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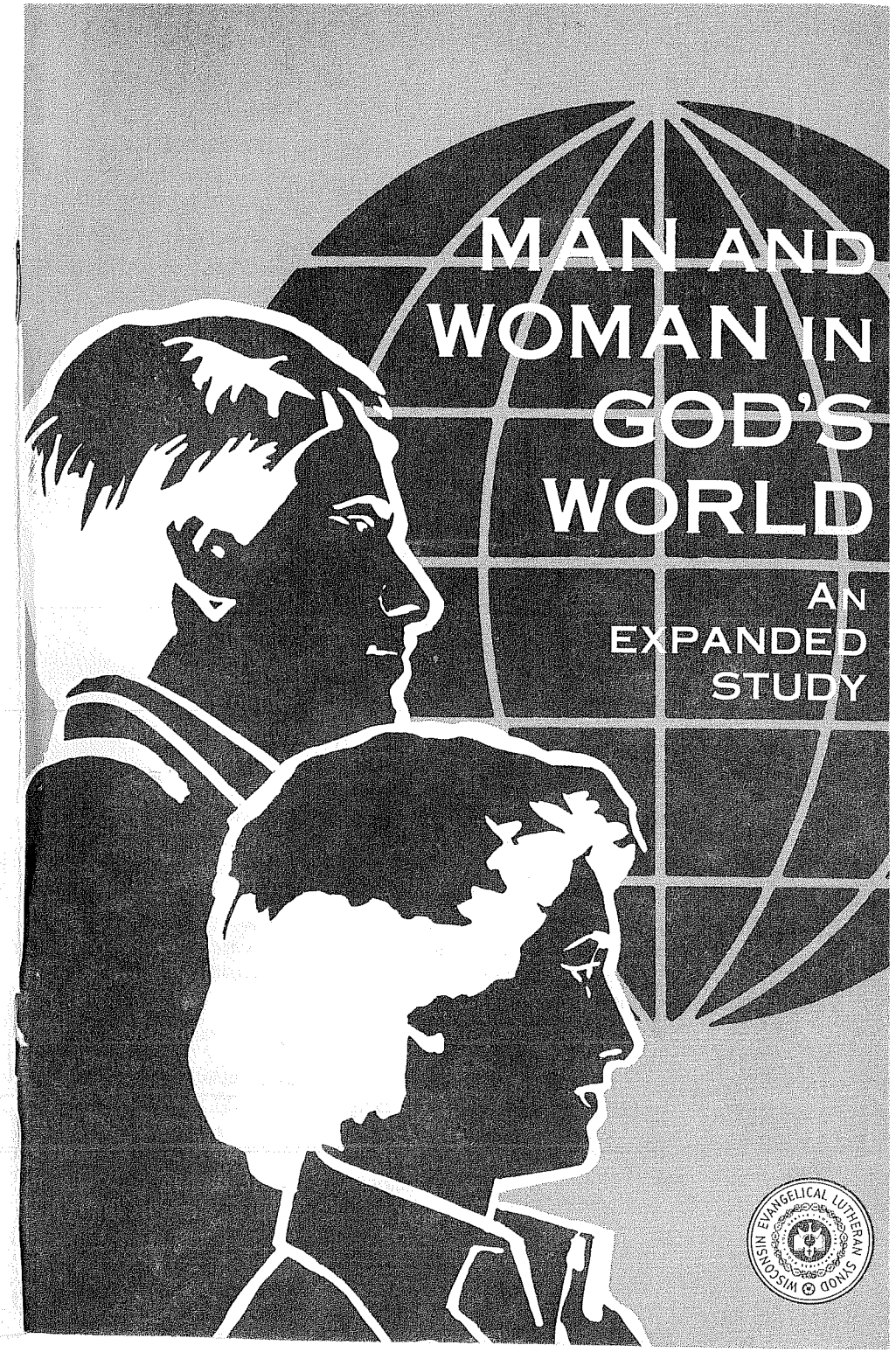

MAN AND WOMAN IN GOD'S WORLD

AN EXPANDED STUDY

Prepared under the auspices
of the Conference of Presidents
of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

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FOREWORD

At the direction of synod the Conference of Presidents appointed a committee to prepare a pamphlet on the role of man and woman according to Holy Scripture. The resolution specified that it be done in readily understood language. In response to this directive *Man and Woman in God's World* was prepared and released in 1985.

In the early stages of its work the committee resolved, however, that it would also prepare an additional booklet that would be of special interest to those who wish to do more intensive study in this area. This expanded work is herewith offered to the members of the synod by the Conference of Presidents.

1. THE ROLE OF MAN AND WOMAN IN GENESIS

Genesis 1 and 2

Chapters one and two of Genesis give us God's account of his creation of the world. These chapters view from two separate perspectives God's one act of creation. In this account God introduces us to two real human beings and defines their relationship to each other.

The creation account offers three noteworthy evidences that God established a role relationship between the first man and the first woman. As the first evidence we note that God created Adam *first* (2:7,22). It was not that God was uncertain whether or not he was going to create a woman; nor was woman's creation any kind of afterthought on God's part. God's original design was to create the human race as male and female. Yet it is significant that God created the man first. St. Paul reaffirmed the significance of this sequence, "For Adam was formed first, then Eve" (1 Timothy 2:13).

Second, the woman was made *for* the man (2:18). The Genesis account does not make any corresponding statement that the man was then made for the woman. Indeed he was created before and apart from her. He would have offered his help and service willingly and joyfully. Yet the text reveals only that she was made to be a helper for the man. Again St. Paul saw this as a noteworthy fact; he wrote, "Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man" (1 Corinthians 11:9).

Third, God made the woman *from* the man. Moses wrote, "The LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground" (2:7). But God did not create woman from the dust of the ground. "He took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man" (2:21,22). This difference in the manner of God's creation of man and woman was also used by St. Paul in the New Testament as a basis for making application of the man/woman role relationship. He was referring to Genesis 2 when he wrote, "For man did not come from woman, but woman from man" (1 Corinthians 11:8).

God repeatedly pronounced that his newly created world and everything in it were good. Yet as long as the man was alone, his

situation was not good. The Lord announced his solution for man's problem, "I will make a helper suitable for him" (2:18).

The woman created by God corresponded to Adam's needs and alleviated his loneliness. She was a suitable helper even as God is when he graciously helps his people and as military leaders were in the Old Testament when they gave support to their allies. The woman's function of offering help and support, however, was consummated in her very creation. She was created to be a helper for man. Her greatest satisfaction and fulfillment lay in offering support and help to the man for whom she was created.

God created Adam to be the head. St. Paul's words in the New Testament explain the relationship of the first man to the first woman: "The head of the woman is man" (1 Corinthians 11:3). God designed man's headship for loving leadership and service in the woman's behalf. Created in God's image the man naturally carried out this role. The law of love was the only guide he needed. The New Testament states that this role of headship, when carried out in marriage, is to be exercised in the spirit of and according to the example of our Lord Jesus who used his headship position for loving us and giving himself up for us (cf. Ephesians 5:25). In God's perfect world the man also used his place as head in that kind of serving love. We call Adam's role a headship role.

The Hebrew word used in this verse (*EZER* translated "helper") appears in its various forms 122 times in the Old Testament. The word has the root meaning "to help" or "to assist." A helper would supply something necessary for someone else by giving that person help and support.

In half of these instances the word is used in connection with God to tell us God assists and helps people. We find the word used with God's name primarily in the poetic portions of Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings, as well as in those books of the Old Testament that are nearly all poetic in form — Job, Isaiah, Jeremiah and most notably Psalms.

To read those passages that say God is our helper is a rewarding devotional exercise.

"Blessed are you, O Israel!
Who is like you,
a people saved by the LORD?
He is your shield and *helper*
and your glorious sword" (Deuteronomy 33:29).

"But you, O God, do see trouble and grief;
you consider it to take it in hand.
The victim commits himself to you;
you are the *helper* of the fatherless" (Psalm 10:14).

"I lift up my eyes to the hills —
where does my *help* come from
My *help* comes from the LORD
the Maker of heaven and earth" (Psalm 121:1,2).

