) the inspired use of a passage of scripture or (b) a message in words given directly by the Lord and not premeditated by the speaker or (c) comments inspired by the Holy Spirit.

#### ***2. Being a "Deaconess"***

Rom.16:1 "Phoebe a servant (margin: "deaconess") of the church in Cenchrea". Compare the so-called "deacons" of Acts 6. In 1 Tim.3:11 speaking about deacons Paul refers to "their wives", again the margin has "deaconesses" because there is no definite article in the Greek.

#### ***3. Teaching***

Titus 2:3-5 The older women were called upon to teach the younger women.

But Acts 18:24-28 is interesting. Apollos "was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervour and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the Baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately." So here this Christian couple together taught this great preacher more of the truth. This involved Priscilla in teaching a man. Her name, coming first, is in a dominant position.

#### **4. Witnessing**

Luke 2:36-38 Anna witnessed to the infant Christ.

John 4:29,39-41 The Samaritan woman witnessed to her neighbourhood.

Acts 1:12-14; 2:1 It seems likely that women were involved in the witnessing on the Day of Pentecost.

#### **5. An Apostolic Couple**

In Romans 16:7 Paul writes, "Greet Andronicus and Junias, my relatives who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles."

Prof. James D G Dunn comments: "The most natural way to read the two names within the phrase is as husband and wife (cf v 3). ... We may firmly conclude, however, that one of the foundation apostles of Christianity was a woman and wife."<sup>32</sup>

John Ziesler commenting on *Andronicus and Junias* says: "Throughout the verse RSV assumes that these were both men. Increasingly this is being seen as unlikely: they were probably a married couple, Andronicus and Junia."<sup>33</sup>

Prof. James R Edwards comments: "The name is normally presumed male (so NIV), but a recent study reveals over 250 examples of it in Greek literature, not one of which is masculine! This seems to be nearly incontrovertible evidence that the name is feminine (Junia), which would make the pair husband and wife (or perhaps brother and sister). If the name is feminine, then Paul's referring to Andronicus and Junia as 'outstanding among the apostles, who were in Christ before I was,' is very significant. It would indicate that (1) 'apostles' refers to a group larger than the original Twelve, (2) among whom was to be counted a woman, (3) and probably a wife, (4) who had been an apostle before Paul was! In saying this we are still holding to the high ground of probability."<sup>34</sup>

Prof. C E B Cranfield writes: "Most probably Andronicus and Junia were husband and wife....That Paul should not only include a woman (on the view taken above) among the apostles but actually describe her, together with Andronicus, as outstanding among them, is highly significant evidence (along with the importance he accords in this chapter to Phoebe, Prisca, Mary, Tryphaena, Tryphosa, Persis, the mother of Rufus, Julia and the sister of Nereus) of the falsity of the widespread and stubbornly persistent notion that Paul had a low view of women and something to which the Church as a whole has not yet paid sufficient attention."<sup>35</sup>

Leon Morris comments: "The patristic commentators seem to have taken the word as feminine ('Junia') and understood the pair to be man and wife....It is fairly clear from the New Testament that there was a wider circle of apostles than the Twelve, and it would seem that this couple belonged to that wider circle. Some find an argument from this that we should understand the second name as masculine, holding that a woman could not be an apostle, but we should bear in mind Chrysostom's comment: 'Oh! how great is the devotion of this woman, that she should be even counted worthy of the appellation of apostle!'"<sup>36</sup> See also Professor Roy Harrisville.<sup>37</sup>

It seems likely therefore that Andronicus and Junia were an apostolic couple in the wider circle of apostles.

#### **6. Helping**

Rom.16:1-2 Phoebe "a great help to many including me" (the Greek word means one who protects or a patron)

- v.3 Priscilla whom Paul calls a "fellow worker" (he uses the same term of Timothy (1 Thess.3:2) Mark and Luke (Philem.24)
- v.6 Mary "who worked very hard" (Greek word means extreme physical, mental and spiritual effort.)
- v.12 The same word used in v.6 is used of Tryphena, Tryphosa and Persis.
- v.13 Paul refers to Rufus' mother "who has been a mother to me"

Phil.4:2-3 Paul refers to Euodia and Syntyche "who has contended at my side in the cause of the Gospel."

It should also be noted that God does use women sometimes in exceptional ways and gives them outstanding gifts, e.g. Basilea Schlink, Jean Darnall, Corrie ten Boom, Gladys Aylward. These people must be taken seriously.

