

SOME VIEWS ON THE ROLE OF MAN AND WOMAN IN THE WORLD AND CHURCH  
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In 1979 a paper entitled "The Role of Man and Woman According to Holy Scripture" was prepared by the CHE for presentation and possible adoption at the Wisconsin Synod convention. Because he disagreed with the position which was stated therein, the writer addressed a memorial to the Synod protesting the adoption of this position paper at that time. He believes that the paper does not clearly represent what the Bible says, that it derives certain doctrines which are not justified, and that it does not fairly state the position of everyone in the Wisconsin Synod.

This essay is not a rebuttal of the CHE statement, but rather a summary of views and beliefs which have arisen from the writer's studies during his preaching and teaching ministry. It takes into consideration a number of statements which have been made by various writers. It does not contain everything that the writer has said himself on the subject. But it tries to summarize pertinent thoughts from his lecture notes pertaining to the relationship between the Christian men and women, husbands and wives, who live in a sinful world under the various authority systems which God has placed on this earth.

The writer believes that there is another legitimate position than that which some Lutherans espouse. It is not different from the CHE statement in every point, but it approaches the subject in a manner which is Scriptural, consistent, logical, systematic, and functional.

This study also examines the story of Creation, the so-called "Order of Creation," and the matter of Moral Law. The writer insists upon a consideration and study of "woman's role" in the history of God's people, and in the times and life of Jesus. He feels that what is recorded about how Israel lived can illustrate how they understood God's statements. He believes that "woman's role" cannot be described by reference to a few Pauline statements or Old Testament verses. Such an opinion is not made to disparage either the Old Testament account or the writings of Saint Paul. The writer believes that Paul is made to say something which he never intended to say.

God's people applied the doctrine of Creation to their lives. It is necessary to study their history and hunt for any statement made, or action recorded, which is pertinent. One cannot let Paul interpret the Old Testament for the Old Testament people as though there was no clear understanding of "woman's role" until he clarified it. One ought rather let the statement and actions from the Old Testament help interpret Paul. One must also let the history and customs of Paul's day help one understand the need for the instructions which he gives. It can be seen that Paul does not venture back to the pre-Fall period for bases which can apply to the post-Fall sinful human race. Once one learns to keep the prophetic and apostolic statements in the frame of reference of fallen humankind, the matter of "woman's role" falls into place more easily. The writer feels that if one confuses conditions before and after the Fall, or applies husband-wife commands to male-female relationship, then he falls into a trap of traditionalism which is Scripturally untenable.

Many of the points which follow in this study were briefly stated in the personal memorial of protest sent to the 1979 convention. These beliefs have also been delivered orally to the Saint Croix Pastoral Conference. They have been summarized here as concisely as possible, but do not state the writer's entire position on "woman's role." What here follows is only "Part I" of the whole subject. Since the CHE statement did not deal with the "woman's role" as pastors/overseers or in any supportive role in the pastoral ministry, neither shall this essay. The writer knows that his views on women in ministry are different than what some care to hear at this time. Those views are in

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Part II and can be the subject of a separate discussion.

#### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The writer believes that statements which apply to husbands and wives have been improperly applied to male-female relationships. He also believes that whatever "subordination" exists between humans in marriage, family, government, etc., came about because of sin and was not existent before the Fall. He believes that the "Order of Creation" is not Moral Law, nor should God's "Orders" be looked upon as legalistic arrangements.

It does no good to refer to Pauline statements unless there is agreement on the matter of Creation and Law. Several questions have to be answered:

1. What is the "Order of Creation"? What is "Moral Law"?  
Is the "Order of Creation" a form of "Moral Law"?
2. Was woman "subordinate" to man in the state of perfection or was a "wife" commanded to be so after the Fall because of sin?
3. Can statements which deal with wife-husband relationships properly be applied to female-male relationships in general?  
Has this been done in discussions among Lutherans?
4. Is one justified in translating the Greek word for "woman" as "wife" because of contextual evidence?

#### DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

In order to better understand the discussion which follows, the writer needs to explain how he uses certain terms and expressions which are used and have become pertinent to this discussion. The word "subordination" is used repeatedly in CHE and other writings on the subject. It will be quoted in this essay also. But the writer believes that it should always be understood with the meaning of "arrange oneself under." This, to the writer, is the proper definition of the Greek hypotasso (usually middle voice), and ought to be the meaning which is given to it.

Moreover the writer does not believe that this "subordination" is required of a woman to a man according to the "Order of Creation." It is clearly taught that a son or daughter is to be "subordinate" to a father according to God's 4th Commandment. There is also a "self-subordination" which God asks of every Christian wife toward her husband. But the writer believes that this idea of "self-subordination" of a wife has been improperly applied to woman-man relationships; that is, those passages which speak of wife-husband are improperly applied to woman-man.

The concept of "helper" or "help suitable for him" applies to woman only when she is a wife. God did not make all women to be "helpers" for every or any man. A woman is not commanded to be "helper" to man (in the Biblical sense) except in marriage. It is not proper to write so as to give any other impression. Wherever unmarried men and women function together in life, and an authority system does not apply (such as marriage, family, school, work, government, etc.), they share and serve equally as human beings, citizens, and as Christians. Man and woman are different in many ways, but woman, as such, is not "subordinate" to man, as such.

#### DERIVED DOCTRINES

It is theologically improper to derive a doctrine by forcing meaning, which may not be there, out of a Biblical text. One should ask whether this has been done on this subject. The writer has often used a personal expression which needs explanation. That expression is "derived doctrine." To him this expression describes any statement which is an unwarranted extension beyond the clear, safe meaning of a Bible passage.

To illustrate: Peter describes a wife as "weaker" (1 Peter 3:7). This basically means that she is generally "not as physically strong" as man. It does not say that she is

innately, psychologically or emotionally subordinate or inferior. To say that much would be a "derived doctrine." Paul commands wives "not to usurp authority over the man" (1 Tim. 2:12). If this is the correct translation of authentēin it tells some woman to stay in her "self-subordinate" position under authority, but does not explicitly forbid woman suffrage in church or state. To say that would be a "derived doctrine." Paul asks some women "to keep silence" (1 Tim. 2:11). He is first of all asking them not to disturb public worship, but he is not thereby saying that she can never use her mouth for prayer, praise or prophesying.

Even the best-intentioned Bible student can derive a doctrine and say possibly more than the Bible actually says. Sometimes this occurs because congregations and church bodies seem to feel constrained to codify everything, to "write rules," and thus dictate every attitude and practice for its membership. When this happens, freedom of decision and action which belong to individual Christians or Christian congregations can be intruded upon. Judaism eventually produced an elaborate Torah on the basis of Moses. But Abraham, Isaac and Jacob got along pretty well without Moses, and have always been illustrations for the actions of free believers anywhere. Confessional Lutherans can also develop a Torah of their own making. In some spheres of life they may already have done so unintentionally. The writer feels that some statements which have been made on the subject of "woman's role" are actually derived doctrines and reflect incorrect and perpetuated attitudes, not Scripture.

Some of the things that are said about women, wives, and "woman's role" are not found in the Bible. Some things have been prescribed and dogmatized when they ought to have been left in the province of Christian liberty. The writer believes that the early Christian church operated under a less rigid, more independent, system than most Lutheran congregations feel allowed to do. Moreover traditional Lutheranism has sometimes said too much about "woman's role" and bound the consciences of male and female believers to "derived doctrines" instead of permitting them the freedom which Christ died to give. Confessional Lutherans must refrain from teaching the overstatements about "woman's role" that they have often taught. Lutheran history is full of intemperate, emotional, but sometimes not very intelligent or compassionate, statements about women.