These passages and others like them paint a dramatic and comforting picture of God. He is a being vastly superior to the creatures with which he has peopled the earth. He could very well have remained unconcerned about them (cf. Psalm 8:4). Yet he is eager to serve their every need as they live under him as his children. He is not a God who feels or exhibits a cold indifference to his universe. This God graces the world he has created with his continual love and blessing.

The word "helper" in the Bible also describes human helpers, most often in a military context. Joshua encouraged the tribes of Gad, Reuben and half of Manasseh to cross the Jordan River and help their fellow Israelites complete the conquest of Canaan. "Remember the command that Moses the servant of the LORD gave you: 'The LORD your God is giving you rest and has granted you this land.' Your wives, your children and your livestock may stay in the land that Moses gave you east of the Jordan, but all your fighting men, fully armed, must cross over ahead of your brothers. You are to *help* your brothers" (Joshua 1:13,14).

First Chronicles 12 lists the contingent of men who came to David at Ziklag and "*helped* him in battle" (v 1). Second Chronicles 28:16 reports, "At that time King Ahaz sent to the king of Assyria for *help*." When this Hebrew word is used in passages that talk about military assistance, it is often translated as "protect," "protector" or "ally."

Linguistics and philology help us understand the broad use of the Hebrew terms "help" and "helper." These terms in themselves do not imply a difference in rank. Nor for that matter does the common Hebrew verb "make" in the phrase, "make a helper suitable for him," imply such a difference. The words show that the woman's function was to support and help the man. After her creation "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good" (Genesis 1:31).

God gives additional information about how he dealt with the first man and woman and what their relationship was to each other. "The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the LORD God commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die' " (Genesis 2:15-17). God revealed his will for the man's life and work in the garden to the man before he created the woman. After he created the woman, God also favored her with useful and satisfying work. "God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; 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' " (Genesis 1:28). The command regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil God gave first to the man. We do not know whether Adam relayed God's will to Eve or whether God himself told her. Either way she knew the command applied to her as well as to Adam.

God created both the man and the woman in his image. Both the man and the woman were made in the state of perfect sinlessness; they knew God's will for their lives and wholeheartedly approved of it. God designed each to fill a unique role for the benefit of the other as they lived together under him as his dear children.

The man expressed profound joy when he saw the woman whom God had created especially for him. He said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man" (Genesis 2:23). His joy arose from seeing this helper who was made for his every need. The Lord had led the man to feel this need himself. The woman was made to supply all he knew was missing in a way that no other of God's good creatures could do. This was the one! Now he had a suitable helper. In his poem of praise Adam recognized at once the interrelationship and interdependence

of the two of them. He recognized that her entry into God's world was through him. The statement, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27) must be understood as a summary statement of the narrative that follows in the second chapter.

The creation account not only relates the history of two human beings. It also teaches that the relationship established between the man and the woman carries implications and offers applications for all human beings who were destined to come into the world after them. Five factors lead to this important conclusion. First, the creation of the man and the woman is revealed to us in the broader context of the creation of all things. The entire account sets a basis for all the world's history that is to follow. Whatever exists in our world today was either created by God initially in those six days or directly descends and results from God's initial creative design. The sun, moon and stars were created to "serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years" (Genesis 1:14); they continue to serve that function in God's world today. The creative word of God determined that all vegetation and trees bearing fruit and all creatures that move through the air or in the water or on the land were to reproduce "according to their kinds" (Genesis 1:11,21,24); the descendants of those original plants and animals follow these same patterns today.

Second, God created the man and the woman "male and female." These were the only two sexes God designed. Every human being thereafter bears the characteristics of one of these two sexes. What we learn about "male and female" from the creation of the first two human beings carries implications for all other men and women in the future.

Third, the name "Adam" is not only the proper name by which we refer to that specific individual. It is also a class name for all human beings. It could, in an appropriate context, be translated as "the human race," or "humanity." It is noteworthy that this word includes all the human race, male and female, in a passage such as Genesis 5:1,2, "When God created man (Adam), he made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female and blessed them. And when they were created, he called them 'man' (Adam)."

Fourth, the name that the first man gave his "suitable helper" was not a proper name for her as an individual. "Woman" is a generic and

descriptive name for the entire female part of the human race. The name "woman" shows that throughout the world's forthcoming history man and woman would draw their strength and help from each other and their lives would be forever bound up with one another. St. Paul later remarks on that truth, "In the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman" (1 Corinthians 11:11). The man later gave this woman the personal name, "Eve" (Genesis 3:20).

Fifth, the Lord's words in Genesis 2:24 clearly demonstrate that this man and this woman were the first in a long line and that descendants would follow in their footsteps. The first man and woman were not created *in* marriage, but *for* marriage. They could not know from personal experience what it meant to "leave father and mother." But Jesus, commenting in Matthew 19:5, reports that the Creator has said, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." The Creator has determined and pronounced that there will be many such unions made up of one man and one woman. Each of these unions gains direction from this first union.

For these reasons we believe Adam and Eve were representatives of all men and women who would follow them. The applications and implications in their relationship have meaning for all men and women who have come after them.

Genesis 1 and 2 speak not only to those men and women who have entered into the agreement of marriage. The Genesis text makes a clear division between the creation of the woman and her subsequent marriage to the first man. Jesus reaffirms that division in Matthew 19:4-6. Men and women retain their unique blessings and roles in life before and apart from marriage. Asking such questions as, "What if the first man and first woman had not married?" or "What if there had been other women from whom the first man could choose a wife?" only direct our attention away from what the text does say.

Genesis 1 and 2 also indicate that a headship principle existed. We reject the idea that such a principle is not a part of God's original creative design but appears only as a response to and a consequence of the fall into sin.

We prefer not to use the terms "submission" and "subordination" to define the man/woman relationship taught in Genesis 1 and 2. We are not reluctant to use these terms because we are unsure whether a headship principle existed; the wider context of Scripture assures us that this principle does exist. God's will for men and women has been one and unchanging. His will has remained constant as he has dealt with the world in justice and mercy.

We note that Scripture begins to use a word such as "submission" only when it restates and applies the principles of Genesis 1 and 2 to men and women who have become tainted by sin and are living in a sinful world. We have chosen to remain as close as possible to the words that the Bible uses in these first two chapters of Genesis. We prefer to leave the discussion of additional biblical terms and their meaning until they appear in their New Testament contexts.

We also note that the terms "submission" and "subordination" speak only about the God-given role of women toward men. They do not present the complete picture of the God-given role and responsibility of men toward women. Genesis 1 and 2, however, offer a clear and balanced picture of the man in his role as *head* and the woman in her function as *helper*. To keep this same balance for God's people today we have chosen to retain those words wherever possible.

Genesis 3

Only certain portions of the account of mankind's fall into sin are pertinent to this discussion. The statements of Genesis 3 that apply to the relationship between men and women now affected by sin constitute a restatement of the principles established in Genesis 1 and 2.

God came walking in the garden to confront his first two human creatures with their sins. He addressed his first question to the man, even though Satan had tempted the woman. St. Paul writes, "Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner" (1 Timothy 2:14). Yet God placed the initial burden of responsibility and accountability on the man. God looked for a full confession of guilt from the man. Only after the man tried to pass his guilt on to the woman did God direct his question to her, "What is this you have done?" St. Paul by way of further explanation writes, "Sin

entered the world through one man . . . By the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man" (Romans 5:12,17).

The center of attention for this discussion is verses 16-19. God had granted the woman the unique blessing of being able to bear children. The chastisement that God announced to the woman because of sin struck at the very ability and blessing that most distinguishes a woman's sexuality. She would continue to have the blessing of giving birth, but that blessing would now be frustrated, saddened and even endangered as a consequence of sin. Despite the pain and the danger of childbearing, the woman's desire would be for and toward her man, "and he will rule over you."

The word translated "rule" occurs over eighty times in the Old Testament. It is used most often to describe a king's relationship with his subjects or the king's ruling activity on their behalf. Lexicons offer "tyrant" as one possible translation of this word. Yet there is no evidence, as we meet this word in the Old Testament, that the ruling relationship or activity is necessarily harsh or cruel. Even in those contexts in which a cruel kind of ruling is described, the cruelty is to be understood from other words in the phrase or in the broader context rather than from the word itself.