## **F. CONCLUSION**

**Taking everything into account, it seems that the NT does not teach any general principle which would exclude women from either the teaching or the presiding role in the church. So I believe there is no biblical barrier to women being ordained and taking headship positions in the modern church. It is disturbingly true that one can just as easily argue from the NT against the liberation of slaves as one can argue against the ordination of women to headship positions. But, more important, it is clear to me that the main thrust of NT teaching on the issue is Gal 3:28 "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."**

## Appendix 1: “The church should never have opposed slavery!”

A strong case can be made out from the New Testament that, as many of their Christian contemporaries told them at the time, the leading 19th century Evangelicals were wrong to abolish slavery!! There were heated arguments between Bible-believing Christians about whether it was right to liberate slaves. After all, anyone reading the New Testament will clearly see the following points are made in it:

1. Jesus and the apostles accepted the submission of slaves as a time-honoured institution in society. They simply ministered to the needs of slaves. (See John 8:35; Acts 16:16-18)
2. Paul, although accepting that everyone is equal before God (see 1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:28; Col 3:11), nevertheless accepts the submission of slaves in a secondary status in society.
3. Neither Paul nor Peter teach that slaves should be liberated, but rather that they should submit to their secondary role sincerely and wholeheartedly, even when treated harshly. The honour of the gospel requires this. However they *should* be treated fairly.
4. So Paul did not liberate the runaway slave, Onesimus, but sent him back to his master Philemon. He did, though, ask that, whilst remaining a slave, he should be treated well as a brother. (See Eph 6:5-8; Col 3:22-4:1; 1 Tim 6:1-2; Titus 2:9-10.)

### Conclusion

At face value, it seems conclusive therefore that the church should, whilst ministering to the needs of slaves and calling for fair treatment of them, not oppose the institution of slavery.

### Postscript

I actually don't believe that conclusion for a moment. But it does, *on the face of it*, appear to be what the NT teaches. Yet the church has rightly seen that the liberation of slaves was implicit (but not explicit) in Scripture.

It is very similar with many of the “biblical” arguments against the ministry of women. The NT writers follow the conventions of a society, e.g. on 135 occasions in the epistles the believers are referred to as “brothers”.<sup>38</sup> Are we to conclude that therefore they are not addressed to women or, worse still, shouldn't be read by women?

So the NT writers did not overturn the institutions of slavery and the second-class status of women in ancient society. Clearly they preferred evolution to revolution in these matters, particularly no doubt because revolution over these issues at that time would have been counterproductive to the spread of the gospel.

But the seeds of the abolition of slavery and of a proper liberation of women are clearly there in the NT. All Christians have in the last 100 years accepted the former and abolished slavery. But many Christians have not yet accepted the latter.

## ***The implicit NT teaching about the liberation of slaves and women***

<i>The Liberation of Slaves</i>	<b>The Liberation of Women</b>
<b>1. All are equal in Christ</b>	<b>1. All are equal in Christ</b>
Gal 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.  1 Cor 12:13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body-- whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free-- and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.  Col 3:11 Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.	Gal 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
<b>2. Slaves are to be treated with honour and submission</b>	<b>2. Women are to be treated with honour and submission</b>
Eph 5:21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.  1 Cor 16:16 ... submit to such as these and to everyone who joins in the work, and labours at it.  Rom 12:10 Honour one another above yourselves.  Philippians 2:3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.	Eph 5:21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.  1 Cor 16:16 ... submit to such as these and to everyone who joins in the work, and labours at it.  Rom 12:10 Honour one another above yourselves.  Philippians 2:3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.
<b>3. Paul's treatment of Onesimus implicitly undermined slavery</b>	<b>3. Jesus' and Paul's treatment of women implicitly undermined their second class status</b>
Philem 10-18 I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains. 11 Formerly he was useless to you, but now he has become useful both to you and to me. 12 I am sending him-- who is my very heart-- back to you. 13 I would have liked to keep him with me so that he could take your place in helping me while I am in chains for the gospel. 14 But I did not want to do anything without your consent, so that any favor you do will be spontaneous and not forced. 15 Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back for good-- 16 no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord. 17 So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. 18 If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me.	<p><b>Jesus' Attitude</b> Women are prominent in the Gospel stories and Jesus treated them with great respect eg. Mary, his mother and Mary Magdalene. Then there was the Samaritan woman at the well.</p> <p>The Jews regarded the Samaritans as racially and religiously impure. Centuries of mutual antagonism had existed between the two peoples. The Jews would never ask favours of Samaritans for fear of becoming ceremonially unclean. Shortly after the time of Jesus, Samaritan women became officially regarded by Jews as in a state of perpetual ceremonial uncleanness.</p> <p>To drink from a Samaritan woman's cup would be regarded as especially defiling. The rabbis also regarded talking to a woman, even a Jewish woman, as a waste of time.</p> <p>In the light of all this, it is clear that, even knowing she was immoral, Jesus showed great respect and love to the Samaritan woman by talking to her and asking her to give him a drink in her own cup.</p> <p>Another woman to whom Jesus showed great respect was the woman caught in the act of adultery.</p> <p>Joanna, Susanna and Mary Magdalene travelled with him (Luke 8:1-3). Women were the last of the disciples to remain at the Cross (Mark 15:47), the first at the tomb on Easter Day (John 20:1), the first to proclaim the resurrection (Matt.28:8), the first to proclaim Jesus to the Jews (Luke 2:37-38).</p> <p><b>Paul's respect for women.</b> In Rom.16:1-2 he calls "Phoebe a servant (margin: "deaconess") of the church in Cenchrea". He says she is "a great help to many including me" (the Greek word means one who protects or a patron)</p> <p>Acts 18:24-28 refers to Apollos as "a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervour and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the Baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately." So here this Christian couple together taught this great preacher more of the truth. This involved Priscilla in teaching a man. Her name, coming first, is in a dominant position.</p> <p>In Rom 16:3 he calls Priscilla whom Paul calls a "fellow worker" (he uses the same term of Timothy (1 Thess. 3:2) Mark and Luke (Philem. 24)</p> <p>In Romans 16:7 Paul writes, "Greet Andronicus and Junias, my relatives who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles." Here is an example of an apostolic couple: man and woman.</p>