(The writer remembers painfully all the unfair improper remarks he has made on this subject. Because it is difficult to conclude that one's teachers could be wrong on any given subject, it took several years for him to stop parroting what he had been taught. Now that he has reached contrary conclusions for himself, he is well aware that he must avoid deriving any doctrines himself. So he tries to continually analyze and test his own historical interpretation, exegesis, logic and consistency.)

#### HOW THIS MATTER AFFECTS ATTITUDES MEN AND WOMEN HAVE TOWARD EACH OTHER

Some who dare to question traditional positions about the "woman's role" are charged with weakness or capitulation to the "feminist movement." Anyone who opines that the position stated in this essay "knuckles under" to the women's movement doesn't understand that movement very well. This position of the writer is no more palatable to an ardent feminist than the stereotypic viewpoint with which the Synod is now charged. But the position can be appreciated by Christian men and women as evangelical, divinely logical, functional and necessary in a sinful world.

There are countless Christian wives who are self-dedicated to being "helpers" for their husbands. But they and their husbands steadfastly resist every suggestion that they are "subordinate" or inferior as women, or that there is a created, inherent ascendance of man over woman, or that they can be treated in such a condescending manner by other

males. They find nothing that supports this attitude in Scripture.

Moreover, they feel a justifiable resentment when, just because they are women, their talents are overlooked, or they cannot receive equal pay or praise for equal work, or their expertise and advice is ignored, or their voice in public or church policy is disallowed, or they are treated as though their only worth is to be a womb. And if their skills and training find them in a position of authority in industry or government, some church doctrinaire is ready to remind them that they really ought not have authority over men. Or, they must never forget that such is only an "unusual" situation in which they should temporarily serve and ask God's forgiveness for their moral insubordination (even when advancement and position came without any effort other than competence and diligence on their parts). Moreover on the distaff side, some Christian males go to work for female overseers with a different sort of guilty conscience. "It is obvious that you are qualified and capable, but woman, remember your place!" is the feeling many have felt. What an atrocity, to think that one cannot work for, or learn from, an expert or teacher, just because she is a woman! How dare one burden another conscience thus? Again, they ponder, because they work for a woman, whether it might be more obedient (to God) for them to resign from their compromising situation and work only under a male.

Within the church, well-trained women, experts in education and social ministry, cannot sit on boards or committees, even on an equal-or-less proportion, and help plan, advise, or decide the work of the church. They cannot supervise or visit Lutheran schools even though long years of experience have made them superior teachers and counsellors in certain areas. This is not only nonsense, but poor stewardship!

It is no surprise that Christian women have been crying "unfair" for centuries. Some have not dared say it very loud. Very few males have dared to speak out for them. But these Christian women are not radicals. They don't believe themselves equal of men in every respect, but they know that men are not their equals in every characteristic either.

Moreover they recognize that sin ruined things in this world and things have not been the same since. Since sin came there have had to be some authority systems in operation or anarchy would be the result. And so various leaderships and headships are necessary. But as Christian believers, these women ask for a share of the same mutualism that prevailed between Adam and Eve at the beginning. Believers can be this way toward each other, however this applies within the authority systems that God has imposed upon the world because of sin. Christian women realize, as Paul wrote, that "...in the Lord woman is not independent of man, nor man of woman." 1 Cor. 11:11. Theirs could be a joyful cooperation in Christian life along the road to heaven.

But sad to say, too many thoughtless statements are made by some who have not graduated beyond thinking and talking in stereotypes. But there are many husbands and wives who simply do not believe that a "subordination" of woman to man is Scriptural. So it will be a mistake to assume that the constituency of the Synod accepts the principles stated in the CHE report. (That does not mean that the will of the majority is truth.) To treat the matter as just being due to "lack of understanding" or "feminist influence" belittles the intelligence and Bible knowledge of too many beautiful Christian women. These fellow female believers accept and try to observe the leadership principles that are stated in Ephesians and are read at marriage ceremonies. But to believe that there is a woman to man "subordination" taught in the Bible is another matter! Christian wives bristle at that suggestion. They may, for it is not in the Bible! And they know it. This should be what a church body confesses clearly. Much more contented, cooperative church work could result when this false notion about men and women is removed from

the synodical atmosphere.

### GOD'S WILL AND MORAL LAW

God's "immutable holy will" ought not be equated with the Moral Law in every sense. Sometimes "woman's role" is approached from the viewpoint of the "Order of Creation." This "Order" is declared by some to be God's "immutable, holy will." It is also immediately called "Moral Law." Thus there is an apparent equating of "will" and "Law" and "order of creation." May these three concepts be legitimately equated? The writer feels that they cannot.

The writer was taught "it is therefore necessary that we define that Law the transgression of which makes a thought or deed sinful. The Formula of Concord describes the Law in the sense in which it is here used as a divine doctrine in which the righteous, immutable will of God is revealed, what is to be the quality of man in his nature, thoughts, words and works in order that he may be pleasing and acceptable to God." Christian Dogmatics p. 212, J. T. Mueller

When God saw that everything He had made was "very good," what remained for man to do that he might "be pleasing and acceptable to God"? Let us apply such a statement to husband and wife at Creation. How were their works to be? God said: "Don't eat," and "Be fruitful." Therein lay the Law of God as they knew it. The will of God must be evidenced here also; i.e., God's command displayed His particular will in this instance. No one knows if Adam and Eve had a "Ten Commandment conscience" at this time, or only a conscience that attested to the few commands which God had given in Eden up to this point. (We may never know exactly just when the "Ten Commandment Conscience" was first found in humankind, but that is basis for another discussion.)

Are these commands (Law) identical with the "Order of Creation"? Moreover, which of these expressions of God's will was repeated in future command(ment)s? The writer believes that they are not identical insofar as the "Order of Creation" is a pre-existent system which is revealed as functional or operational by the presence of the command itself. Each is certainly related to the other, but they are not equal, nor may they be equated.

If these commands were Law, applicable to all humans for all times, is it not reasonable to expect that they would be written down as the other points of Moral Law were done through the Command(ment)s of God? But there are no such statements of "subordination" of woman to man.

In addition, while Law can be called "God's Will" not all of God's Will is Law. For example, it must be remembered that God's "immutable, holy will" includes His desire that "all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth," 1 Timothy 2:4. The Bible also says "This is the will of God, even your sanctification," 1 Thess. 4:3. But this saving Will is Gospel, not Law. The writer feels that it is never proper to write on this matter in such a way as to give the impression that God's Will at Creation is equivalent with Moral Law. Is God's will concerning other institutions of humans automatically Moral Law also? When Christians pray "Thy will be done" are they praying for and about Moral Law?

Moreover, Moral Law is generally considered to be embodied in the Ten Commandments and other commands from God. That is, Moral Law has been repeated in written form for sinful humankind. If one applies the principle to "woman's role," which command(ment) in Scripture deals with a "subordination" of woman to man? There is no such statement, or reiteration, of Moral Law which declares a subordination of woman to man in the Old Testament from Genesis 3:16 to the end of God's prophetic scriptures. It is not practiced by the patriarchs, or declared by Moses or any other prophet. That the Jews sometimes

treated wives cruelly or unjustly and established a husband-oriented society does not declare such a Moral Law.