Based on the previous discussion of Genesis 1 and 2, the phrase, "and he will rule over you," does not introduce a headship principle that had not previously existed. That relationship was already there. The phrase is a restatement of the principle previously expressed in Genesis 1 and 2. As long as the man and the woman remained in a state of perfection, this rule was not perceived by the woman as oppressive, excessive or physically abusive. Nor was the rule used by the man as a license to dominate the woman.

But the phrase is preceded by God's announcement of the consequences that fell on the woman because of her sin, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children" (v 16). The phrase, "and he will rule over you," is also followed by the list of chastisements that God would impose on the man as result of sin. God had intended man's ruling headship to be pure blessing. But now because of sin man in many instances abuses his role. He uses his often superior physical strength to dominate, overpower and control the woman. Because of sin the woman in

many instances now shows resentment, frustration and anger even when the man exercises his headship properly.

The Lord said to Adam, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it' " (v 17). God's primary intention was to rebuke Adam's willingness to follow his wife's advice *because her advice was to do something sinful.* It was wrong for Adam to follow his wife because the suggestion she made was contrary to God's will. God's secondary intention was to rebuke Adam *because he was wrong to relinquish his position as head* when he was faced with a situation that demanded leadership. Regardless of the situation the initiative and the leadership ought to have come from him. This implied a previously understood role relationship between the first man and the first woman. Again speculations such as, "What would Adam have done if the woman had made a God-pleasing suggestion?" or, "What would have happened if Adam had not followed the woman's suggestion to eat the fruit?" or, "What if Adam had been the one tempted and Eve had been in a position to offer a correct rebuke?" are not helpful in learning the meaning of the text.

The list of sin's consequences and chastisements in verses 17-19 do not relate directly to this discussion. In passing, however, it can be said that just as God had inflicted a chastisement on the woman in the very area of life that most clearly illustrated her special female gifts, so God also imposed chastisements on the man that strike at the very heart of his being and station. God had put the man in the garden to work it and care for it. Banished from the garden the man found his once satisfying and useful work was now frustrated by painful labor. Thorns infested the ground, and he had to earn his food by the sweat of his brow. The headship over the world which had been given to both the man and the woman (Genesis 1:28) would now be greatly curtailed. Dr. Martin Luther calls it a "mock sovereignty." What was even more tragic and brutal, both the man and the woman would return to dust by death.

The account of Genesis 3 is historical. This chapter relates the most tragic event in the lives of two real human beings. The first man and woman are not mythical inventions, mere symoblic "Everyman" and "Everywoman." On subsequent pages of Scripture they are seen and

heard from again. The rest of God's Word treats them and leads us to see them as historical beings. (cf. Genesis 4:1,25; 5:1-15; Deuteronomy 32:38; 1 Chronicles 1:1; Job 31:33; Luke 3:38; Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:22,45; 1 Timothy 2:13,14; Jude 4).

Scripture teaches the sinful actions of these first two human beings carry consequences for the rest of the human race after them. Although God had made the first man and woman in his own image, man and woman lost that image of God through sin. The children born to them were born "in his [Adam's] own likeness, in his own image" (Genesis 5:3). Chapters four through eleven of Genesis show the sinfulness that intruded into God's world through the first two humans shattered relationships between brothers and between nations. In Romans 5 Paul shows Adam's sin had a damaging effect on all the human race. By the one man's sin a pronouncement of "guilty" has been issued over all human beings whether they feel that guilt and believe that verdict or not. We rightly sing:

All mankind fell in Adam's fall,
One common sin infects us all;
From sire to son the bane descends,
And over all the curse impends. (TLH 369:1)

God has graciously furnished a cure for sin's infection. Paul says in Romans 5 that just as the human race has been affected by the sin of the first Adam, so all men and women have been granted a verdict of "not guilty" through the perfect life and innocent death of the second Adam, the Lord Jesus. "For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! . . . Just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous" (Romans 5:15,18,19).

In addition to presenting Adam and Eve as historical figures, the Bible presents them as the representatives of the entire human race. So it is also correct when talking about the relationship between men and women to say Adam and Eve represent all men and women.

As we apply to our world the principles revealed in the first three chapters of Genesis, we need to come to grips with a simple yet often unstated truth, namely, there were only two people in the world when God established these principles. In the beginning these two human beings were the whole of society, they were all of God's church, and they became husband and wife. Human society today is far more complex; the variety of relationships in which men and women find themselves will not always be as clear nor as easily defined.

God has also given us his New Testament record where the principles written for our learning concerning the first two human beings are restated and applied to differing situations in the lives and times of New Testament people. In applying these principles today we need to exercise great care that we do not restrict God's New Testament people any more than God himself does with his unchanging will. We must be careful not to burden people with applications unless they are clearly within the biblical principles. However the principles stand and are to be applied for the entire human race for all time. A church and a people faithful to their Lord and his Word will seek to know and do their Lord's will in every moment of their lives.

2. THE ROLE OF HUSBAND AND WIFE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Ephesians 5:21-33

God has clearly defined the relationship between a man and a woman within God's gift of marriage. Many English translations, among them the *New International Version*, choose to begin this section of Scripture with verse 22 and assign this portion of God's Word a title such as, "Wives and Husbands." It is easier to understand 5:21 as a bridge that connects 5:18-20 with 5:22—6:9. The theme of 5:22—6:9 is "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ."

Everyone in general is to submit to everyone else. Under this general heading fall three areas of life in which God asks his people to submit to others — wives to husband (5:22-33), children to parents (6:1-4) and slaves to masters (6:5-9).

Paul says, "Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord." The word "submit" occurs forty-four times in the New Testament. Its basic meaning is "to arrange under" someone or something. The word appears in Greek papyri and is used to describe the affixing of one's signature under a written document. The word was carried over into the military field where soldiers were arranged under their officers or aligned in military formation. The word as such carries no negative connotation.

St. Paul makes it clear when a Christian willingly submits himself, he always does so "out of reverence for Christ." Jesus Christ and his inspired apostles have added new meaning to this word as they have to so many others. Jesus Christ and the New Testament authors have put the entire matter of rank and authority into new light. "You know that the 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 your slave — just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:25-28). Jesus himself on the night before he died provided an object lesson in submission and service. He put a towel

around his waist and washed his disciples' feet. When he had finished, he explained, "Do you understand what I have done for you? You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for this is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you" (John 13:12-15). Jesus offered his greatest demonstration of serving and submitting love when "being in very nature God, [he] 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" (Philippians 2:6-8).

St. Paul applies this Christ-taught view of submission to relationships between human beings, or, as Dr. Luther might have put it, Paul tells how people can be little Christs to one another as they live within their earthly stations. Being in Christ and living out of reverence for Christ do not abolish role relationships in the New Testament. Being in Christ and living out of reverence for Christ mean we will perceive our role relationships and we will want to live within those relationships in ways that please our Savior. We will be eager to preserve them and to presevere in them despite the ravages of sin.

Under such a subject heading, "Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ," Paul speaks to wives in their relationships to their husbands. Whenever one man in God's world "leave[s] his father and mother" and is "united to his wife" and they "become one flesh" in marriage, that man becomes her man. Whenever one woman in God's world is joined to a man, she becomes his woman. Paul writes, "Wives, submit to your husbands." But the word "submit" is again understood in new light when Paul adds the phrase, "as to the Lord." Paul compares a wife's submission to her husband with the larger and more noble picture of the church's submission to Christ.

Prompted by the new man a Chrsitian does not view his life arranged under Jesus Christ as a burdensome, ball-and-chain affair. He does not get up in the morning with the dreary complaint, "What do I have to do for Jesus today?" He knows and believes and rejoices that "Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the

Savior" (v 23). Christ is the head who gives his body direction. Christ is the Savior who provides life for his body. Without him as the head the body dies. A Christian has been brought to live under amazing grace. The Spirit of the Lord has entered his heart and conformed his will to the wishes of Jesus, his head. A Christian can willingly, truthfully, regularly sing, "What pleases God, that pleases me" (TLH 529:1). He eagerly arranges himself under Christ because he knows that's the only kind of life worth living.