	He also refers in Rom 16 to other women he wishes to honour: v.6 Mary "who worked very hard" (Greek word means extreme physical, mental and spiritual effort.); v.12 The same word used in v.6 is used of Tryphena, Tryphosa and Persis; v.13 Paul refers to Rufus' mother "who has been a mother to me"; Phil. 4:2-3 Paul refers to Euodia and Syntyche "who have contended at my side in the cause of the Gospel."
<b>4. The apostles make various culturally-conditioned statements of temporary local significance about slaves to prevent revolutionary change</b>	<b>4. The apostles also seem to make various culturally-conditioned statements of temporary local significance about women to prevent revolutionary change</b>
<p>Eph 6:5-8 Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. 6 Obey them not only to win their favour when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. 7 Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, 8 because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free.</p> <p>Col 3:22-4:1 Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favour, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord.</p> <p>1 Tim 6:1-2 All who are under the yoke of slavery should consider their masters worthy of full respect, so that God's name and our teaching may not be slandered. 2 Those who have believing masters are not to show less respect for them because they are brothers. Instead, they are to serve them even better, because those who benefit from their service are believers, and dear to them. These are the things you are to teach and urge on them.</p> <p>Titus 2:9-10 Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, 10 and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Saviour attractive.)</p> <p><u>So slaves are urged to obey and respect their masters in everything, wholeheartedly and sincerely, as if serving Christ, even if they are maltreated. The existence of Christian slave owners is accepted. Yet all Christians now accept that slavery is a great evil, totally contrary to God's will.</u></p>	<p>1 Cor 11:4-10 Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonours his head. 5 And every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonours her head-- it is just as though her head were shaved. 6 If a woman does not cover her head, she should have her hair cut off; and if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut or shaved off, she should cover her head. 7 A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man. 8 For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; 9 neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. 10 For this reason, and because of the angels, the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head.</p> <p>1 Cor 14:34-35 women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. 35 If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.</p> <p>1 Tim 2:9-14 I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, 10 but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God. 11 A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. 12 I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.</p> <p><u>The exhortation about head-covering is now accepted by almost all Christians in the west as culturally-conditioned and so not having direct relevance to our culture.</u></p> <p><u>The 1 Cor 14 command for women to be silent in church is clearly related to some local situation and not of general relevance, otherwise it contradicts 1 Cor 11:5 which allows women to pray and prophesy, and the context is clearly about worship in church.</u></p> <p><u>The 1 Tim 2 passage is clearly culturally-related in terms of the dress code. And it seems possible that Paul's unusual language ("I do not permit...") implies that this command was for the Ephesian church rather than a permanent command for the whole church.</u></p> <p><u>Ephesus was the centre for the immoral, idolatrous worship of Artemis in which women figured prominently. Paul would therefore be concerned to avoid any appearance of impropriety concerning the position of women in the church.</u></p> <p><u>It appears that the church was influenced by an early form of Gnosticism which was leading the women, particularly, into false teaching.</u></p> <p><u>There are suggestions of women seeking to dominate and to be busybodies.</u></p> <p><u>Also this passage was written before the whole church had the New Testament so the teaching ministry had more authority in those days and there was greater possibility of deception for the uneducated without a written Scripture.</u></p>

## Appendix 2: Teaching of the New Testament we don't obey!

It is interesting that many Christians with a high view of Scripture who react against claims that certain NT teaching about women is culturally or historically conditioned, do not realise that, in practice, they do regard some NT teaching as conditioned in that way. Below is a list of such teaching which many modern Christians, who have a high view of scripture and who oppose women priests, do not obey because they regard it as culturally or historically conditioned. **It is interesting that most of these culturally or historically conditioned passages occur in the books which speak of the submission of women: six in 1 Corinthians; two in Ephesians; one in Colossians; three in 1 Timothy; one in Titus and two in 1 Peter.** The other passages are references in Acts 15; 2 Cor 13 and 1 Thess 5.