That there were priests, and no priestesses, does not declare such a Law. That the synagogue at the time of Jesus was husband-oriented and husband-dominated, does not declare such a Law. In fact, since God never established the synagogue practice, there is nothing from the synagogue practice which dare be applied as having any divine bearing on the subject at all!

There are some who jump from Creation directly to St. Paul and Interpret the Old Testament through the apostle. This is an unfortunate thing to do because it tacitly ignores all the history of God's people and the actions of many women during those centuries. Why not Interpret the Old Testament in the light of the incidents and characters themselves? That does not ignore New Testament commentary on the Old Testament, but it allows the Christian to view those times from the record itself.

There is another correlative point which can be made, and it has to do with the entire context of Creation. The writer deems it necessary to stress that the prevailing situation at the Creation between God and His creatures, was not initially or dominantly legal but evangelical.

To make the relationship between the first husband and wife in Eden a matter of Law puts the whole of Genesis 2 in a unique theological light. Is the matter of Creation to be considered in the context of Law? Is not the story of Creation (that is, God's mighty acts, His display of wisdom, and providence, the perfectness of Creation, etc.) an illustration of an evangelical, not legal, will? God's creative actions display wise love and favor as far as humankind and this world are concerned. The first humans were able to look around and see the works, of not just a sovereign, omnipotent God, but also a gracious, benevolent Father. Commands (Law) do not come until after Creation was complete and functionable and the Eden commands about fruitfulness and about eating the fruit of the tree, are given.

THE ORDER OF CREATION AND PROVIDENCE Let us expand on, and further develop, this concept. The Order of Creation is a gracious manifestation of God's Providence. This is also a divine "Order" and the two orders are inseparably linked or related. Theologians regularly refer to an "Order" of Redemption, or Creation, or Providence, etc. The "Order of Creation" is often referred to without any explanation of it as though it can be taken for granted that all understand. What is the Order of Creation? Is it a command or an arrangement, or both? Is it legal or evangelical? Is it merely chronological at a certain point in time, or are its features of perennial importance? Are there other "orders"?

It is true that with any order there probably is something chronological involved; that is, it began at a point in time. But there is more than chronological time involved.

Others speak of the "Order of Creation" as proceeding from the lower to the higher. This includes the initial production of crude material, the subsequent separation of simple creatures, the furnishing and the completion of the whole world. Some of this was done immediately ("God said") and some done mediately ("Let the waters bring forth," "He took the rib" and "From the ground made he," etc.)

Some add to this picture the suggestion that each succeeding creation is of greater importance until man, the crown, is created. (If "Subordinationists" advocate this too heartily however, they must reach the logical suggestion that woman, created later than, is superior to, man! Such ranking according to importance gives problems! But it would

be ironic if there is truth to such a ranking, if the necessary helpmeet's position was subverted by her own carelessness, and she found her sin rewarded by being placed under her husband. Is this similar to the way in which the superior human creation was dropped a little "lower than the angels" because of sin?)

But the "Order of Creation" must be more than this, being tied so closely to the "Order of Providence." Perhaps the theologians who called it an "Einordnung" understand it best. God established a system at the beginning. The Creator ordered a creative process into existence; that is, things are ordered not only into being, but also into function. One cannot separate origin or existence from purpose. This is important!

Sun, moon, stars, herbs, animals, birds, and fishes were made to function, to multiply. Man was not allowed much time to stand around admiring himself before God ordered him to compare himself, his physical anatomy and his needs with other animals. He could thus realize the "uniqueness of man" in comparison, but also recognize an existing inadequacy, as yet, and then, receive and enjoy God's deliberate solution, a specially created wife.

The Order of Creation thus demonstrates completely how the Creator made all His creatures creators also. The ability to reproduce becomes accompanied by the drive to reproduce which has been typical of living things ever since. Because of it there is food for other living creatures (for one thing). Animals instinctively mate (for another thing). And ever since, humans have normally expected and planned to get married and become parents some day. A divine institution. Grand providence!

So one chief rabbi comments: "The sacredness of marriage relations, according to Scripture, goes back to the very birth of human society; nay, it is part of the scheme of Creation." Pentateuch and Haftorahs Ed. J. H. Hertz, p. 24.

The "Order of Creation" signifies the institution of the marital relationship, not a male-female relationship, and displays a wise and provident God. But is such an "Order of Creation" a Law? Moral Law? Is the Order of Providence Law? Moral Law? (By way of comparison, is the Order of Redemption Law?) Does "Order of..." make something Law just because one therein can recognize the Will of God?

#### THE ORDER OF CREATION AND FEMALE SUBORDINATION

To say that the "Order of Creation" teaches a "subordination" of female to male makes every female a "help" to every male. This is not warranted. It is in the marital relationship alone that woman is to be "helper" to man, otherwise she is not "subordinate" to man in any way. There was no "subordination" of any sort in the state of perfection. When God said "I will make him a helpmeet for him," and acted upon His intentions, He was making one command to Adam ("Be fruitful") possible for Adam to keep. Adam and Eve's purpose of existence from that point on was prescribed. That she might become "subordinate" at a later time (and that this did occur after the Fall), did not make her "subordinate" before the Fall, or because she was created second. That which is made second is not thereby "subordinate" to that which is first. To imply that such a "subordination" between man and woman existed before the Fall can lead to the unsupportable, but natural, conclusion, that every female is "subordinate" to every male.

The writer's insistence that the later creation of woman does not imply any "subordination" can also be understood more easily when one appreciates the purpose for her creation. Man could not function without a wife in the activity for which God would soon give His command "Be fruitful, etc." Her presence on earth was absolutely essential to God's purposes on earth. Eve was created to be Adam's mate. That Adam was shown the

other animal pairs impressed upon him his own reproductive, procreative function, but also his inadequacy as yet. No mate or "help suitable" was found for him. Adam experienced another facet of God's personal goodness to him when God supplies for him a mate who is totally suitable. God thus makes Adam complete, finishing humankind. Without Eve, Adam could not obey God. She was a "help suitable" with all that this implies in regard to their physical and sexual natures. Must there not have been also an emotional, intellectual, social compatibility? She was not a casual mate, like some animals are, but one who was "always before his face." Without Eve, Adam was not complete. Creation was incomplete. God did not thus create just woman, but a wife. She does not just represent womanhood, but "wifeness." There is teleological importance in this creative act of God. The matter suggests as the verse declares, that it is the will of God that the normal relationship between man and woman is ultimately marriage. But can one call this Moral Law? Any Moral Law application to marriage here involves a necessary respect for marital obligations.

All should ponder well what "subordination" within the created state of "perfection" can mean. "Perfection" is something about which humans know very little. (The ranks of angels, apparently illustrating a type of subordination, do not apply to human creation.) How was Eve less holy, less righteous, less knowledgeable of God, less capable, less wise, with less free will; that is, less "perfect" than Adam? And if the new spiritual person in faith (New Man) has the beginning of a divine restoration within him or her, and if an Adamic condition (except for the procreative command, etc.) will be totally restored in Heaven, will women "subordinate" to men there for eternity?

#### IN THE STATE OF PERFECTION EVE WAS NOT SUBORDINATE TO ADAM

That woman was taken "from man" does not teach "subordination" but indicates her created equivalence in the state of perfection. This brings this study to a crucial point. All will have to decide ultimately whether "helper" and "from man" actually teaches "subordination" of woman to man. The writer does not believe that such a conclusion is warranted. "...called woman because she was taken from man" is a statement of historical fact. It can be a play on words. It can also be a statement of identicalness.