Paul says to everyone, "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ." But Paul then specifically says to wives, "Submit to your husbands as to the Lord." Paul does not make any corresponding statement to husbands, such as, "Husbands, submit to your wives." Nor does Paul say to the husbands, "Make your wives submit." God wants a wife to offer a willing submission to her husband, to be moved only by love. The relationship between man and woman, established in Genesis 1 and 2, is reaffirmed and clearly defined and delineated in the marriage relationship of a husband and wife.

Paul goes to great lengths in addressing men and pointing out very clearly that the headship, rightfully theirs in marriage, offers no legitimate opportunity for brutality, chauvinism or lovelessness. Paul's word to the heads in these marriage relationships is, "Husbands, *love* your wives." Again, the very word "love" is given new meaning in the life and death of Jesus Christ, "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" (vv 25,26).

The Greek word for "love" has been variously explained as "a love that makes distinctions, choosing and keeping its object;" "a giving, acting love on the other's behalf;" "a love of intelligence and purpose;" "a love of full understanding and true comprehension, coupled with a corresponding blessed purpose." Such love is a free and decisive act determined by its subject, not by its object. This love does not love because the one loved is so lovable. This love loves because the lover is such a lover!

This love lives in the heart of God the Father. With such love the Father embraced the entire world and gave his Son for the benefit of all the world (cf. John 3:16). This love lives in the heart of God the

Son and moved him "while we were still sinners,"to die for us (cf. Romans 5:8). This love led Christ to give himself up for us "as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (cf. Ephesians 5:2). He loved us long before we ever began to love him, however feebly, in return (cf. 1 John 4:19).

Such love becomes both the power and the pattern as the man views the woman who has become his wife in marraige. Such love elected the church to be Christ's bride, yet such love would not accept such a bride as she was. Christ gave himself to make his bride acceptable to him as the groom and to his Father. This love was communicated to the bride through water connected with God's word and, in view of the sacrifice this love called forth, declared sinners not guilty and dressed them in spotless robes.

A man who loves his wife the way Christ loves the church will not want to view her as a second-class citizen. He will seek to serve her physical, emotional and spiritual needs. He will take on all the responsibility that the word "head" implies. He will strive to exercise such responsibility in a constant, self-sacrificing concern for her. Love may seldom ask a man to die for his wife, however love will call on him continually to live for her and to make the well-being of his wife and family his primary concern.

As a summary of this headship principle in marriage Paul says, "Each one of you (husbands) also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect (fear) her husband" (v 33). The same vocable for "respect" or "fear" occurs in a second New Testament passage that deals with marriage, "Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands . . . [who] see the purity and *reverence* of your lives" (1 Peter 3:1,2).

1 Peter 3:1-7

Peter wrote his first letter "to God's elect, strangers in the world" (1 Peter 1:1). In everything he wrote to them, he appealed to them "as aliens and strangers" (1 Peter 2:11). They were strangers because God called them "out of darkness into his wonderful light" (1 Peter 2:9), and because the world around them forced them "to suffer grief in all kinds of trials" (1 Peter 1:6). Peter's advice to them as they live as God's people in a society hostile to Christians was to be "self-controlled," to "set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Christ Jesus is revealed" (1 Peter 1:13), and "as obedient children, . . . not [to] conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance" (1 Peter 1:14).

Like Paul, Peter says that the key to a life of harmony among believers and the key to offering greater good in the world is to "submit yourselves" (1 Peter 2:13). Like Paul, Peter applies this general directive to the various stations of life in which God places Christains — under government, as a slave to a master and as a wife to a husband. Like Paul, Peter gives new meaning to a Christian's attitude toward submission by recalling how Christ left both example and power, "When they hurled their insults at him [Christ], he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed" (1 Peter 2:23,24). Peter recognizes a person may be treated as an alien and a stranger not only in the outside world; he may be an alien and a stranger within his own household. The nearest unbeliever may be one's own spouse. Peter's word to a wife whose husband is not a believer is, "Submit." "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 behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives" (1 Peter 3:1,2). Such purity and reverence, Peter says, would show not in the way a wife adorns herself on the outside but in the way she lives out the beauty that is on the inside (1 Peter 3:3,4). This kind of inner beauty was the pattern in Old Testament times. "For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master" (1 Peter 3:5,6).

Peter's words to husbands tell them to come with a similar deference as they approach their side of God's marriage arrangement. "Be considerate as you live with your wives" (1 Peter 3:7). That is, live with them according to knowledge, not a knowledge that merely recites a certain set of correct facts, but a personal, considerate, affectionate understanding. Peter says that the wife is the "weaker partner." The most obvious way that a wife may be weaker than her

husband is in physical strength, althought that is not true in every marriage. But physical weakness may not be the only meaning of Peter's words. The context does not lead us to insist on any particular way in which she is the "weaker partner." Even if a husband can point out ways in which he is the stronger of the two of them, God does not want him to use that superior strength as a license for abuse. God has called them equal on a different and far more important plane; both men and women are "heirs . . . of the gracious gift of life."

It is noteworthy that neither Peter nor Paul ever say to husbands, "Make your wives submit to you," and thereby assign to men a role not unlike that of a commanding officer who can point to the insignia on his shoulder and bark in a private's ear, "Salute the stars!" Nor do Peter or Paul ever say to wives, "Make your husbands the head," and thus ask women to prop up their husbands and manipulate them like puppets. Peter and Paul address wives as they are in their stations and husbands as they are in theirs. They urge husbands and wives to live with each other in love and to follow God's pattern. Such scriptural keynotes give excellent basis for the couplet:

Let each his lesson learn with care
And all the household well shall fare.

The relationships that God has defined for marriage in these New Testament passages, as well as any other relationships defined and applied in the New Testament, are not concessions to human sinfulness. We reject the opinion that had there been no fall into sin, there would be no role relationships for any of God's human creatures. Such a misconception presupposes that the picture of Christ, the bridegroom, and his bride, the church, is based on a sinful premise. Such a misconception takes a faulty view of the state of perfection, both as it was in Eden before sin and as it will be for the believers in the resurrection. Perfection does not mean the absence of role relationships. Perfection means we will accept and serve willingly in our relationships unclouded by pride and presumption or by unwarranted jealousy and resistance.

The Bible mentions no role relationships for the sexes in the resurrection. The Bible in fact rejects the notion that in the resurrection there will be marriage as we know it now (cf. Matthew 22:30).

Does the Bible teaching of degrees of glory in heaven signify greater or lesser ranks of persons in heaven? The Bible does not answer this for us. Of this we can be sure that each saint in heaven, whatever the position each may hold, will accept with joy the Lord's gracious provision and respond to it with praise and service. There will be no envy toward those whose glory may be greater from our earthly point of view nor pride toward those whose glory may not be as great.

3. MEN AND WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

1 Timothy 2:11-15

The New Testament moves toward a broader base as it speaks to the larger grouping of men and women who have been called together in Christ to be a part of his body, the church. Paul's first letter to Timothy contains a general statement regarding the roles of men and women in this broader context. Paul's pastoral letters are in many ways the most general in nature. In sum, they are a kind of textbook on pastoral theology addressed to Timothy with the command, "Carry on the work." It is true that Timothy lived in a specific place, the city of Ephesus. There were specific problems and false teachings that plagued the Christians whom Timothy served in that city. We have no warrant, however, to interject historical considerations not found in the text in such a way as to limit or misinterpret Paul's words. We need to read and understand Paul's words as he wrote them for our learning. They come to us in a clear and absolute way.

The key phrase in understanding the section 1 Timothy 2:1—3:15 is the phrase that appears in 3:14,15: "I am writing you these instructions so that . . . you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household." The vocable translated "household" means the building where a family lives. It can mean by extension the household or family that lives in a particular building. When added to the word God thus becoming "God's household" (a "spiritual house," or "the house of Israel," or "the house of Judah"), it means God's people. Paul explains the term himself with the phrase, "God's household, which is the church of the living God" (1 Timothy 3:15).

It is helpful also to understand the meaning of the word "church." The New Testament never uses "church" to refer to a building. We who rather automatically picture a structure of bricks, boards and bells when we hear that word may miss the full meaning the New Testament gives to it. The word originally meant those who have been called out. By Paul's time the word had come to mean a group or an assembly of any kind. "The church of the living God" is that group of people who have been called out of the world to be God's people.