Passage	Comment
<b>KOSHER MEAT</b> Acts 15:28-29 The Apostolic Council of Jerusalem gave the following command to the Gentiles: "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: You are to abstain from food sacrificed to	Few Gentile Christians regard it as mandatory on them to eat kosher meat.

<p>idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things. "</p>	
<p><b>DELIVERING SINNERS TO SATAN</b></p> <p>1 Cor 5:4-5 Paul commands the Corinthian church to deal with a sexually immoral member in the following way: "When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.</p>	<p>Not many churches act on "delivering an erring brother to Satan".</p>
<p><b>NOT GOING TO LAW</b></p> <p>1 Cor 6:1 Paul writes: "If any of you has a dispute with another, dare he take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the saints?"</p>	<p>Many Christians would not regard the ban on taking legal action against a fellow Christian as absolute.</p>
<p><b>MARRIAGE DISCOURAGED</b></p> <p>1 Cor 7:1, 27-28, 38 "Now for the matters you wrote about: It is good for a man not to marry ... Are you unmarried? Do not look for a wife. But if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. But those who marry will face many troubles in this life, and I want to spare you this....So then, he who marries the virgin does right, but he who does not marry her does even better. "</p>	<p>Many Christians do not take Paul's suggestion that it is good not to marry as generally applicable and timeless teaching.</p>
<p><b>AVAILABILITY OF ALL THE CHARISMATIC GIFTS</b></p> <p>1 Cor 12 Teaching on spiritual gifts</p>	<p>It is interesting that many of the main opponents of women's ordination would regard the charismatic gifts (especially Tongues) as for the apostolic age only!</p>
<p><b>SPONTANEOUS CHARISMATIC WORSHIP</b></p> <p>1 Cor 14 Teaching on charismatic worship (with spontaneous contributions from the congregation).</p>	<p>Many Christians would not regard this pattern as generally applicable today.</p>
<p><b>CHARISMATIC STRUCTURE OF LEADERSHIP</b></p> <p>Paul taught such structure was essential to the welfare of the church.</p> <p>Eph 4:11-12 "It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up..." (cf. 1 Cor 12:27-29)</p>	<p>Many Christians do not adopt or accept that structure today.</p>
<p><b>SLAVERY ACCEPTED</b></p> <p>1 Cor 7:20, 21, 24 "Each one should remain in the situation which he was in when God called him. Were you a slave when you were called? Don't let it trouble you-- although if you can gain your freedom, do so...Brothers, each man, as responsible to God, should remain in the situation God called him to."</p>	<p>Most Christians today would not agree with Paul's teaching that slaves should remain in slavery if they could not gain their freedom.</p>
<p><b>SLAVES TO BE OBEDIENT</b></p> <p>Eph 6:5-8 "Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favour when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free."</p>	<p>Most Christians today would not accept that slaves should remain obediently in slavery.</p>
<p><b>SLAVES TO BE OBEDIENT</b></p> <p>Col 3:22 "Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favour, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord."</p>	<p>Most Christians today would not accept that slaves should remain obediently in slavery.</p>
<p><b>SLAVES TO BE OBEDIENT</b></p> <p>Titus 2:9 "Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them..."</p>	<p>Christians today would not accept that slaves should remain obediently in slavery.</p>

<p><b>SLAVES TO BE OBEDIENT</b>  1 Peter 2:18-21 "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. For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God. But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps."</p>	<p>Christians today would not accept that slaves should remain obediently in slavery.</p>
<p><b>WOMEN NOT TO WEAR BRAIDED HAIR, GOLD, PEARLS ETC.</b>  1 Tim 2: 9 "I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes..."</p>	<p>Most Christians today do not take this verse as a literal or of timeless relevance in all cultures.</p>
<p><b>CHURCHES TO HAVE A LIST OF DEDICATED WIDOWS</b>  1 Tim 5: 3-16 This list includes only older widows who have washed the feet of the saints and apparently made some special dedication to Christ. They are supported by the church.</p>	<p>Not many churches obey this command today.</p>
<p><b>ENCOURAGEMENT TO DRINK WINE!</b>  1 Tim 5:23 "Stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses."</p>	<p>Some Christians today are tee-total.</p>
<p><b>GREETING WITH A HOLY KISS</b>  2 Cor 13:12 "Greet one another with a holy kiss."</p>	<p>Many Christians would not follow this teaching today. In some cultures it would not be acceptable.</p>
<p><b>GREETING THE BROTHERS WITH A HOLY KISS</b>  1 Thess 5:26 "Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss."</p>	<p>Many Christians would not follow this teaching today, especially between male Christians.</p>
<p><b>GREETING WITH A LOVING KISS</b>  1 Peter 5:14 "Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ."</p>	<p>Many Christians would not follow this teaching today.</p>

# Appendix 3: The “Submission of Wives”

The two main New Testament passages on this subject are Ephesians 5:21-33 and 1 Peter 3:1-9. Sadly this teaching has been misinterpreted and misunderstood with the result that some husbands have claimed biblical backing for behaving rather like selfish dictators. And some women have thought the NT required them to be “doormats”.