The next verse is very pertinent, since Adam speaks of marriage as "one flesh." The marriage relationship is the important feature here. From "one flesh" come two separate sexes; contrariwise, two separate sexes come together in marriage and form "one flesh." How can this be? It is its own kind of "mystery" says Paul. But isn't "one-fleshedness" the key here? That is, there is identicalness, except for sex. Luther refers to the "she-man." If God took part of Adam's body cells and tissues, there must even be a genetic, genotypic, sameness! "At last" comments Adam, "someone just like me!" Eve is the first identical, fraternal twin! She is the first different-sexed clone! But impossible! A miracle! Of course!

The writer believes that no more than this can be said about the relationship between Adam and Eve from the words "from man." This expression illustrates the ultimate meaning of being "one flesh" in marriage. The relationship between Adam and Eve in the state of perfection is not completely fathomable to us, but it is not an example of relationships today in a world of sin. So we ought not, from this slim vantage point, speak too dogmatically about the relationship of man and woman. And we must also remember that wherever Adam and Eve are hereafter referred to elsewhere in the Bible, such references are to husband and wife, not man and woman.

#### LUTHER ON THE ROLE OF WOMAN AS ILLUSTRATED BY EVE

Luther can be quoted on this subject in a variety of ways. The only problem is that in his lectures on Genesis he seems to speak



uncertainly. The writer will use the following quotations to support his position, recognizing full well that another can use Luther to support another position, since he did not know where he stood on the subject of man and woman. It might be very "Luther-an" for others to be less positive with the data and commands which they have. Luther does speak about the creation of Adam and Eve, the divine image, the natures of man and woman, perfection and the Fall. The quotations are from Luther's Works, Vol. Lectures on Genesis.

"Here Moses puts the two sexes together and says that God created male and female in order to indicate that Eve, too, was made by God as a partaker of the divine image and of the divine similitude, likewise of the rule over everything." page 69

"Therefore when we speak about that image, we are speaking about something unknown. Not only have we had no experience of it, but we continually experience the opposite; and so we hear nothing except bare words. In Adam there was an enlightened reason, a true knowledge of God, and a most sincere desire to love God and his neighbor, so that Adam embraced Eve and at once acknowledged her to be his own flesh. Added to these were other lesser but exceedingly important gifts--if you draw a comparison with our weaknesses--namely, a perfect knowledge of the nature of the animals, the herbs, the fruits, the trees, and the remaining creatures." page 63

"Therefore, that image of God was something most excellent, in which were included eternal life, everlasting freedom from fear, and everything that is good. However, through sin this image was so obscured and corrupted that we cannot grasp it even with our intellect. Although we utter the words, who is there who could understand what it means to be in a life free from fear, without terrors and dangers, and to be wise, upright, good, and freed from all disasters, spiritual as well as physical?" page 65

"Eve had these mental gifts in the same degree as Adam, as Eve's utterance shows when she answered the serpent concerning the tree in the middle of Paradise. There it becomes clear enough that she knew to what end she had been created and intended to the source from which she had this knowledge; for she said Gen. 3:3 "The Lord said." Thus she not only heard this from Adam, but her very nature was pure and full of the knowledge of God to such a degree that by herself she knew the Word of God and understood it." page 67

"Moses wanted to point out in a special way that the other part of humanity, the woman, was created by a unique counsel of God in order to show that his sex, too, is suited for the kind of life which Adam was expecting and that this sex was to be useful for procreation. Hence it follows that if the woman had not been deceived by the serpent and had not sinned, she would have been the equal of Adam in all respects. For the punishment, that she is now subjected to the man, was imposed on her after sin and because of sin, just as the other hardships and dangers were: travail, pain, and countless other vexations. Therefore Eve was not like the woman of today; her state was far better and more excellent, and she was in no respect inferior to Adam, whether you count the qualities of the body or those of the mind." page 115

"So the woman was a helper for Adam; for he was unable to procreate alone, just as the woman was also unable to procreate alone. Moreover these are the highest praises of sex, that the male is the father in procreation, but the woman is the mother in procreation and the helper of her husband. When we look back to the state of Innocence, procreation, too, was better, more delightful, and more sacred in countless ways." page 118

"Moreover, this designation carries with it a wonderful and pleasing description of

marriage, in which, as the jurist also says, the wife shines by reason of her husband's rays. Whatever the husband has, this the wife has and possesses in its entirety. Their partnership involves not only their means but children, food, bed and dwelling; their purposes, too, are the same. The result is that the husband differs from the wife in no other respect than in sex; otherwise the woman is altogether a man. Whatever the man has in the home and is, this the woman has and is; she differs only in sex and in something that Paul mentions 1 Tim. 2:13, namely, that she is a woman by origin, because the woman came from the man and not the man from the woman." page 137

"Also of this fellowship we observe some remnants today, although pitiable ones, if we look back to the first beginning. For if the wife is honorable, virtuous, and pious, she shares in all the cares, endeavors, duties, and functions of her husband. With this end in view she was created in the beginning; and for this reason she is called woman, or, if we were able to say so in Latin, a "she-man." Thus she differed only in sex from the head of the household, inasmuch as she was taken from the flesh of the man." page 137

"If Eve had persisted in the Truth, she would not only not have been subjected to the rule of her husband, but she herself would also have been a partner in the rule which is now entirely the concern of males." page 203

Having written all these things, is Luther justified in opining about the Fall in this unwarranted fashion?

"Satan's cleverness is perceived also in this, that he attacks the weak part of the human nature, even the woman, not Adam the man. Although both were created equally righteous, nevertheless Adam had some advantage over Eve. Just as in all the rest of nature the strength of the male surpasses that of the other sex, so also in the perfect nature the male somewhat excelled the female. Because Satan sees that Adam is the more excellent, he does not dare assail him; for he fears that his attempt may turn out to be useless. And I, too, believe that if he had tempted Adam first, the victory would have been Adam's. He would have crushed the serpent with his foot and would have said: 'Shut up! The Lord's command was different.' Satan, therefore, directs his attack on Eve as the weaker part and puts her valor to the test, for he sees that she is so dependent on her husband that she thinks she cannot sin." page 151

To what extent have Lutheran attitudes been based on the opinions of the German monk instead of the actions of the Son of God?

#### AUTHORITY SYSTEMS AND SUBORDINATION CAME INTO THE WORLD THROUGH SIN

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

One of several existent Kephale structures today, instituted by God, and stated in the Bible, has to do with husband and wife. It came into existence after the Fall and the rupture of perfection by disobedience. The "subordination" of wife to husband is a result of sin, not the "Order of Creation." Since the time of the Fall (and not before it) a headship leadership of husband in marriage is not implied, but clearly prescribed in Scripture, Genesis 3:16, Ephesians 5:22-24.

A similar "self-subordination" is asked of citizens to the ruler, Titus 3:1, Romans 13:1, of servants to masters, 1 Peter 2:18 and all Christians to each other, Ephesians 5:21. Jesus acted thus toward His parents, Luke 2:51, demons were controlled by Jesus' disciples who used His name, Luke 10:17 and 20. In all these references the middle voice of

hypotasso describes the "arranging oneself under." In no case is this because of an inherent equality or inequality. That is not the issue. Also, of Jesus it is predicted that He will "self-subordinate" Himself under the Father, 1 Cor. 15:28. One dare not say that there is an inherent inequality between the Son of God and the Father because of this "self-subordination" by Jesus. The Son was not unequal to the Father. These uses of a hypotasso do not permit one to teach that the "self-subordination" of a Christian woman to her husband in marriage is due to an inherent "subordination" from the Order of Creation. Her "subordination" came about because of sin. "Because you have done this..." are the fateful words! Disobedience changed things. And after she disobeyed, Eve is already so far from "perfection" that she cannot say, "Oh, Adam, I made a mistake. Please don't eat." No, she gives the fruit to Adam and the mistake is compounded. But why place a double onus on Eve? "She gave to her husband who was with her," says the Scripture, Genesis 3:6. The moral fibers of Adam disintegrated quickly, too.