For this reason the entire context of 1 Timothy 2:1—3:15 must be broader than what we today are likely to understand to be what people do in church or when they go to church. Instead, it is meant to be a guideline for what people do because they *are* the church. The applications and exhortations that Paul gives in this section are applicable and God-pleasing not *only* when they are done in church, but throughout a Christian's life. Men ought to pray not only in church but in every place "without anger or disputing." Women ought to "dress modestly, with decency and propriety," not only in church, but wherever they are. Those men who are called to be overseers in the assemblies of believers ought to exhibit exemplary behavior, "temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable," not only in church but in all places of their lives.

In 1 Timothy 2:11-15 Paul discusses the relationship of the men and women who make up God's church. The text offers no evidence that these words were written *only* for the women who assemble in the church at Ephesus, as if to allow that these words would not be in effect for women in other churches. The text offers no evidence that these words were addressed *only to women who were acting in a rebellious or contentious way*, as if to allow that these words would not be in effect if the women under consideration changed their behavior. The text offers no evidence that these words were written *only to women who were teaching false doctrine*, as if to allow that these words would not be applied to women whose teaching conformed to sound doctrine. These words are written about Christian women and give direction to Christian women *because they are women.*

Paul's specific application is, "I do not permit a woman to teach." These words forbid a woman to do that kind of teaching by which she exercises authority over men. Paul qualifies the phrase "to teach" with the phrase, "to have authority over a man." The teaching in question must have been of such a nature that by this act the teacher assumed authority over men. A question arises whether all kinds of teaching involve a similar authority. Let it be said that the root meaning of the vocable for "teaching" is related to the word for "master."

When a learner or disciple placed himself under a master, he was to do far more than merely accept a set of facts. The disciple walked and

talked, traveled and lived with his master. Mark's gospel account about Jesus' disciples says, "He appointed twelve — designating them apostles — that they might be with him" (Mark 3:14). A master wished to impress on his disciples every aspect of his life. It is this kind of teaching to which Paul referred.

In verse 12 we also find the vocable for "have authority." This word occurs in no other place in the New Testament. It was not a common vocable in secular Greek. Any fears, however, that the Christian church has utterly missed the basic meaning of this word and any suggestions that a new and more exotic (and erotic?) meaning of this word is more appropriate for this verse are incorrect and have been put to rest. (See, "*AUTHENTEIN* — A Word Study," by Armin J. Panning; *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, Vol. 78, No. 3.) The translation "have authority" is adequate. The translation "exercise authority" is also permissible. It is pointless to have authority without being able to exercise it; one cannot exercise authority without first having it. The KJV translation, "to usurp authority," is acceptable. It implies that a woman is acting in a role which God has not given her.

Paul's specific application, "I do not permit a woman to teach," based on the general principle, "a woman is not to have authority over a man," is grounded on two facts of biblical history. Paul writes, "For Adam was formed first, then Eve" (1 Timothy 2:13). He is recounting chronology, and chronology is the only meaning to attach to the words "first" and "then." Yet the chronology is significant. Paul under guidance of the Spirit lists the creation chronology as a reason for maintaining the headship of man principle.

Paul states a second fact of biblical history. "And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner" (1 Timothy 2:14). Paul is not laying greater blame on the woman for the fall of the human race into sin. Nor is Paul stressing that the woman sinned first. In Romans 5 Paul writes that Adam's was the first sin. Paul does not intend to offer a psychological observation to prove the average female is more susceptible to temptation than is the average man and therefore less qualified to serve the church as a teacher. We need to understand the reference in line with Paul's basic concern with order in the church in this section of Scripture.

Paul is emphasizing the different ways in which the fall into sin includes a violation of the relationship God intends for men and women. Paul, again under the inspired guidance of the Spirit, sees the fall into sin as in part a violation of God's design. This sheds greater light on God's words to Adam in the garden, "You listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' " (Genesis 3:16).

As we apply this principle of authority to our lives as members of God's household in this twentieth century, we need to remember that the New Testament has prescribed no precise form for the ministry of the word. Paul says in another place that God "gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers" (Ephesians 4:11). His words, however, are not to be considered a mandate concerning the style, the scope or the form of any specific office of the ministry of the word today. It is a mistaken assumption that because the Bible says nothing about women being parish pastors and because there was no office of the parish pastor as we know it in the first-century church, Paul's words cannot be applied to our time. Neither is it valid to make a comparison with a first-century assembly and reach the conclusion that the Bible does not speak to the situation.

It is correct to preceed as Paul does. The headship principle learned from Genesis 1 and 2 stands. The principle is that the woman is not to have authority over the man. Paul's application of the principle is, "I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man" (1 Timothy 2:12). Paul later makes a second application: an overseer and a deacon in the church is to be a man, "the husband of but one wife" (1 Timothy 3:2,12). From that starting point we need to examine present-day forms and functions of service that involve authority over a man and that have been developed in Christian freedom. We need to evaluate the specific requirements, responsibilities and functions of each of these forms of ministry. We then need to apply the general principle so women are not required in any of those forms of service to act in ways that overstep the principle.

The form of the ministry of the word as we practice it in the parish ministry today necessarily involves a position of authority, of pastor over people. In this form of ministry a parish pastor's duty to preach

the word is an authoritative exposition of God's Word for people's lives. Such authority is exercised quite naturally in congregations which are made up of both men and women. The Bible asks God's people to "obey your leaders and submit to their authority" (Hebrews 13:17; see also 1 Thessalonians 5:12,13). For that reason the principle is correctly applied when the parish ministry as we know it is limited to qualified men.

Could there be other forms of ministry developed in Christian freedom to meet the needs of Christ's people that call for women who are theologically trained? Could such other forms of ministry be carried on in the parish as we know it, but defined in such a way that they follow the principles God has designed for men and women? Many of our churches have felt a need for greater Christian service by women and to women in counseling, as women's deans, chaplains at women's institutions, and in education, evangelism and other parish work. Some churches have responded to these needs with a broader range of opportunities for women to serve in lay service programs. Congregations have demonstrated an increased sensitivity to the needs of women in their church families and have opened doors of opportunity to utilize more extensively the abilities and special gifts God has given to Christian women. As the needs of God's people increase, God's church is wise to seek more women as well as men who are willing to serve, train them to put their gifts to God-pleasing use in his kingdom and to thank him for the variety of talented men and women who can serve his church.

Paul closes this direction to Timothy with a tribute to the gift of giving birth to children (1 Timothy 2:15), a gift given only to women. This verse might well be included under the discussion of marriage. Bearing children and participating in the raising of children by God's design are intended to be done within the framework of marriage. Paul's words here, however, are best understood in their context. Some women, acting in misguided zeal, may have taken on themselves the function of teaching men. While they listen to Paul's words, they may feel thwarted. In addition a woman may feel a sense of added guilt because it was the first woman in God's world who was deceived by the devil. She may ask, "What's left for me?" Paul answers, "You will be kept safe through childbirth."

There are at least six suggested interpretations of what Paul means by those words, yet it is not necessary to reach agreement on this point to understand Paul's primary logic. The function and the blessing uniquely given to women is childbearing. There is no more distinguishing female characteristic. Far from belittling this funtion, Paul glorifies it. A woman's role may not be that she influences a man while serving in a position of authority, or, we may say, from the top down. Her avenue of influence is more personal and more direct. She can exert her Christian influence on her children in their earliest and most formative years.

We can find two more specific applications of the headship principle in the first letter Paul wrote to the Corinthians. Although this letter to the Corinthians was written earlier than his first letter to Timothy, the applications are based on the principle that is presented more generally in the first letter to Timothy.

1 Corinthians 11:3-16

In these verses we come in contact with a local custom in Corinth, namely, the covering of the woman's head. That custom held significance for those people at that time. Both pagan and Christian people in that city considered a woman with an uncovered head exhibited an unnatural and rebellious attitude toward men.