It is obvious that the NT teaches *mutual* submission. All Christians, male or female, young or old, in leadership or not are called to serve: to a life of submission. Jesus said: “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, *whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.* For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:42-45).

So the NT does not teach the submission of wives without at the same time teaching the submission of husbands.

## **Submission to one another in the Lord**

In his introduction to the subject of submission in Ephesians 5 Paul says: “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.” (Eph 5:21 cf. 1 Cor 11:3). A careful reading of the passage shows that the pattern is: he gives in submission; she responds in submission.

## **The husband gives in submission; the wife responds in submission.**

### ***How the husband submits to his wife***

*By loving her as much as he loves himself, with a sacrificial, selfless love, like Christ loved the Church, giving everything for her.*

1. He submits to her by giving and giving and giving again.  
“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (Eph 5:25)
2. He submits to her by building her up as a person.  
“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.” (Eph 5:25-27) “Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.” (1 Peter 3:7)
3. He submits to her by sitting loose to his rights for her benefit  
“In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.” (Eph 5:28)
4. He submits to her by putting her well-being before his own, sacrificing his own comfort, ease, likes and dislikes  
“He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no-one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church...” (Eph 5:28-29)
5. He submits to her by seeking to reach consensus on decisions
6. He submits to her by forgiving her failure.
7. He submits to her by being Christ-like  
“For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Saviour.” (Eph 5:23)

### Note:

For him to demand her submission when he is not showing Christ-like love is quite unbiblical.

He should always seek to reach consensus, not to make unilateral decisions.

## ***How the wife submits to the husband***

***By submitting to his sacrificial, selfless Christ-like love.***

1. She submits to him by giving and giving and giving again.
2. She submits to him by building him up as a person.  
“the wife must respect her husband.” (Eph 5:33)
3. She submits to him only in ways consistent with being built up in Christ and only when he is asking something out of love for her and the family.  
“Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.” (Eph 5:24)  
“Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord.” (Eph 5:21-22)  
  
(The norm is mutual submission and consensus).
4. She submits to him by sacrificing her own comfort, ease, likes and dislikes for his well-being.
5. She submits to an unbelieving husband (in ways consistent with obeying and being built up in Christ) in order to win him to Christ.  
“Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behaviour of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.” (1 Peter 3:1-2)
6. She submits to him by forgiving his failure.
7. She submits to him by being Christ-like

# Appendix 4: Would the method of interpreting Scripture used above justify homosexual practice?

Conservative Evangelicals and others tend to reject the method of interpreting the relevant passages used above (which they call “the new hermeneutic”) because, they claim, it could be used to justify homosexual practice as compatible with Scripture.

If it could be so used that would not in itself prove the hermeneutic invalid. But I believe it cannot legitimately be so used. Here is a hermeneutical comparison between the issues of women’s ministry, slavery and homosexual practice:

<b>Homosexual Practice</b>	<b>Slavery</b>	<b>Women’s Ministry</b>
<b>1. The focus group consists of people involved in a sinful lifestyle.</b>	The focus group consists of simply slaves, not those involved in a sinful lifestyle.	The focus group consists of simply women, not those involved in a sinful lifestyle.
<b>2. The behaviour of the focus group is subject to severe punishment (Lev 20:13; Rom 1:26-27; 1 Cor 6:9)</b>	The behaviour of the focus group is subject to no punishment	The behaviour of the focus group is subject to no punishment
<b>3. There are no exceptions in Scripture to the behaviour of the focus group being condemned.</b>	There are numerous indications of slaves being treated with respect in a way which implies the ultimate abolition of slavery.	There are numerous indications of women being treated with respect in a way which implies the ultimate liberation of women.
<b>4. Practising Homosexuals are excluded from the groups the NT teaches are equal in Christ.</b>	Slaves are included in the groups the NT teaches are equal in Christ. (Gal 3:28)	Women are included in the groups the NT teaches are equal in Christ. (Gal 3:28)
<b>5. Practising homosexuals are never treated with honour.</b>	Slaves are treated with honour.	Women are treated with honour.
<b>6. The NT unequivocally condemns homosexual practice.</b>	Paul’s treatment of Onesimus implicitly undermines slavery.	Jesus’ and Paul’s treatment of women implicitly undermine their second class status.
<b>7. Homosexual practice is contrary to the pre-Fall creation narratives. Humans are created physiologically and emotionally for heterosexual relationships.</b>	The liberation of slaves is in harmony with pre-Fall creation narratives in that all humans are created equal.	The liberation of women is in harmony with pre-Fall creation narratives in that all humans are created equal. Male domination is introduced as a result of the Fall.
<b>8. The NT condemnation of homosexual practice is counter-cultural in the Gentile Greek world which accepted homosexual relationships, especially pederasty.</b>	The NT teaching favouring slavery was culturally-conditioned. In the purposes of God the Holy Spirit allowed this, probably because of the danger that a liberation movement would draw attention away from the gospel and lead to a blood bath.	The NT teaching favouring the second class status of women was culturally-conditioned. In the purposes of God the Holy Spirit allowed this, probably because any liberation movement would draw attention away from the gospel and lead to social chaos and accusations of immorality levelled against Christianity in its infancy.