God watched sadly. "You wanted to be gods. You thought there was more authority and freedom than what you already had. You could not appreciate the extent of your present freedom. I will provide a way so that you can get out of this 'death' eternally, but now your days of freedom are over. You have lost it." Now their relationship came under the punishment which God predicted for Law breaking. So Adam got tied to work and job and tiredness and responsibility to wife, and eventually, obligation for family. God pronounces a curse upon the ground because of his sin.

And Eve also got tied to work and husband and tiredness, and her reproductive specialness becomes pain-causing for her. One must note God did not "curse" her in so many words. How tragic, bitter, or ironic, that the one whose creation was performed so specially and meaningfully now has to "arrange herself under." She has forfeited her co-leadership! And every descendant of Adam and Eve experience a measure of the same positioning because of sin. Whether or not they marry determines the dimensions of that "subordination."

There are other authority systems (Kephale structures) commanded by God. Among these are the parent-child and the ruler-ruled relationship. After the institution of marriage two other sets of relationships develop; namely, parental and civil authority. The writer refers to these with little comment because they must be regarded as parallel examples of Moral Law. There ought be no question about the origin of these authorities because they are extensions of, and are covered by, the Fourth Commandment. Moreover, commands to be "subordinate" to parent and ruler are repeated in various forms in both the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures.

This is not the case however with the viewpoint that there is a "subordination" of woman to man according to the "Order of Creation." According to the "Order of Creation" what is created is subject to that which creates it. Thus, Adam and Eve were subject to their Creator. Their children in turn would be subject to them. Eve, created by God, was not thereby "subordinate" to Adam, nor would any of her daughters, created by Adam and her, be thereby "subordinate" to any of their sons. Thus are derived the Biblical principles of "subordination" in family and government, reiterated in the Fourth Commandment.

#### WOMAN'S ROLE AS IT IS DISPLAYED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament does not display a persistent female to male subordination. Any "subordination" of women found in the Old Testament is generally that of wife to husband, daughter to father, and not female to male per se. The writer believes that a good way to grasp the knowledge and practice of God's people is to observe their actions throughout history. (He has included scores of incidents in his original notes on this subject, but will omit most of them here for the

sake of brevity.) The reader probably knows Old Testament history well enough to be able to ponder his or her own examples.

In the age of the Patriarchs, is the position of women like Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel illustrative of female "subordination?" Can one not find independent thinking, acting and advising? Ponder the period of Moses and the Law. How much of the Pentateuch or ceremonial law deals with male and female relationship from a "subordination" viewpoint? Very little is said about women at all. The passages that deal with a woman (Leviticus 12, 15, 18) refer to ceremonial uncleanness (menses, birth of male and female child), obligations in case of miscarriage, rape-adultery matters. Did Moses consider woman mere chattel? Ponder the position of Miriam, prophetess, who led Israel in worship, and Zipporah, who rebuked Moses for his failure to abide by God's covenant requirements. Attitudes toward wives were terrible at the time of the Judges, it is true, but where can one find the command which justified any of these vicious acts?

It may seem easy to extrapolate the situation at Jesus' time back into Old Testament history; this is not justifiable. There are strong female figures pictured, from Deborah onward. Barak did not fight for Israel with a guilty conscience because he was taking orders from Deborah! Abigail was no timid rabbit! Solomon did not suggest that the Queen of Sheba abdicate because she was a woman! One notes a dearth of commands or episodes which reiterate any female to male "subordination." The great tribute to the virtuous wife, Proverbs 31, is not a description of a woman who is a slave to man, burdened with a severe inferiority complex. To be such a wife was the goal of many Jewish daughters.

Jewish marriage practices being what they were, it is probably true that there may have been very few unmarried women, except for widows in those days. Women were probably married off early by fathers who felt such responsibility for their daughters' welfare. Thus the authority of either father or husband probably prevailed and dominated social relationships. God's people live together agreeably wherever they lived as believers under whatever social customs existed. One has to note however, that although there were some prophetesses, famous queens, and a female judge, there never was a priestess in Israel. God's will is declared by women on occasion, but she was excluded from any share in the sacrificial aspects of Judaism. This fact may be pertinent to later discussions of "woman's role" in regard to the pastoral office.

#### JESUS, HIS APOSTLES, AND WOMEN

Jesus not only did not declare any "subordination" of women to men per se, but also, elevated women to rights which had been previously reserved for men in the male-oriented society of His day. How Jesus treated women ought to be more important an example and more directive than anything else in the Bible! Among the harshest-sounding things Jesus has to say to women are His words to His mother (in the Temple, Luke 2, and at Cana, John 2) but even these statements lose their apparent harshness when the translation is good and one understands the role of Mary and her Son.

It is interesting to note that Jesus never prescribed a Domestic Code for His disciples to follow. At no time did He command women to silence; in fact, He allows a very voluble woman to be His first missionary in Samaria. He defends a wife's right not to be put away without the legality of those Mosaic "letters of divorcement." Actually, the situation cited in Matthew 5 emphasizes her rights to remain in marriage in spite of her husband's fickleness. In the presence of Mary and Martha, he champions woman's right to study the Scripture, which had previously been retained jealously by males only in their synagogues. When a woman praises Jesus' mother on one occasion, He announces that woman is not just a womb, but is a hearer and doer of His word also. When He says "Whoso looketh on a woman to lust after her, committeth adultery with her..." he removes

adultery from the position of being a sin against the rights of a husband, and makes it a violation of a woman herself! That is, a woman isn't just chattel, but a worthy person who can be sinned against! Bible readers are familiar with many other contacts with women and there is no explicit declaration of woman to man "subordination." No wonder the women followed Him around Galilee and from there clear to Calvary! He accepted their love and service just as He received the tears and perfume of other contrite, forgiven female sinners.

No woman, however, was chosen as an apostle! But for that matter, no Judean, Samaritan was chosen either! Can one infer that Jesus did not approve of a female apostolate? Or female pastors? Or would this be a "derived doctrine"? Does that infer that only a Jew could be an apostle? Ought this fact be remembered in connection with "woman's role" in the pastoral office?

Four of Jesus' followers, two who were apostles, and two who are called "evangelists," record Jesus' life. Three have Jewish backgrounds. Luke's background is a mystery. But their words show how they have imbibed the spirit of Jesus themselves. This is even true of Luke, who might have been affected by Pauline "chauvinism" had Paul been as "misogynistic" as some claim him to be. Luke is often described as being the most sympathetic to women in his Gospel, but Matthew, Mark and John, with their Jewish background are no less gentle and considerate of women. They display no spirit of female to male "subordination," unless one finds it in their anger at the mothers who brought their babies to Jesus, and their surprise that Jesus talked to a Samaritan woman (but the latter may only reflect their Jewish snobbishness and prejudice toward Samaria.)