It is apparent from other parts of this letter that some Corinthian Christians had abused the gospel pronouncement that in Christ they were free. They had translated that good news into a license for their sinful flesh. They had come to believe that Christian freedom gave them the right to ignore the unchanging will of God for their lives, to trample underfoot the conscience scruples of weaker Christians and to flout local customs in front of the world. This section presents us with another example of how the Corinthians used the gospel to abuse the sensibilities of their neighbors and to ignore the will of their Lord.

Paul sets the tone in verse 3 for all that he says in the verses to follow: "The head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God." By saying this Paul emphasizes that headship is an arrangement for good order. Headship rightly understood and carried out does not ask for demeaning submission.

To suggest that headship necessarily implies superiority on the part of one person and inferiority on the part of another is to misread this part of Paul's opening statement, "The head of Christ is God." To intimate that God's headship over Christ means that God is superior and Christ is inferior is incorrect.

The word that appears here and in other places in the New Testament and is translated "head" literally means the part of a human being's or an animal's anatomy above the shoulder. When used figuratively, it has a variety of meanings. When used about persons, it means the ruler or leader. When used about things, it can stand for anything that is first, supreme or extreme. It can be the point, the top or the end. Interestingly it is used in secular Greek for both the source and the mouth of a river.

The word is used seventy-six times in the New Testament. In the vast majority of cases it is used in the literal sense. "A woman came to him [Jesus] with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on his head" (Matthew 26:7). " 'Then, Lord,' Simon Peter replied, '[do] not just [wash] my feet but my hands and my head as well!' " (John 13:9). "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I don't need you!' And the head cannot say to the feet, 'I don't need you!' " (1 Corinthians 12:21). Five times (Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; 1 Peter 2:7) Jesus is called the head of the corner, translated "cornerstone" in the KJV and "capstone" in the NIV. The cornerstone of the building was not its foundation or the level from which it originated, but it was the stone that set the plumb and the angles for the building. The capstone was the keystone in an arch above a doorway.

The word "head" is used figuratively to describe Christ, with the church as his body, in Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; 5:23 and in Colossians 1:18; 2:10; 2:19. In every reference Christ is the head who gives guidance to the body. Christ was raised to sit at the right hand of God, to share in the Father's authority, power and dominion. God placed all things under Christ's feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the benefit of the church (cf. Ephesians 1:18-23). The head, Christ, gives direction to the body as it grows up in him (cf. Ephesians 4:15). Christ is the head who loved and gave himself for his body, the church, of which he is the Savior (cf. Ephesians 5:23,25).

Christ is the head of every power and authority because he both creates and sustains them. He is the head of the church because he has redeemed it with his blood (cf. Colossians 1;16-20). Christ is the head over every power and authority (cf. Colossians 2:10). Whoever would place undue emphasis on his own humility or on the worship of angels has lost his connection with Christ, who is the head. The whole body is connected to him and is given direction by him as God causes it to grow (cf. Colossians 2:18,19).

Paul uses the word "head" nine times in this section of 1 Corinthians 11. He discusses the Corinthian custom of wearing or not wearing a covering on one's physical head. The word "head" in verses 4, 5, 7, and 10 means a person's actual head. But the second use of the word in verses 4 and 5 is metaphorical. As Paul alternates between these two uses of the word, he develops a play on words. "Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. And every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head. A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God . . . the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head." The custom about which Paul writes involves a headship that directs and gives leadership to another.

In Corinth a man by custom prayed with his head uncovered. If he prayed with his physical head covered, he dishonored his head, Christ. A woman by custom prayed with her head covered. If she prayed with her physical head uncovered, she dishonored her head, man. If a woman wanted to go so far that she wanted to pray with her physical head uncovered, she might as well make her attitude clear and shave off all her hair. That would really cause a stir! But ignoring the existing local custom which, as it happened, fell in line with God's principle regarding the man as head of the woman, was just as much an abuse. If a woman would recognize that it was a disgrace to shave her head, let her also recognize what a similar disgrace it was in that culture to pray with her head uncovered.

Beginning in verse 7 Paul provides the reasons behind his application. "[Man] is the image and glory of God, but the woman is the glory of man." Paul does not contradict the clear statement of Genesis 1:28 that both sexes had been created in God's image. Paul merely restates the remark with which he begins, namely, Christ is man's

head; man is woman's head. A man ought to do those things that will reflect favorably on and give glory to his head, Christ. A woman ought to do those things which reflect favorably on and give glory to her head, man. Why? "Man did not come from woman, but woman from man" (v 8) — a reference to creation. Again, "neither was man created for woman but woman for man" (v 9). It is significant God said that he would make a suitable helper for the man, but nowhere is there a corresponding statement that he would make the man to be a suitable helper for the woman. In verse 10 Paul sums up his application based on the headship principle: "For this reason, and because of the angels, the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head."

Beginning in verse 11 Paul reacts to possible reverse abuse. A man could misuse the foregoing statements and abuse his role of head. Paul is quick to point out that, while man is the head of woman, the relationship is not meant to be one of uncaring independence. Man's and woman's continued existence and happiness are bound up in each other. These verses reaffirm the description of the first man and first woman in Eden. Their respective roles were designed to bring blessings to both of them. Neither one ought to carry out his or her role by disregarding the other's welfare.

This portion of Scripture refers to man and woman in general, rather than to husband and wife in particular. Both of the Greek vocables here, as well as the corresponding Hebrew vocables in the Old Testament, have as their basic meanings "male human being" and "female human being." There is no specifically different word for "husband" or for "wife." These vocables can be given the more restricted meaning of "husband" and "wife" when a possessive pronoun is added, thus, "her man," hence a woman's husband, or "his woman," hence a man's wife. Also these vocables can be narrowed in meaning to "husband" or "wife" when there are compelling reasons of context to do so. There must be compelling reasons of context; it cannot be that we or any other exegetes try to make the words mean what we want them to mean. A basic principle of biblical interpretation is a word is always understood and translated in its widest possible meaning unless there are specific reasons in the context to limit its meaning.

Obviously "male human being" and "female human being" are translations that are broader than "husband" and "wife." Every husband is a male human being, but not every male human being is a husband.

The verse that perhaps has led some to believe the preferred translation should be "husband" and "wife" is verse 7: "[Man] is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man." How can one say the woman is the glory of man outside of marriage? In view of the entire context, however, Paul's statement is merely a restatement of the opening remark in verse 3 that man is the head of woman. In keeping with the principle established in Genesis 1 and 2, this phrase can be understood outside of marriage. In addition, the custom under discussion in Corinth was one that went beyond marriage. Unmarried women also followed the custom. Disregarding such a custom brought disgrace not only on married men but on all men of the community.

Furthermore, Paul's words beyond verse 7 show this reference involves more than just the marriage relationship. Verse 8, "For man did not come from woman, but woman from man," refers to the original creation of the first two human beings exclusive of their relationship as husband and wife. Verse 12, "For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman," also refers to the principle in Genesis and would make no sense if the more restrictive meanings of "husband" and "wife" were adopted.

Finally, verses 14 and 15 say, "Does not the very nature of things teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him, but that if a woman has long hair, it is her glory?" This reference also is broader than only to men and women in marriage. The "nature of things" in Corinth included unmarried men and women as well as married.

A final word needs to be said about the NIV translation of verse 16, "If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no other practice — nor do the churches of God." Such a translation implies that Paul's application concerning a woman's head covering is enforced in all the other churches he served. In effect such a translation says that if anyone wants to disagree with Paul, he would also disagree with how the matter is handled in every other congregation, because "we have no other practice — nor do the churches of God."

This translation, however, clearly mistranslates the demonstrative adjective that ought to be translated "no such." Translated correctly, the verse says, "If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have *no such* practice — nor do the churches of God." The custom about which Paul writes existed only in Corinth as far as we know. It must not have been a matter of grave concern in other parts of the Roman empire or even in other parts of Greece. In other areas and as local customs of other people were considered, to wear or not to wear a head covering may have been an indifferent issue, an adiaphoron. It was an issue in Corinth because there was a certain understanding which both pagans and Christians attached to that local custom. In Corinth a woman's action contrary to the custom was understood as a rebellion against men. In that environment God's basic principle was being overstepped.