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<sup>1</sup> Professor S H Hooke, Peake's Commentary on the Bible, Nelson, London, 1962, p.181

<sup>2</sup> Professor Gerhard von Rad, "Genesis", OT Library, SCM., London, 1963, p.90

<sup>3</sup> Derek Kidner, "Genesis", Tyndale OT Commentaries, London, 1967, p.71

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix 1

<sup>5</sup> Prof. F F Bruce, "1 and 2 Corinthians", New Century Bible, Oliphants, 1971, p.103

<sup>6</sup> David Prior, "The Message of 1 Corinthians" (Bible Speaks Today) IVP, Leicester, 1985, p.180

<sup>7</sup> John Piper & Wayne Grudem, "Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood", Crossway Books, Wheaton, Illinois, 1991, p.425f.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p.467f

<sup>9</sup> Stephen Motyer, *Evangel*, Paternoster Periodicals, Carlisle, Autumn 1994, pp.91.

<sup>10</sup> Bruce, op.cit. p.106f.

<sup>11</sup> Prior, op. cit., p. 180

<sup>12</sup> Prof. Chas. H Talbert, "Reading Corinthians" SPCK, 1987, p.67 points out that "...A shaven head was a sign of a woman's humiliation and mourning (e.g., Deut 21:12-13)... Jewish women appeared in public only with their heads covered... Evidence for non-Jewish practice is debated. The practice of veiling was Oriental but reached as far west as Tarsus (Dio Chrysostom 33, 46). The evidence for Greek women is not clear-cut. Some data suggests that respectable Greek women also wore a head covering in public... but it is far from compelling. Where the head covering was worn, it appears to have been a social symbol attesting one's femaleness. On the other hand, some have suggested that the term should be translated, 'with unbound hair'... In a Jewish context, for a woman to go out with her hair unbound was regarded as the first step to adultery (m Ketuboth 7:6; cf. Num 5:18 LXX; Jth 10:3; 16:8)... In a pagan milieu, the sight of dishevelled hair was connected with the worship of Oriental deities... Wearing the hair up on the head, then, symbolised responsible dignity. Which of these two readings is more probable? The linguistic evidence favours the former. The major argument for the latter is v.15 which refers to long hair. This need not be taken in a way that runs counter to the linguistic evidence..."

<sup>13</sup> Antoinette Clark Wire, "The Corinthian Women Prophets", Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1990, p.117.

<sup>14</sup> Wire, op.cit., p.121.

<sup>15</sup> Beware the paraphrases or rather loose translations of Scripture like the following: *Living Bible* v.5 "**for her covering is a sign of her subjection to him**" v.10 "a woman should wear a covering on her head **as a sign that she is under man's authority.**" *Good News Bible* v.10 "On account of the angels then a woman should have a covering over her head **to show that she is under her husband's authority.**" *Amplified Bible* v.10 "Therefore she should (**be subject to his authority and should**) have a covering on her head (**as a token, a symbol of her submission to authority.**" NB: None of the words emphasised are in the biblical text.