The Book of Acts contains no Domestic Code nor does it command any "subordination" or women to men or "silence" in the church. This is most interesting because Acts recounts the activities of Peter and Paul who later wrote New Testament Domestic Codes. Readers are glad that generous Dorcas was returned to life, that Lydia's house was opened to Philippian Christians, that Priscilla was a friend of Paul and took the initiative in Apollos' theological development. Paul, on his last journey to Jerusalem, visited the home of Philip, whose four daughters were prophetesses. There is no command from Paul to them to stop prophesying and stay "in their place." One wonders if this is not possibly an intentional reference to women who were very well-known in the church.

But it is only when reading the greetings in the Pauline epistles that one can grasp the full role of women who were Paul's co-workers. One cannot know, this side of Heaven, all of the ways these women assisted Paul. But from Paul himself one can learn that he described one woman, Phoebe, with a word, Romans 16:1, that he used later as the title/name/office of a lesser church worker; namely, diakonos/"deacon, server." 1 Tim. 3:8

And so it is possible by following Scripture in this manner, from the Old Testament through the life of Jesus and into the Apostolic church, to note a pattern which does not display any "subordination" of woman to man. Better, one notes a dearth of statements which can be used to teach a woman to man "subordination." One can counter with the claim that the principle of "subordination" was so deeply ingrained in Jewish life that it never needed to be repeated. This is doubtful. Jesus seems to have repeated and commented upon every moral principle that existed as He described the "Greater Righteousness" expected of His disciples. Why did He choose to say so little about this most basic relationship of all? The probable answer is that there was no woman to man "subordination"; this was only a condition within marriage.

#### PAUL AND WOMAN'S ROLE

Of course, such a study finally leads to Paul and his writings. Many epithets have been hurled at Paul's name because of his supposed "anti-feminism." The writer does not believe that Paul is guilty as he is charged. His

personal, apostolic practices testify that Paul follows the example of Jesus and Old Testament practice consistently, and that he writes in the frame of reference of husband and wife in a fallen world. Sad to say some have wrongly applied such statements to man and woman. That causes trouble. Moreover, it is necessary to study Paul's statements that are pertinent to "woman's role" in light of their historical context.

But before one treats the specific verses in Paul's letters, one ought to take an overall view of the career of this great saint. Students cannot ignore the development of Pauline theology as he preached and wrote to early Christians.

Paul began his missionary journeys preaching a "freedom" which was something unheard of in that culture. But this freedom was spiritual, freedom in Christ, freedom from the confines of Mosaic ceremonialism. It may be impossible for a twentieth century believer to appreciate satisfactorily the dimensions of change which the Apostle himself had to make in order to convey the message of God's grace to the Gentiles. No other figure in the Apostolic age came into Christianity from such a rabbinic background (except perhaps Apollos, the Alexandrian). Because of this Paul had to make a spiritual and intellectual adjustment which most contemporary ministers have never had to do.

But to go out and preach freedom in Jesus has its own hazards. It may never be possible for one to preach it without a listener misunderstanding. The recipient of the good news may interpret, and use, the freedom wrongly. It was not long after Paul had started travelling and preaching that he learned that listeners "back down the road" had misunderstood what he said. Some took the freedom too far, and felt that they had some "freedoms" which Paul had never said they had. So Paul, who started out his missionary career preaching Christ crucified, not Moses, had to remind his listeners that the Moral Law of God was not obsolete in the world. Paul was no anti-nomian! He had great respect for God's Law. "The Law is good."

It may seem ironical that a reminder about God's Law as stated in a Domestic Code in the New Testament is linked to the apostle who fought so openly and who suffered such personal sacrifice for freedom and equity for Jew and Greek, bond and free, male and female. But it arises from the perennial tension between freedom and order. Freedom is always at the risk of its abuse in terms of permissiveness, disorder, anarchy, or chaos. The twin threats of legalism and libertinism are ancient and recurrent.

One of Paul's first major battles was with legalism, when certain Judaizers sought to impose circumcision upon Gentile converts to Christianity. The "Hebrew of Hebrews" took a firm stand, and resisted efforts to impose Jewish rites upon Gentile believers. What mattered to him was the "new creation." "In Christ" there is "not any Jew nor Greek, not any slave nor free, not any male and female."

To some of Paul's hearers, being freed from "the Law," or other Grecian religious bondages, was an invitation to the rejection of all restraint, especially on the part of any who saw themselves as the "spiritual ones." Those who had no experience with Jewish Law would interpret Paul's preaching of freedom in Christ from whatever religious background they came. Since women and slaves had suffered under the heaviest restraints, they would understandably make the most of their new freedom "in Christ." There was in Paul himself a strong "nomistic" strain, even though he emphasized salvation as the gift of God's grace and not as a reward for human works.

But it is on this point that one finds certain tension in the letters of Paul; that is, as he writes that proper freedom must be balanced with proper obedience to the Law displayed in the lives of free Christians. Paul learned that he could not just leave the matter to the free choice and good judgment of Christians because some novices could not

judge correctly. Those Jews, who thought that everything Jewish was abrogated, and Greeks, who didn't know about Moses at all, were equally guilty here. So Paul had to write down some rules for the early Christians. (This was even true of marriage and worship practices.)

The codes of behavior develop slowly, but surely, wherever they are needed. Thus one can find in some of Paul's later letters the inclusion of "tables of duties" for persons in various positions. Each set of rules can appropriately be called a "Domestic Code." The most complete "code" is in Ephesians 5 and 6. (There is also a Petrine Domestic Code, probably written to Jewish Christians for similar reasons.)

Bible students know that Paul had to write some directions to novice Christians because of the disorderliness which had developed out of a misunderstanding about Christian freedom (as well as the normal actions of the Old Adam.) The disorder within the Corinthian congregation is well known, and some of this disorder was related to worship. The writer believes that certain Pauline statements which are used to support "subordination" must be understood in this background. And as Paul tries to settle problems, he does so by reminding Christians of positions of "subordination" that have existed since the Fall. These authority systems were 1) marriage, 2) family, 3) government, and 4) church.

Sometimes Paul refers believers back to Adam and Eve, not as examples of man and woman, but husband and wife. In other cases he cites the clear commands of the Fourth Commandment when it applies. Also important is his usage of the Greek words *gunee* and *gunaika*. These words can be translated as either "woman" or "wife." Each translator must subjectively decide which meaning is proper. But in each context there are other expressions which qualify the situation and help one choose. While some choose otherwise, the writer contends that Paul does not teach a woman to man "subordination" but consistently speaks of a wife (in marriage) or a daughter (in family). Thus it can be maintained grammatically that Paul is not guilty of saying the things of which he has been accused with such vehemence. He is only reiterating positions which God's people had always held.

It is possible to trace the development within Pauline writing of the Domestic Code. Since one can reliably presume that Paul usually corresponded with groups that he had visited and/or converted to Christianity, it is possible to set up a fairly chronological sequence of needs.

1. In Galatians Paul defends the Christian liberty of believers against Judaizing legalism. There is no Domestic Code in this letter.
2. In Thessalonians he encourages persecuted believers and answers questions about the Second Coming, etc. There is no Domestic Code.
3. The letter to the Romans describes justification by faith through grace. Paul wants to visit them and greets many acquaintances in Rome. Phoebe is apparently his messenger to Rome. Whatever code of laws is prescribed has to do with the Christian and government, Romans 13.

There are different needs by the time the third missionary journey begins.