Paul did not live in an ivory tower, nor was he interested in spinning out theoretical solutions to hypothetical problems. He was a traveling missionary and pastor. He applied the principles of the Word to those specific concerns in the life of the church when and where he faced them. When he applied the principles of the Word to real life situations, the principles and their applications were at times quite naturally intertwined. We misuse this section from 1 Corinthians if we declare that all women, living in all cultures and in all generations, must wear a headcovering when they assemble among believers. Such an understanding presupposes that there are ceremonial laws for New Testament believers. The New Testament tells us to believe the opposite: there are no New Testament ceremonial laws.

At the same time Paul bases this specific application on a general principle that does apply to all people, living in all cultures and in all generations. Today's customs may differ greatly from those in Corinth. Certain customs today may connote men are relinquishing their responsibilities of headship, rather than women are overstepping their functions as helpers. The point, however, remains. If a local, prevailing custom has at its base an attitude that falls in line with God's principle for the relationship of men and women, God wants his people to live in keeping with his principle. If a Christian's words or actions were to undo this principle, they would cause confusion and offense not only in the world but also among those Christians who

understand God's principles correctly and try to carry them out in their lives. God's principles need to be applied to the situations so that the actions of God's people are once again in line with his principles. If the customs of the unbelieving world around us are in line with God's principles, Christian men and women should not undermine them.

1 Corinthians 14:33-36

First Corinthians 11 presupposes that women can pray and prophesy. We need to bear that truth in mind when we approach chapter 14 with its apparently more restrictive injunction, "Women should remain silent in the churches. It is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church."

First Corinthians 14 is a lengthy discussion about the use of charismatic gifts in the congregation at Corinth and about the effect of those gifts when used in the assembly of believers. In fact Paul devotes three chapters to a discussion of charismatic gifts, their rightful use and their main abuse. In chapter 14 Paul is concerned with the effect the use of such gifts has on the orderliness of the congregation. He upholds another general principle of the Lord: "God is not a God of disorder but of peace. Everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way" (14:33,40).

Paul describes a worship setting that in many ways does not bear a close resemblance to our structured, more liturgical forms of worship. This is clear from the words, "When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation" (1 Corinthians 14:26). Paul does not want to squelch this form of worship as long as it can be put in line with the general principle of orderliness. Paul's words are a guide for bringing orderliness to their actions. "All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church. If anyone speaks in a tongue, two — or at the most three — should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God. Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed

and encouraged. The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets" (1 Corinthians 14:26-32). Then Paul restates the principle to show everything he suggests is appropriate, "For God is not a God of disorder but of peace" (v 33).

Modern translations disagree whether the second half of verse 33, "as in all the congregations of the saints," ought to be included with the preceding paragraph or whether it should mark the beginning of the upcoming paragraph. In either case the phrase serves as a bridge to connect the thoughts just spelled out with the thoughts that are coming. In the following paragraph too the issue is orderliness in the assembly. In both the preceding and the following paragraphs God's desire for orderliness is upheld as something to be carried on in all the churches. In this congregation as well as in any other congregation where such conditions prevail, both the principle of orderliness and the principle of headship could be overstepped. Paul seeks to correct that with the statement: "Women should remain silent in the churches" (v 34).

Paul uses a more restrictive term here, "remain silent," than he does in 1 Timothy 2:11, "learn in quietness." In addition Paul here follows that first restrictive clause with a second: "They are not allowed to speak" (v 34). He directs that women's discussion and questions be carried on in another setting. "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" (v 35).

The command not to speak is more absolute, and the vocable for "remaining silent" is more restrictive than Paul's words in 1 Timothy 2. Yet it is also clear this prohibition is confined to a more specific context, "in the church." Again, we do not understand by the word "church" a building or a piece of real estate but the gathering of the believers in an assembly. In the context of 1 Corinthians 14 this is the assembly as it gathers to worship and be edified. God often encourages all his people, as universal priests, to pray, to sing, to share the gospel, to build up and to support each other. We cannot maintain that this verse in contradiction to the rest of the Bible forbids all speaking by every woman within the setting of the assembled church.

The context suggest what kinds of speaking are forbidden, namely, the very prophesying and interpreting that Paul has just detailed in

verses 29-33. The activity of speaking a message from God in front of men and women, as well as giving a judgment on the meaning of those words for men and women, would overstep the principle. Therefore Paul stresses, "[Women] must be in submission, as the Law says" (v 34). When this principle has been violated, Christian men and women still seek to reorder their actions so that the disgrace is removed. Paul suggests a proper method in this situation: "If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home" (v 35). The translation might better read "their own men." Following that course of action would promote the God-pleasing purpose of having women learn more from the Word and grow in their faith. Following that course of action would maintain God's principle in the assembled church.

What "Law" is Paul referring to when he states, "[Women] must be in submission, as the Law says" (v 34)? It is helpful, first of all, to see that Paul uses the word *NOMOS* rather than *ENTOLAY*. An *ENTOLAY* is a specific injunction or commandment, a you shall or a you shall not. An *ENTOLAY* is what we are most likely to understand when we hear the word "law" in contrast to the "gospel," or when we think of the Ten Commandments as the summary of the "law." But Paul uses *NOMOS*, the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew *TORAH*. The *TORAH* was not only the you shall's and the you shall not's. It was the specific name for the first five books of the Old Testament, as Jesus mentions them in Luke 24:44, "the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." The Torah includes both law and gospel as well as all the historical portions of the Pentateuch, including Genesis 1—3.

If we look for a specific commandment that says, "You shall keep your women in subjection," we won't find it. One might be drawn to Genesis 3:16: "To the women he [God] said, 'I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be to your husband, and he will rule over you." To assume that Paul only means Genesis 3:16 when he refers to "the Law" in verse 34 presents a problem. A reference to Genesis 3 would force one to limit the understanding of this section from 1 Corinthians to include only husbands and wives, because God in Genesis 3:16 spoke to Eve rather specifically as Adam's wife. Paul's remarks in this

section, however, cover a broader spectrum than only those women who are married. It is not only married women whose disorderly speaking brings the disgrace Paul mentions. Even unmarried women could ask "their own men." They could have spokesmen who could listen and speak on their behalf if the Lord had given them no husband.

It is better to understand Paul's reference to "the Law" to include all portions of the Torah that set the principles for male/female relationships, especially Genesis 2. To understand this as a reference to those sections of Genesis 1—3 gives Paul's application in this section from 1 Corinthians the broadest application, by covering all men and women in the assembly, which is Paul's intention.

Are Paul's words here to be confined to this particular congregation in Corinth? It is true that the congregation had deep-seated problems. The cancer causing many of its problems was a contentious spirit which led some members of the church to be unwilling to submit themselves to each other and to their leaders for the good of their fellow Christians. It is further true that the answer Paul gives is a specific application of the principle to that particular situation. Not every church situation in every culture at every time will be directly comparable to this situation in first century Corinth.

The entire application, however, including its restatement of the principle that "women should remain silent in the churches," is an application not only for that congregation. Paul's statements: "Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission. It is disgraceful for a woman to speak in church," are not qualified by any phrase that says these women are doing something with a contentious spirit. They do not imply that if such a contentious spirit is removed, they could carry on in their actions. Instead, Paul says such actions are in violation of the principle in such a situation, the assembly of men and women, because women are doing the speaking. That applies to us also.

The statement, "as the Law says," carries us back to the basic relationship model for men and women in all of God's world. This word does not speak about how women are doing something. It speaks to men and women because they are men and women and because God wants his church to offer a clear example of the headship principle in this world.

Paul seems to anticipate the objections of many twentieth-century readers that his words do not apply to our time. He flanks his words in these verses on both sides with statements that assure his authority as an apostle and his words as the inspired words of God. With his phrase, "as in all the congregations of the saints," he is applying an all-inclusive principle. Following these words Paul writes, "Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached?" It is not the prerogative of people to fit the word to their whims. This same word of God is the word that directs all other congregations. Because other congregations may have different circumstances or problems it is possible that the word can be applied to their situations in different ways. Yet this same word is the guide for all.