<sup>16</sup> Bruce, 1 and 2 Corinthians, op.cit., p.135

<sup>17</sup> Dr. Margaret E Thrall, "I and II Corinthians" Cambridge Bible Commentary, 1965 p.102

<sup>18</sup> Prior, op.cit., p.252

<sup>19</sup> Talbert, op.cit., p.91 comments on 1 Cor.14:35ff:

"(14:34-40)... (vv.34-35)... Two things stand out about these words. First, they reflect the general cultural values: (a) Livy's account of a speech by the consul Cato against Roman women has Cato ask: 'Could you not have asked your husband the same thing at home?' (34:1-8); (b) Juvenal speaks disparagingly of a woman who boldly rushes around the whole city intruding on the councils of men, and talks down leaders in military clothes, in front of her husband (Satires 6); (c) Philo says, 'The husband seems competent to transmit knowledge of the laws to his wife'; (d) Josephus says, 'The woman, says the Law, is in all things inferior to the man. Let her accordingly be submissive ... that she may be directed, for the authority has been given by God to the man' (Against Apion 2.201). Second, the position taken in vv.34-35 runs counter to that taken by Paul elsewhere; (a) Gal 3:27-28, ... (b) 1 Cor.11-5, ... 11-12 ...

"...later interpolation ... frequently been suggested... On the other hand, the discordant note may be regarded as the position of Paul's opponents, cited by the apostle before his refutation. This has, of late, also been suggested for vv. 34-35."

<sup>20</sup> Beware: *Living Bible* v.34 "Women should be silent during church meetings. **They are not allowed to take part in the discussion.**" v.35 "... "It is improper for women **to express their opinions** in church meetings. " *Amplified Bible*: v.35 "... (**that is for her to usurp and exercise authority over men in the church.**" NB: None of the words emphasised is in Scripture.

<sup>21</sup> Thomas D. Lea and H P Griffin, *The New American Commentary*, "1,2 Timothy, Titus", Broadman, Nashville, 1992, p.94 add: "... The heavy emphasis in the Pastorals on proper doctrine (1 Tim.1:10; 4:6,13,16; 6:1,3; 'didaskalia') implies the need for a trusted source of doctrine. The fact that Paul next discussed the elder/overseer (3:1-7) who needed to be 'able to teach' may have indicated that he viewed the occupant of the position as the official declarer of doctrine. Doubtless, the immediate occasion for Paul's prohibition against teaching by the Ephesian women was due to their gullibility and instability (1 Tim.3:6-7)...."

"Second, Paul did not permit a woman to 'have authority over' a man. This rare word (authenteo) occurs here only in the New Testament, and its meaning is greatly disputed. The best evidence suggests that it refers to the authority a teacher has over those who are learning."

<sup>22</sup> Dr B S Easton, "The Pastoral Epistles", SCM, London, 1947, p.129

<sup>23</sup> Dr. J H Bernard, "The Pastoral Epistles", CUP, 1899, p.49

<sup>24</sup> Robert Falconer, "The Pastoral Epistles", Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1937, p. 131

<sup>25</sup> Prof. A T Hanson, "The Pastoral Epistles", *The New Century Bible Commentary*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1982, p. 71

<sup>26</sup> Thomas D. Lea and H P Griffin, *The New American Commentary*, "1,2 Timothy, Titus", Broadman, Nashville, 1992, p.94

<sup>27</sup> Prof. W Lock, "The Pastoral Epistles", *International Critical Commentary*, A & C Clark, Edinburgh, 1936, p.32

<sup>28</sup> Prof. J L Houlden "The Pastoral Epistles", SCM, London, 1989, p.71

<sup>29</sup> Dr. A R Leaney, "The Epistles to Timothy, Titus and Philemon", SCM, London, 1960, p. 54 comments on v.15: "It is frequently overlooked that woman's subjection to man (as distinct from subordination), far from being part of the divine intention, is

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according to the biblical myth a result of mankind's fall, to which is also assigned the cause of pain and danger in childbirth (Gen.3:16). The present verse is therefore surprising, and has given rise to the view that 'the childbearing' refers to Mary's bearing of the Saviour, thus reversing the influence of Eve on man's status. Had such an interpretation been intended it would have been given clearer grounds...."

<sup>30</sup> Prof. E F Scott, "The Pastoral Epistles", Moffat NT Commentaries, Hodder, London, 1947, p.26