4. When he writes back to Corinth he has to deal with Greek converts who have run loose in Christianity since he first preached the Gospel to them. These Christians are disorderly and indecent in many ways. They flaunt their Christian liberty improperly, forgetting moral positions under authority and/or propriety in worship. Paul has to remind them about the Law of God and practical Christianity. Paul finds that he has to

give direction but the domestic code is incomplete. He reminds them about propriety in Christian public worship. Their environment is one of pagan religions and revelry in which women normally played a major role as priestess, oracles, and often were participants of sexually immoral acts in the name of religion. There are Christians from pagan backgrounds who needed to be told that the Most High God was not to be worshipped in orgiastic rituals like they might have been accustomed in worship previously.

When Paul commences writing again after ten years or more he has been and is, in jail. This is the fourth decade of his career as apostle to the Gentiles. These prison epistles speak to churches dominated by Gentile Christian converts. Grecian, not Jewish, backgrounds color the churches.

5. Philippians is a happy letter of grateful praise for those believers' generosity and faith. There is no Domestic Code. There is a plea for the healing of a rift between Euodia and Syntyche who have labored with Paul in his ministry, Phil. 4:2.

6. Ephesians may be the circular letter to Laodicea which Paul writes about in Colossian. It contains some basic Christian doctrines and the most complete Domestic Code, Eph. 5:12-6:9. The letter is well suited to be one which could be exchanged in all the Asian churches and read publicly and regularly for instruction in doctrine and practice. Most important it is written to a center of paganism and fertility cultism. This is also the place where Paul had left Timothy to serve as pastor. One cannot ignore the fact that Ephesus is the place to which Paul writes both an epistle and the Pastoral Epistles to Timothy. Paul's statements about husband and wife in the Domestic Code do not apply to woman-man relationships at all. There really should be no debating the "self-subordination" that these statements urge for they echo Genesis 3:16.

7. There is a brief Domestic Code in Colossians 3:18ff and in Titus 2. There is also a Domestic Code in 1 Peter 3. When one reads the directions in Colossians and Peter about men and women it is obvious that, like Ephesians, they refer to husbands and wives. Peter refers to a most noble Hebrew wife, Sarah, mother of believers. This is a remarkable example, because Sarah not only became a wife, but in so doing she left the relationship of being sister to "arrange herself under" her brother/husband in marriage!

The portions of Domestic Code most pertinent to this discussion are the Pauline statements about husband and wife in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and 1 Corinthians 14:34-36, and the instructions in 1 Timothy 2:8-15. In studying them one can note how the references to man and woman can also be construed to refer to husband and wife.

Paul's words about "woman's role" in 1 Cor. 11: 2-16 can be understood in view of the wife-to-husband relationship and what is proper in worship. That this is spoken in view of an authority system is shown by the reference to the head covering, vs. 4-7. Some discard these verses as pertaining only to a custom of that day and say it is not applicable to Christian women today. They say that this does not require women today to go to church with their heads covered because that was only a "custom of those days." That such was the custom may be true, but that does not mean that one can discard the principle which was behind the custom. Such head coverings were not just a fashion, but were symbols of wifely "self-subordination" to a husband and the obedience of marriageable virgins to a father. Thus Paul's words instruct wives and daughters not to flaunt the God-placed authority of husband or father. They are not to behave in their daily lives, or in the church (public worship is the scene), as though they were free of husband or father, could ignore them, and behave insolently or disrespectfully. The same situation could occur today if a wife discarded her wedding band at will, acted unmarried when it pleased her, separated herself from her husband in public or the church service, and spoke or acted flirtatiously or wantonly. Such actions today would be equivalent to what Paul is forbidding the Corinthians.



Paul, while speaking about the woman's head covering which illustrated a woman's "subordination" then points out that the length of her own hair can be a covering also, and representative of whatever position she has. Then he points out (and throws another curve at readers) that the matter of appropriate hair length (head covering) has been decided by a "law of nature." Bible students have sought in vain for this "nature" which Paul appeals to so authoritatively. (Lutheran school officials had fits over lengthening male hair styles back in the early 1960's. They had been indoctrinated to short hair styles by certain Bible interpretations, but couldn't find any "Law of Nature" by which to convince any student to keep his hair above the ears.) If there was such a "Nature" who spoke in the Greco-Roman world it had to be that "law" which evolved out of custom and the needs of that day. If it has ever been "natural" for men to have short hair in this world, it probably has been because of the centuries old need to go to war, and in the process wear a helmet. The male, who may have needed to don his helmet seasonally and be a "glorious warrior" for his mother could not be long-tressed. (How many still wear a hair style which is military in origin?) One may not equate this "Law of Nature" with the "Order of Creation."

Not so, some may say, and insist that "man" here is not "husband" but any man according to the "Order of Creation." But the only hint of any "Order of Creation" in this passage might be in verses 7, 11 and 12 where Paul speaks of the relative origins of man and woman. These passages could be rendered "husband" and "wife." The arrangement of Christ-man-woman in verse 3 is not from Creation since the Christ-Messiah was not active at Creation. The Son of God was present, but Messiah did not come into existence until the Incarnation. This is a statement of New Testament divine order; that is, Christ is the head/leader of the husband/father who is the head/leader of the wife/daughter. The RSV may translate verse 3 most correctly "... the head of a woman is her husband..." This is almost an exact parallel of Ephesians 5 where Paul also speaks of the relationship between husband and wife to the exalted Lord. Should anyone feel "too worthless" about a sinful or wavering life, the words of verse 7 can inspire that life. Humankind has a divine origin, originally created in the image of God. They are something special! Even though sin placed her in a "subordinate" position a wife reflects the glory which God shined first upon her husband.

There is the contention that "woman for the man" in vs. 9 (like "out of man" in Gen. 2:23) implies "subordination". The writer disagrees. This is a statement of fact. A wife was made for the sake of the first man so that he could function according to God's plan. That does not mean "subordination". Does the fact that humans learned about the photosensitivity of certain elements, and then produced cameras and film, make either the camera or film "subordinate" to the other? Is the radioactive material "subordinate" to an atomic reactor? Are not each of these part of a process/system/function? At the beginning one of the systems to be in operation was marriage. Each partner was necessary for the system. No "subordination" existed, whatever the order of their origins!

When Paul speaks about "Nature" vs. 14 and "we have no such custom" v. 16, is he not talking about customs which had developed among Christians or customs to which Christians had accommodated themselves? It is interesting that Paul does not explain himself exactly sometimes. Paul used words and expressions for which one can not yet know the exact meaning, cf. vs. 10. This does not violate inspiration; it just illustrates that there are some words and practices which are as yet obscure. When he cites that certain things have developed as prevailing practice of the churches, does this mean that God Himself prescribed them?

One must pay particular attention to verse 5 where Paul does not deny women the right to "pray and prophesy" but says that she must not do it with her head "uncovered"; that

is, flaunting the position of "self-subordination" under her "man." (This verse about praying and prophesying will be referred to in the next section.)

Paul's commands to women in 1 Cor. 14: 34-36 can be understood as a prohibition to wives/women a) not to contribute to "confusion" in the church, and b) perhaps not to presume to the position of a teacher of those men under whom they are arranged in "self-subordination" in marriage. (The latter thought may be a "derived doctrine" however.) A key verse is 33 since it reminds that God wants "peace" not "confusion." This concludes his statement about the charismatic confusion which prevailed at that time within the church. "Women" who have "husbands" from whom they could get information at home later, vs. 35, (hence "wives") are told to "keep silence" in the church.