Paul also writes in verses 37 and 38, "If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command. If he ignores this, he himself will be ignored." The gift of real spiritual discernment, Paul says, lies in a person's acceptance of the foregoing words and principles as the Lord's command, not as man's words and not as the suppositions of a human being groping for the truth. These words convey the stated will of the Lord. Paul, as he writes these words, is being carried along by the Lord's Spirit. The ability to accept his words as God-breathed is also a Spirit-given gift.

It may be appropriate at this point to discuss other aspects of the relationship of men and women within the assembled church. There is no direct parallel between the forms of the ministry in the first-century church and the form of the parish ministry today. It has also been said that there is no direct parallel between the assembly of the first-century church and the many ways in which God's people assemble today, among them the congregational voters' assembly. Admittedly there may be differences of structure and polity. Yet the first-century assembly and the twentieth-century assembly exhibit many similarities. In both assemblies men and women may be present. Among those men and women present there are some men and women who have been joined together as husband and wife. There are other men and women who are not married or whose spouses are not a part of the church. In both the first-century and the

twentieth-century assemblies the items of interest are at times the growth, the edification and the worship of the members as word and sacrament are administered. At other times these assemblies are concerned with making decisions concerning the best way of carrying out the congregation's business. In both God wants everything done in a fitting and orderly way.

It is the duty of the church in our time to apply God's principle concerning man's role as head and woman's role as helper whenever believers assemble. When that headship principle is truly in force, it is in keeping with the principle that men have the position of leadership. It is not in keeping with that principle when women exercise authority over men.

The church in every age needs to examine both the ever-changing needs of its people as well as the variety of gifts God gives his people. The church in every age needs to be careful to separate what are cultural traditions and customs from what are the unchanging principles of the Word.

The church may introduce to gifted and willing women in the future areas of service that have not been open to them in the past, but God always wants his church to do so in keeping with the unchanging principle of men's and women's roles. Our churches are correct in limiting to men in our congregations those offices that exercise leadership and authority. Our churches are correct, in keeping with this principle, to limit the voting members of governing assemblies to male members of the congregation. We need to encourage men in our congregations to take active, responsible roles in the life and affairs of their congregations. We need to encourage men in our congregations to be the spiritual leaders of their families. We need to encourage men to train for the teaching and preaching ministry, to come to voters' assemblies and to be willing to serve in elected offices and on appointive committees. We need to encourage the men of our congregations to seek the questions, suggestions and opinions of their wives. We need to seek the questions, suggestions and opinions of every unmarried woman and of every married woman whose husband is not a member of the congregation. This can be done in both organized and informal ways.

It is a false distinction that women may have authority over men in some positions and functions, as long as those positions are not

directly involved with the administration of word and sacraments. The Scriptures nowhere maintain such a distinction. Women may serve on advisory committees or be involved with service that gathers information or needs special skills. But where authority over men is concerned, the principle of headship requires that the authority be exercised by the men.

4. MEN AND WOMEN IN SOCIETY

As we apply the headship principle in a Christian's life, we see that God has laid down no specifics. God has not spelled out precisely how a wife is to submit to her husband. He has not spelled out exactly how a man ought to love his wife. Similarly God has not given us a code of laws to follow as we apply this principle to Christians assembled as the church or to Christians as they live out their lives in a society which often cares little or nothing about God's will. God gives only a few applications of the principle, but two of those do treat situations that go beyond the home or the church. The words of 1 Timothy 2:11-15 apply in every phase of a woman's life. Those of 1 Corinthians 11 deal with an earthly custom.

A Christian will not hold or exhibit one set of attitudes and principles when he is among believers and a different set of attitudes and principles outside the fellowship of believers. God has given us the general principles. He asks us out of love for him to test everything in our lives by his principles, to do all we can in keeping with his will and to avoid all those things which disagree with his will (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:21,22). This is the wonderful freedom God has given us New Testament men and women in Christ. We live under no ceremonial laws. We are truly free, and we can live as free men and women.

Neither Jesus nor his apostles have spoken in any specific way to men and women to tell them how to conduct themselves in the world because they are men and women. The New Testament contains many examples for Christian men and women to follow because they are Christians. Jesus' many examples of uplifting treatment offered to both men and women are enlightening and gratifying. He talked to the woman at the well in Sychar. This surprised her not only because he was a Jew and she was a Samaritan and not only because she was a sinful woman, but also because she was a woman. Jesus' actions were as surprising to her as they were to his disciples (cf. John 4:5-30). Jesus shattered the pretensions of the men who were about to stone to death a woman caught in the act of adultery. He pointed out that they

too were guilty of sin. Could they rightly condemn her? (cf. John 8:1-11) Jesus said, "You have great faith!" only twice, both times to Gentiles; one time it was to the Canaanite woman who was willing to settle for the crumbs of Jesus' grace to have her sick daughter healed (cf. Matthew 15:21-28). Jesus called the woman whom he healed of a crippling deformity "a daughter of Abraham" (cf. Luke 13:16). Luke's Gospel gives high praise to the virgin Mary because she believed what the angel told her and agreed to be the mother of Jesus. Women were the last ones to stand below the cross, the last ones to leave the grave, the first ones to tell the good news of the resurrection.

The guidelines of the apostles are filled with encouragements to love each other, to submit to one another, to carry each other's burdens, to treat all with equality and equanimity. The same St. Paul who said what he did about the respective roles for men and women in this present life is just as clear in making the point that such roles have no bearing on one's eternal status with one's Creator and no bearing on one's relationship with Jesus Christ. "You are all sons (with the legal status of heirs) through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:26-28).

Every exhortation that the New Testament makes, it makes to Christian men and women because they are Christians. Every appeal is offered because men and women are "in Christ." Every encouragement is made "in view of God's mercy" (cf. Romans 12:1). The New Testament does not ask God's people to coerce the unbelieving world to keep God's laws.

Let every man remember that he is a son of Adam. Let every man see that God's statement about the first man, "It is not good for the man to be alone," is in a general way true for all men today. There will be individual men who feel no need for a personal "suitable helper" in marriage. Jesus says there will be such exceptions (cf. Matthew 19:10-12). Yet every man enjoys great blessings through the many women who have played greater and lesser roles in his life. He would not be here if it were not for a woman. Let every man remember that the first woman was made for the first man as a helper, to supply something he needed even in a perfect world. Let every man strive to

express freely the joy that Adam felt and expressed when a suitable helper had been made for him. Let every Christian man recognize that every woman, whether or not his wife, whether or not a sister in the faith, is still a daughter of the first woman. Let him accept her with joy and treat her with dignity.

Let every woman remember that she is a daughter of Eve. Let every woman remember that Eve's greatest fulfillment, in view of her creation and in a world without sin, lay in her role as a helper for the first man. Let every woman remember that when Eve stepped outside that function, a tragic breakdown in her relationship with the man resulted. Let a woman not see her function as a helper as one of inferiority or degrading subservience. Let a woman not attempt to deny her created role by deliberately seeking jobs or duties expressly to assert authority over men. Let every Christian woman rejoice in her creation as an indispensable complement and helper to the man. Let her see every man as a descendant of the first man for whom the first woman was made a helper.

We are not warranted in making a code of laws to apply this principle to the Christian man and woman in their lives at home, in church or in society. Scripture does not do so. The wisest method is to follow the practice of the apostle — study the principle, understand the principle and urge Christian men and women to live by the principle in every area of their lives. In doing so Christians will have the warrant to make specific applications of the principle in given situations. But such applications dare not be understood as general laws or regulations binding on all areas and ages of the church.

The scriptural truth that Eve was created as a helper for Adam and that all men and women are descendants of Adam and Eve should not result in any attempt on the part of Christians to spell out how all women are to be submissive to all men. While there may be instances today which lead us to pass the judgment that in society some women and men are not living according to their God-given roles, that does not give us the license to coerce society to accept our judgment and make it binding for all roles and all authority positions held by women and men in the world. Rather, let us continue to preach the saving gospel so that its influence will win women and men to understand and carry out the roles God has given them. Let Christian

women and men bear in mind the facts surrounding their creation. Let them be eager to bring the meaning of their creation and the spirit of the gospel to the stations and functions to which God calls them in life. Let them carry out those roles at the prompting of the Spirit, out of love to their Creator and Redeemer and in full agreement with God's Word, thus giving effective witness to the blessed truths of God's will for men and women in his world.