<sup>31</sup> The following passages address only the brothers (not the sisters). If taken absolutely literally they would apply only to male Christians, which is ludicrous. This list proves beyond doubt that when the NT uses the masculine in this general way it includes the feminine. So no argument against the leadership of women can be induced from such usage. After all, are only the brothers: to give charity (Acts 11:29); to be visited by Paul (Rom 1:13; 1 Cor 2:1); free from law (Rom 7:1, 4; Rom 8:12); predestined, loved, chosen and sanctified by God (Rom 8:29; 1 Thess 1:4); to know God's purpose for Israel (Rom 11:25); a spiritual sacrifice (Rom 12:2); to pray for leaders (Rom 15:30; 1 Thess 5:25; 2 Thess 3:1); to avoid division (Rom 16:17; 1 Cor 1:10; 2 Cor 13:11); responsible to God (1 Cor 7:24); guilty of offending weaker believers (1 Cor 8:12); to be loving at Communion (1 Cor 11:33); to be taught about spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:1; 14:6, 20, 26, 39); preached to by the apostles (1 Cor 15:1); to be taught about the resurrection (1 Cor 15:50; 1 Thess 4:13); to give themselves to the work (1 Cor 15:58); to aim for perfection (2 Cor 13:11); children of promise (Gal 4:31; 5:11, 13); to restore sinners (Gal 6:1; James 5:19); to experience the grace of Christ (Gal 6:18); to receive peace, love and faith from God (Eph 6:23); to rejoice in the Lord (Php 3:1); to follow apostolic example (Php 3:17); loved and encouraged by the apostles (Php 4:1; 1 Thess 2:17); to think on higher things (Php 4:8); holy and faithful (Col 1:2); suffering for Christ (1 Thess 2:14); exercising faith (1 Thess 3:7); taught to please God (1 Thess 4:1); loving fellow-believers (1 Thess 4:10; Heb 13:1; 1 Peter 1:22; 3:8; 1 John 3:14); to be taught about the second coming (1 Thess 5:1, 4; 2 Thess 2:1); to respect those over them (1 Thess 5:12); to encourage fellow-believers (1 Thess 5:14); to have 1 Thess read to them (1 Thess 5:27); increasing in faith and love (2 Thess 1:3); standing firm (2 Thess 2:15); to avoid the idle (2 Thess 3:6); not to tire in doing right (2 Thess 3:13); to be warned about false teaching (1 Tim 4:6); to fix their eyes upon Jesus (Heb 3:1); to avoid apostasy (Heb 3:12); to enter God's presence confidently (Heb 10:19); to receive the message of Hebrews (Heb 13:22); to rejoice in tribulation (James 1:2); to avoid being deceived about God (James 1:16); to avoid hasty anger but to show patience (James 1:19; 5:7); to avoid favouritism (James 2:1); to avoid wrong use of the tongue (James 3:10, 12); to avoid slander (James 4:11); to avoid grumbling (James 5:9); to avoid superficial oaths (James 5:12); facing suffering and hatred (1 Peter 5:9; 1 John 3:13; Rev 6:11); to make their calling and election sure (2 Peter 1:10); to sacrifice (1 John 3:16); accused by Satan (Rev 12:10)?

<sup>32</sup> Prof. James D G Dunn, Word Biblical Commentary, Romans 9-16, Word, Dallas, 1988. p.894. His full comment is: "*Iouinian* has usually been taken in the modern period as ...Junias, a contraction of Junianus (so RSV, NEB, NIV, NJB). But the simple fact is that the masculine form has been found nowhere else, and the name is more naturally taken as ... Junia (Lampe 139-40, 147 indicates over 250 examples of 'Junia', none of Junias), as was taken for granted by the patristic commentators, and indeed up to the Middle Ages. The assumption that it must be male is a striking indictment of male presumption regarding the character and structure of earliest Christianity ... The most natural way to read the two names within the phrase is as husband and wife (cf v 3). ... "The straightforward description 'the apostles' (contrast 2 Cor 8:23 and Phil 2:25), and the following clause, together strongly suggest that Andronicus and Junia belonged to the large group (larger than the twelve) of those appointed apostles by the risen Christ in 1 Cor 15:7 ... That is, they belonged most probably to the closed group of apostles appointed directly by the risen Christ in a limited period following his resurrection... This would give Andronicus and Junia a higher status in the eyes of Paul and of others - higher than the '(false) apostles' of 2 Cor 11:13 or the later wandering apostles = missionaries of Did.11.4-6 (the implication of Acts 14:4 is that Barnabas and Paul were 'apostles' of a lower significance = 'missionaries of Antioch,' than 'the apostles' = the twelve [Acts 1:21-26; 2:37,42; 6:2,6], and would include Andronicus and Junia within the select group of 'premier' apostles (Eph 2:20, along with Barnabas (Gal 2:9; 1 Cor 9:5-6) and probably Silvanus (1 Thess 2:6-7)... We may firmly conclude, however, that one of the foundation apostles of Christianity was a woman and wife."

<sup>33</sup> John Ziesler, "Paul's Letter to the Romans" SCM, London, 1989 p.351f

<sup>34</sup> Prof. James R Edwards, "Romans", New International Biblical Commentary, Hendrickson, Peabody, 1992. p.355

<sup>35</sup> Prof. C E B Cranfield, "The Epistle to the Romans", International Critical Commentary, A & C Clark, Edinburgh, 1979. p.788f

<sup>36</sup> Leon Morris comments : "The Epistle to the Romans", Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1988, p. 533f

<sup>37</sup> Prof. Roy A Harrisville, "Romans", Augsburg Commentary on the NT., Augsburg, Minneapolis, 1980 p. 251.

<sup>38</sup> See note 38 above.

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