But immediately one sees an apparent contradiction surface. How does this "keep silence" harmonize with the previous statement (1 Cor. 11:5) which forbids praying and prophesying with heads uncovered, but which seems to grant that a woman could pray or prophesy with her head covered appropriately? Has Paul changed his mind between chapter 11 and 14? In chapter 11 she is permitted to talk, but in chapter 14 she cannot? Is Paul being capricious when he appears to state two contradictory things to women in these two Corinthian references? No, the previous statement qualifies this "keep silence." Paul refers to the authority system within marriage, v. 34. There is to be orderliness in the church. Women, who up to this time might not have had the opportunity to worship openly with their husbands like Christians worshipped, should not disturb a church service either by talking or interrogating. (Is this not comparable to Paul's admonition to husbands to avoid lifting up their hands in prayer and getting into arguments?)

He backs up his command by referring to the "self-subordination" of wives under their husbands "as the Law says." What Law? There is no Law about any "subordination" that is earlier in time than Genesis 3:16. Therefore this is a statement which is based on the post-Fall condition. So one is justified in considering that this refers to the husband-wife relationship.

But a new thought now has been added. Paul tells these wives that they ought not presume to spiritual headship publicly over the men to whom they had pledged "self-subordination" in marriage. To avoid confusion they were to ask their husbands about certain spiritual matters/decisions at home, and not interrupt and disrupt preaching or public worship with their personal opinions or questions. If such seems strange to 20th century ears, it may be because they don't appreciate the free-swinging things that went on in a temple, or erupted in a synagogue when opposing rabbinic viewpoints surfaced and clashed.

When one studies the instructions in 1 Timothy 2:8-15 one realizes the importance of understanding Grecian/Asian customs. This is a difficult section because a hapax legomenon occurs in verse 12, the meaning of which can make a difference in whatever practice is drawn from the verse. Moreover the various verses do not, at first glance, seem to be related very well, especially the closing verse 15 which seems to teach salvation by childbirth.

So it is important to first note that the setting is worship. Men are to pray, vs. 8, without getting into the frequent verbal battles for which some synagogues had been famous. Not all the Christian men had Jewish backgrounds however, yet they are warned not to get carried away into disputation.

Since the authentein in verse 12 could be a reference to indecent activities within the church during the period of worship (which might naturally come out of Grecian temple experiences) he asks all worshipping women/wives to dress modestly, verses 9-10 (so as not to change the focus from God to sensual matters).

Verses 11 and 12 remind everyone about the relative position of both husbands and wives in church. While they may have been used to different ways of worship in their previous Greek religions, they should be aware and learn that Christian worship practice is definitely different. First of all, learning goes on in the Christian church, v. 11.

Next, the women are not to presume to leadership in worship. The Greek world had many women who had elevated themselves to teachership, and were priestesses, and worse, temple prostitutes. Christianity was not a similar fertility cult. Nor was it some free-for-all religious experience where everyone contributed to a sacred potluck ceremony, where there was disputation, feasting and factionalism, as well as sexual immorality. This is a good place to remember the disorderliness of the Greek converts at Corinth and apply these incidents to the Ephesian situation.

The verb authentain is an hapax legomenon. It has several meanings, yet all of them are related variations of "take control of." So one could translate this verse in several ways, such as

- a. "teach and usurp authority over the man" or
- b. "teach and take control of a man's body" or
- c. "teach and thrust oneself upon a man physically" or
- d. "teach and murder a man" or
- e. "teach and seduce/engage the man in religio-sexual practices."

Which one shall be chosen? The writer chooses the last one in view of several facts.

First, the meanings listed in a to d do not make the best sense in view of the fact that Paul is talking about something going on in Church. Second, there is evidence that this word was used with its sexual meaning, sometimes vulgarly. Third, it fits the milieu of the Greek/Asian world with its priestesses, temples and temple courtesans who acted just as Paul describes with this expression. One can look for comparable warnings in Ephesians and Timothy. Fourth, the writer's Liddell and Scott lexicon lists the word authentria as a peculiar form of authentain. Its meaning is "mistress." Fifth, this gives better sense to the final verse, making verse 15 a promise of God's forgiveness and help to any careless woman or wife who may have sinned in such an act of worship and has been "blessec with a pregnancy.

Thus there is support for a translation for this verse which is different from the King James version which most have learned. Because there is disagreement about the meaning of this word, one should not be too insistent on the meaning in the KJV.

This meaning (described above) could very well have been what Paul intended and referred to. Thus he warns Ephesian Timothy (remember that the locale to which Paul wrote was the home of Artemis) that there are to be no Christian priestesses who presume to spiritual leadership like some Grecian oracle/priestesses, and who may have climaxed many a religious service by the imposition of and invitation to sexual pleasure.

Lest any woman/wife presume to spiritual leadership/teachership Paul tells her not to take for granted (if her customs in a pagan religion have been otherwise) that she may aspire to, and set herself up as, a teacher in the Christian Church. She might, by such presumption, place herself at conflict with the one under whom she is arranged by virtue of birth, or marriage, Gen. 3:16 and Ephesians 5:22ff.

The Christian Church is not to have a corps of self-appointed priests, priestesses, pastors, deacons, or other workers. Whoever serves, at whatever level, ought to do so only by the agreement (call) of the other saints who agree to this service at a given place, in accordance with God's Word, the talents/proficiency given or acquired by education/training. (But this is not taught here.)

There are some today who are scandalized when one suggests this interpretation. Should one minimize the "decently" of Paul's "let everything be done in..." 1 Cor. 14:40? Why should it have been any less necessary for the apostles to warn against offensive religious practices in the apostolic age, and use explicit language in doing so, than it was for the prophets to warn against the rites of the Canaanites two millennia earlier?

One can study Peter, and some of the later church fathers, and find strong parallel admonitions against this very type of thing in Christian life. Immorality in religion is not uncommon. At Ephesus it might occur in the heat of mistaken religious rites. A pregnancy could result if a novice Christian woman disregarded God's ways. But God would be a strong support of the pregnant believer if she contritely lived in faith until her baby was born.

But can one be so sure that this still speaks about wife-husband relationships? Two things pertain: first, there is the reference again to Adam and Eve in verses 13-14 and second, there is the promise concerning child-bearing in verse 15. Childbearing is not the blessed prerogative of a single, but married, woman. Thus the whole instruction refers to wife-husband in the post-Fall condition. Adam was made before Eve, but Eve sinned before Adam. This is a statement of historical fact. But it thus refers to the "subordination" which applies since the Fall.

Thus Paul insists again on "decency and order" in the church and one notes how specifically he emphasizes "decency" in this case. And so one can legitimately contend that this admonition is mainly aimed at Grecian customs. "Teach and force oneself upon" may even be a Hellenistic colloquialism since many colloquial or highly specific expressions are the best explanation for the use of an hapax.

The Bible gives very few directives about how a group of believers should organize and carry on church work on the congregational level. It seems that much freedom prevailed in the Apostolic Church. But Christians were always to remember the authority of God's Word, and the authority systems it established, and then proceeded in obedience and dedication with their evangelistic efforts. Whether one was "Jew or Greek, male or female, bond or free," the reestablished one-ness with Jesus enveloped, and envelopes, all in happy service until Heaven finally opens for believers.

Such an openness ought to be found inside the heart of every Christian man. They ought not consider women, in general, to be "subordinate" to them because of their sex. Without them Christian men are as unable to function today according to God's complete will as Adam was before he received Eve. This is especially true in the Kingdom of God, for "in our life in the Kingdom woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as woman was made from man, in the same way man is born of woman; and all things come from God." 1 Cor. 11:11-12

This concludes Part I. Since the CHE statement does not deal with woman's role or share in congregational ministry the writer feels that his views ought not be added to the discussion of that essay.